Independence for Latin America
Timeline Cards

Core Knowledge®
Introduction

With the financial backing of Spain’s King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, Christopher Columbus sailed west in 1492, believing that he would reach the East Indies.
In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas split the land of South America between Spain and Portugal.
In 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral happened upon present-day Brazil and claimed the land for Portugal.
After Columbus, other Spanish expeditions explored the Americas, including expeditions led by Juan Ponce de León, Hernando de Soto, and Francisco Vázquez de Coronado.
Between 1519 and 1522, Spanish soldiers under the command of conquistador Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire in present-day Mexico.
Between 1531 and 1533, Spanish soldiers under the command of conquistador Francisco Pizarro conquered the Inca Empire in present-day Peru.
During the 1600s, England established colonies along the coast of North America.
In 1776, the British colonists in North America declared their independence from Great Britain.

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*
In 1789, a revolution began in France. That summer, the National Assembly created a Bill of Rights and issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man.
CHAPTER 1: Revolutions in America

Many Spanish colonies in the Americas declared independence from Spain in 1810, after Napoleon removed the Spanish king, Charles IV, from power.

**Big Question:** Why did European colonies in North and South America want their freedom?
In 1791, Boukman, a voodoo priest, led a rebellion of enslaved workers in the French colony of St. Domingue on the island of Hispaniola.

Big Question: How would you describe the battle for freedom that occurred in Haiti?
In 1801, Toussaint L’Ouverture assumed command of the revolutionary army in Haiti, teaching his soldiers discipline like a professional army. He became the ruler of Hispaniola for France.

**Big Question:** How would you describe the battle for freedom that occurred in Haiti?
In 1802, Napoleon sent General Leclerc to take control of St. Domingue. Toussaint was captured and taken to a prison in Europe.

Big Question: How would you describe the battle for freedom that occurred in Haiti?
In 1804, Jean Jacques Dessalines declared Haiti’s independence from France, but then he ruled the country as a dictator.

**Big Question:** How would you describe the battle for freedom that occurred in Haiti?
On September 16, 1810, the Mexican Revolution began under Miguel Hidalgo, assisted by Ignacio Allende and Juan Aldama. Hidalgo was captured and killed in 1811.

**Big Question:** Why did the people of Mexico rise up against Spanish rule, and how and why did Miguel Hidalgo become a revolutionary leader?
CHAPTER 3: Mexico’s Fight for Independence

José María Morelos continued the fight for independence against the Spanish. He was captured and killed in 1815.

**Big Question:** Why did the people of Mexico rise up against Spanish rule, and how and why did Miguel Hidalgo become a revolutionary leader?
In 1821, Agustín de Iturbide led the revolutionary army into Mexico City and declared Mexico a free nation. This map shows the extent of Mexico after gaining its independence from Spain.

**Big Question:**
Why did the people of Mexico rise up against Spanish rule, and how and why did Miguel Hidalgo become a revolutionary leader?
CHAPTER 4: Mexico After Independence

In 1836, General Santa Anna defeated the Texans at the Alamo. While Santa Anna won this battle, he lost the Mexican-American War.

Big Question: What kinds of challenges did Mexico face after gaining its independence?
Benito Juárez served as the first indigenous president of Mexico (1861–1872) and was a champion for the poor.

Big Question: What kinds of challenges did Mexico face after gaining its independence?
After Juárez’s death, Mexico fell under the rule of Porfirio Díaz. Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa fought for the rights of indigenous people and the poor against Díaz’s government.

**Big Question:** What kinds of challenges did Mexico face after gaining its independence?
CHAPTER 5: Simón Bolívar the Liberator

In 1806–1807, Francisco de Miranda tried to liberate Venezuela.

Big Question: What were the achievements and failures of Simón Bolívar?
In 1821, Simón Bolívar led a revolutionary army that won independence for New Granada and Venezuela, which united to form a new country, Gran Colombia.

**Big Question:** What were the achievements and failures of Simón Bolívar?
Between 1821 and 1824, Bolívar and José Antonio Sucre worked to liberate much of South America from Spain, but failed to unite the separate countries into a single country like the United States.

Big Question: What were the achievements and failures of Simón Bolívar?
CHAPTER 6: Revolution in the South

In 1806, the British invaded Buenos Aires, but the Argentinian militia drove them off.

Big Question: What successes did José de San Martín achieve as a military leader?
CHAPTER 6: Revolution in the South

In January 1817, José de San Martín crossed the Andes to attack Spanish forces in Chile.

**Big Question:** What successes did José de San Martín achieve as a military leader?
On February 12, 1818, San Martín and Bernardo O’Higgins marched into Santiago, Chile, and declared its independence from Spain.

**Big Question:** What successes did José de San Martín achieve as a military leader?
Prince João of Portugal settled in Brazil in 1808 and opened Brazil to international trade.

**Big Question:** How did Brazil’s way of gaining its freedom differ from the other South American countries you have learned about?
In 1821, Brazil won its independence from Portugal, and Pedro I declared himself emperor.

**Big Question:** How did Brazil’s way of gaining its freedom differ from the other South American countries you have learned about?
Between 1838 and 1840, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica became independent nations.

**Big Question:** How did Brazil’s way of gaining its freedom differ from the other South American countries you have learned about?