

# 12.3.1 Lesson 5

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, pages 71-78 (from “Let us now trace the chain of causation” to “causation that will take up the next two parts of this book”). In this passage, Diamond analyzes the proximate causes that contribute to Pizarro’s extraordinary capture of Atahualpa. Students consider how the events and ideas in this passage develop “proximate causation” (p. 78). Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do the ideas and events in this excerpt interact to develop the larger concept of “proximate causation” (p. 78)?

For homework, students read and annotate pages 229-237 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, boxing any unfamiliar words and looking up their definitions. Additionally, students continue to surface issues and develop inquiry questions as part of the research process. Finally, students respond briefly in writing to two questions.

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## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 11-12 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., <i>The Federalist</i>, presidential addresses]”).</p>
L.11-12.4.c	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11-12 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.</p>

## Assessment

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### Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- How do the ideas and events in this excerpt interact to develop the larger concept of “proximate causation” (p. 78)?

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Explain how the ideas and events in this excerpt interact to develop “proximate causation” (e.g., Diamond traces the “chain of causation ... beginning with the immediate events” (p. 71), like the fact that the Spanish had “steel swords and other weapons” (p. 72) and horses. Diamond then explores other less-immediate causes of the Spaniards’ victory: For example, the Spanish had access to knowledge about other cultures that the Incas did not, and thus Atahualpa “marched into Pizarro’s obvious trap” (p. 76). Additionally, an “epidemic of smallpox ... had killed the Inca emperor Huayna Capac” (pp. 74-75), so the Inca Empire was divided and weak, which only lent greater power to the Spaniards with their technological advantages (guns, horses, etc.). Beginning with the most “[i]mmediate reasons” (p. 78), such as advanced weaponry, and working backward to less immediate reasons such as smallpox and literacy, Diamond demonstrates how those “proximate factors” interacted to result in “proximate causation” of this historical outcome (p. 78).).

## Vocabulary

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**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- antecedents (n.) - preceding circumstances or events
- precipitated (v.) - hastened the occurrence of
- endemic (adj.) - natural to or characteristic of a specific people or place
- maritime (adj.) - of or relating to the sea
- envoy (n.) - a diplomatic agent; any accredited messenger or representative
- provocation (n.) - something that incites, instigates, angers, or irritates

**Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)**

- None.

**Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)**

- hindsight (n.) - the knowledge and understanding that you have about an event only after it has happened
- routed (v.) - defeated someone easily and completely in a game or contest
- muskets (n) - long guns that were used by soldiers before the invention of the rifle
- lances (n.) - long, pointed weapons used in the past by knights riding on horses
- daggers (n.) - sharp, pointed knives that are used as weapons
- besieged (v.) - a city, building, etc. that is surrounded by soldiers who are trying to take control of it
- immunity (n.) - the power to keep yourself from being affected by a disease

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RI.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.b, L.11-12.4.c</li> <li>Text: <i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> by Jared Diamond, pages 71-78</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>4. Quick Write</li> <li>5. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 20%</li> <li>3. 55%</li> <li>4. 15%</li> <li>5. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the Surfacing Issues Tool (refer to 12.3.1 Lesson 2) (optional)—students may need additional blank copies
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.3.1 Lesson 1) (optional)

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## Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

### Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.3. In this lesson, students read pages 71-78 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, analyzing how the ideas and events in this excerpt develop “proximate causation” (p. 78).

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Read and annotate pages 71-78 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (from “Let us now trace the chain of causation” to “causation that will take up the next two parts of this book”) (W.11-12.9.b).) Instruct students to discuss their responses to the homework assignment in pairs.

- Student annotation may include:
  - Star next to the paragraph that begins, “Let us now trace the chain of causation” (pp. 71-72). This statement describes what Diamond does through the rest of the excerpt as he explains the reasons why Atahualpa was captured.

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- Star next to the sentence, “The transformation of warfare by horses began with their domestication around 4000 B.C., in the steppes north of the Black Sea” (p. 74), because this shows how horses came to be native to Spain but not the Americas.
- Exclamation mark next to the paragraph that begins, “Atahualpa’s presence at Cajamarca thus highlights one of the key factors in world history: diseases transmitted to peoples lacking immunity” (p. 75), because the effects that disease had on the conquest of the New World are very surprising.

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Instruct student pairs to share and discuss the vocabulary words they identified and defined in the previous lesson’s homework (L.11-12.4.c).

- Students may identify the following words: *antecedents*, *precipitated*, *endemic*, *maritime*, *envoy*, and *provocation*.
  - **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *hindsight*, *routed*, *muskets*, *lances*, *daggers*, *besieged*, and *immunity*.
  - Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.
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Instruct students to take out their responses to the second part of the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Continue to generate inquiry questions for 2-3 surfaced issues and come to the next lesson prepared to discuss several questions.) Instruct students to share their inquiry questions in pairs.

- Student responses may include:
  - What is more important in military strategy: number of soldiers or technology?
  - How did learning about history aid European colonizers in the New World?

### Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.b).

Remind students to continue to surface issues and develop inquiry questions for research as they read and analyze the text.

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- **Differentiation Consideration:** For additional support, consider providing students with copies of the Surfacing Issues Tool.
- If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

**What does Diamond mean by “proximate causation” (p. 78)?**

Instruct student pairs to reread pages 71-78 (from “Let us now trace the chain of causation in this extraordinary confrontation” to “causation that will take up the next two parts of this book”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**What is a “chain of causation” (p. 71)?**

- *Causation* is the relationship between an event and its possible cause. A “chain of causation” (p. 71) is a series of causes leading to a single conclusion or event.
- Remind students of their work with the term *causation* in 12.3.1 Lesson 3.

**What is the purpose of the questions Diamond poses in the first paragraph of this excerpt?**

- Diamond’s purpose in asking the questions is to demonstrate the chain of causation leading to the Spaniards’ victory. Diamond begins to “trace the chain of causation in this extraordinary confrontation” (p. 71) by presenting questions about why history happened the way it did. For example, Diamond asks, “Why did Pizarro capture Atahualpa?” rather than the other way around, given Atahualpa’s “vastly more numerous forces” (p. 72). Diamond also wonders about the “antecedents” (p. 72) of the events leading to the Spanish defeat of the Incas. For instance, Diamond asks, “How did Pizarro come to be there to capture [Atahualpa], instead of Atahualpa’s coming to Spain to capture King Charles I?” (p. 72).

**How does Diamond explain Pizarro’s capture of Atahualpa, as well as other Spanish victories, against enormous odds?**

- Diamond explains that the Spanish had a major advantage because of the physical military tools at their disposal, such as “steel swords” and other “strong, sharp weapons,” primitive guns called “harquebuses” (p. 73), and horses. These advantages were important because “[h]orsemen could easily outride Indian sentries before the sentries had time to warn Indian troops behind them, and could ride down and kill Indians on foot” (p. 74).

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**Why did the Spanish have horses when the Incas did not?**

- Horses were not native to the Americas and so were not available for Native Americans to use in warfare. Diamond explains that, “[t]he transformation of warfare by horses began with their domestication around 4000 B.C., in the steppes north of the Black Sea” (p. 74).

**What was the role of military equipment in Europeans’ colonization of the New World (pp. 72-74)?**

- Spain’s weapons helped it to win many “decisive” (p. 72) battles against native peoples whose “rebellions ... failed because of the Spaniards’ far superior armament” (p. 73), including sharp weapons and metal body armor (p. 74). Diamond states that “[t]he sole Native Americans able to resist European conquest for many centuries were those tribes that reduced the military disparity by acquiring and mastering both horses and guns” (p. 72), though even those tribes eventually fell to “massive army operations by white governments” (p. 72).

**What events left the Incas “divided,” rather than a “united empire” (p. 75)?**

- Diamond writes that “an epidemic of smallpox ... had killed the Inca Emperor Huayna Capac ... and ... his designated heir, Ninan Cuyuchi” (pp. 74-75). Atahualpa then fought with “his half brother Huascar” (p. 75) in a civil war for power over the empty throne. Thus, smallpox resulted in a divided empire.

**What two factors intersected to result in the “military disparity” (p. 72) that allowed for Pizarro’s victory?**

- Disease and “military disparity” (p. 72) worked together by playing “immediate” (p. 71) roles in determining the outcome of the collision at Cajamarca. If it had not been for an outbreak of smallpox, Pizarro “would have faced a united empire” (p. 75). But the Inca Empire was “divided and vulnerable” (p. 74), which amplified the power of the Spaniards with their advantages such as guns and horses.

**How did literacy contribute to Pizarro’s capture of Atahualpa? How did literacy contribute to other similar historical events?**

- Student responses should include:
  - Literacy gave the Spanish access to “a huge body of knowledge about human behavior and history” (p. 77). Atahualpa and other native peoples, in contrast, had never been exposed to the Spaniards or any other “invaders from overseas” (p. 77). Had he been aware of information about similar threats of colonization, Atahualpa may not have “walk[ed] into [Pizarro’s] trap” (p. 76) so readily.

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- The principle that a tradition of literacy gave the New-World settlers access to information about other cultures and behaviors that native peoples did not have applies to many other European victories in the New World. This same principle resulted in Montezuma's miscalculation "when he took Cortés for a returning god and admitted him ... into the Aztec capital" (p. 77), which resulted in Cortés's or another European's victory.

### What is a "proximate factor[]" (p. 78)?

- *Proximate* means "nearest" or "immediately before." Diamond seeks to identify "the set of proximate factors that *resulted* in Europeans' colonizing the New World" (p. 78), which suggests that a proximate factor in this context is the nearest factor before an event that caused that event.
- Consider reminding students of their work with the vocabulary word *proximate* in 12.3.1 Lesson 3.

### How does Diamond structure this excerpt in order to address the "proximate factors" (p. 78) leading to Atahualpa's capture?

- Diamond opens this excerpt with a series of questions, such as "Why did Pizarro capture Atahualpa and kill so many of his followers?" and "Why did Atahualpa walk into ... a transparent trap?" (p. 72). Diamond then proceeds to answer these questions one by one, asking the questions again in italics, until there are none he can explain with "proximate factors" (p. 78).

### What questions are left unanswered even after exploring the "proximate factors that resulted in Europeans' colonizing the New World" (p. 78)?

- Diamond claims that, "we are still left with the fundamental question why all those immediate advantages came to lie more with Europe than with the New World" (p. 78). That is, while we may understand the "proximate factors" of such events, such as the Spanish having military advantage, we still do not understand what comes before the proximate factors, or the "ultimate causation" (p. 78) or root causes of such advantages.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

### What is the difference between "proximate causation" and "ultimate causation" (p. 78)?

- The difference between "proximate causation" and "ultimate causation" (p. 78) is that proximate causes are the "[i]mmediate reasons" (p. 78) or nearest causes for why

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an event has occurred. In the case of Pizarro's capture of Atahualpa, the proximate causes are European advantages such as "military technology" and "writing" (p. 78). In contrast, ultimate causation is the root cause for why something has happened; the first or original factor for why history has proceeded the way that it has. For example, Diamond questions, "Why weren't the Incas the ones to invent guns and steel swords, to be mounted on animals?" (p. 78), demonstrating that the ultimate or root causes of why the Europeans had "proximate" (p. 64) advantages that the Incas did not has yet to be explored.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**How do the ideas and events in this excerpt interact to develop the larger concept of "proximate causation" (p. 78)?**

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.
- Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.
- Consider using the Short Response Rubric to assess students' writing. Students may use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

## Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate pages 229-237 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (from "On July 3, 1908, archaeologists excavating the ancient Minoan palace" to "yet another invention in search of a use?") (W. 11-12.9.b). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct students to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text (L.11-12.4.c).

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Additionally, instruct students to continue to surface issues and generate inquiry questions as part of the research process and come to the next lesson prepared to discuss 1-2 issues and 1-2 questions.

Also for homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

**How does Diamond's explanation of technology on page 231 relate to his research purpose as established in earlier excerpts?**

**How does Diamond dismiss the claim “necessity is the mother of invention” (p. 232) and the “heroic theory of invention” (p. 231)?**

Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read and annotate pages 229-237 of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (from “On July 3, 1908, archaeologists excavating the ancient Minoan palace” to “yet another invention in search of a use?”). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Additionally, continue to surface issues and generate inquiry questions as part of the research process. Come to the next lesson prepared to discuss 1-2 issues and 1-2 inquiry questions.

Finally, respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

**How does Diamond's explanation of technology on page 231 relate to his research purpose as established in earlier excerpts?**

**How does Diamond dismiss the claim “necessity is the mother of invention” (p. 232) and the “heroic theory of invention” (p. 231)?**

Use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in your written responses.

## Model Surfacing Issues Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class</b> :		<b>Date</b> :	
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**Directions:** As you read, look for issues that are suggested in the text. Remember that an issue is an important aspect of human society for which there are many different opinions about what to think or do. Summarize the issue succinctly, and note the page number and what the text says about the issue in the correct columns.

Issue	Page(s)	Key information about the issue from the text
Chain of causation	71-78	Diamond attempts to “trace the chain of causation” (p. 71) leading up to Atahualpa’s capture. Diamond begins with the most immediate circumstances and works backward, from guns to disease, in order to identify the principles at play in similar world events.
Proximate factors vs. ultimate causation	78	Diamond explains that Pizzaro’s success was based on military technology, infectious diseases, maritime technology, centralized political organization, and writing. However, these are all “proximate factors” (p. 78) or immediate factors that do not explore the “ultimate causation” (p. 78) or why all those “advantages came to lie more with Europe than with the New World” (p. 78).

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Technology as a military advantage	73	Diamond writes that “Within half a dozen years of the rebellions against the initial conquest, Incas mounted two desperate, large-scale, well-prepared rebellions against the Spaniards. All those efforts failed because of the Spaniards’ far superior armament” (p. 73). Technology like steel weapons and guns helped the Spanish conquer the Incas, but if the Incas had had better armament, or weapons, the Europeans may not have succeeded in defeating them.
Disease as genocide paving the way for colonization	75	Diamond writes that “Throughout the Americas, diseases introduced with Europeans spread from tribe to tribe far in advance of the Europeans themselves, killing an estimated 95 percent of the pre-Columbian Native American population” (p. 75). Disease served to pave the way for European colonization, insofar as it helped Europeans defeat pre-existing societies.
Literacy as military advantage	77	Diamond claims that “literacy made the Spaniards heirs to a huge body of knowledge about human behavior and history” (p. 77), which the Inca people did not have. This gave the Spanish a military advantage insofar as they could predict others’ behavior more easily than the Incas.

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