

Conquest Student Page

Introduction:

After Christopher Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492, it was only a matter of years before other Europeans followed and systematically conquered the native populations. Mayan civilization actually peaked in about 900 AD, long before European arrival, but those Mayans who lived in the 16th century witnessed the arrival of Europeans and suffered at their hands. Hernan Cortés and Francisco Pizarro conquered the Aztec and the Inca. In both cases, the conquest was violent and bloody. In this lesson, you will read about the poverty of Mayan society after European arrival, and you will study texts that describe interactions between Cortés and the Aztec, and Pizarro ("The Governor") and the Incan King Atahualpa.

Note: All sites in this lesson can be found at <http://www.socialstudies.com/ancientlinks.html>.

Directions:

An Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico

Go to <http://www.cla.sc.edu/hist/faculty/scardaville/hist420/doc19.htm>

Read the text and answer the following questions. This letter was composed by an English priest approximately one century after the Spanish conquest of the Yucatan Peninsula.

1. How does the author describe the clothing of Mayan men?
2. What did the Mayans sleep on, and how well did they sleep?
3. How did Mayans who were "of the better sort, and richer" dress and sleep?
4. The author writes, "The women's attire is cheap and soon put on." What do you think he meant by this? What did Mayan women wear?

5. How does the author describe their houses? How did Mayans repair houses?
6. What was the Mayan diet like? Describe "*Chicha*."
7. This text was composed approximately one hundred years after the Mayans were conquered by the Spaniards. Based on your reading of this text, evaluate the quality of life Mayans experienced after Spanish conquest. What aspects of this life were harsh? What were positive?
8. Based on your reading of this text, what do you think was the author's opinion of Mayan life? Explain your reasoning.

Hernan Cortés: from Second Letter to Charles V, 1520

Go to <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/aztecs1.html>

Read the selection and answer the following questions:

9. Montezuma says to Cortés, "Our lord, you are weary. The journey has tired you, but now you have arrived on the earth. You have come to your city, Mexico. You have come here to sit on your throne, to sit under its canopy." Based on Montezuma's words, who did Montezuma think Cortés was?
10. Where did Montezuma look when waiting for Cortés?
12. What did Cortés say to translators for Montezuma?
13. Describe what happened at the fiesta Montezuma and his people prepared for Cortés.

14. According to the text, what had begun?

Capture of an Inca King: Francisco Pizarro

Go to <http://www.fl.vt.edu/culture-civ/spanish/texts/spainlatinamerica/pizarro.html>

Read the selection and answer the questions.

14. Describe the procession of Incas to Francisco Pizarro.

15. What did the monk say to Atahualpa?

16. How did Atahualpa respond?

17. What did the Governor do?

18. What did Atahualpa offer the Spaniards in return for his freedom? How long did it take to provide this?

19. What did a chief, Lord of Caxamalca, say to the Governor?

20. To what did the Governor sentence Atahualpa? How did he actually die?