**Aim: What happens when cultures interact?**

**Topic: Conquistadors and conquest of the New World**

**Task: Choose: Read about Hernan Cortez OR Francisco Pizarro and answer the following questions for either person: (Extra credit for doing these questions for both!)**

1. **Who did the Conquistador Conquer?**
2. **What problems did the Conquistador have?**
3. **How was your Conquistador able to conquer?**
4. **What were the long term results of his conquest?**

**Hernan Cortes**

In 1519 Hernan Cortes landed in the [Yucatan Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yucatan_Peninsula) in [Mayan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayan_civilization) territory. He defeated the Mayans (who were already falling apart) and then learned about the wealthy Aztec Empire and its riches, which he wanted to conquer next. In order to eliminate any ideas of retreat, Cortés destroyed his ships.

Moctezuma, the Aztec Emperor did not want to fight Cortes. He sent tributaries to offer Cortes gold, which just made Cortes want more. Cortès marched toward on the Aztec capital city of [Tenochtitlan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenochtitlan) in mid-August 1519, along with 600 men, 15 horsemen, 15 [cannons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannon). Cortes made alliances with the tribes (such as the Nahuas, Tlaxcala and Tlaxcaltec) that the Aztecs controlled; adding thousands of soldiers to his army. He would need them – the Aztecs had the largest army of all of the MesoAmerican Empires as well as their capital city surrounded by a lake! He first stopped at Cholula, the second largest city of the Aztecs and massacred thousands of its citizens and burned the city.

By the time he arrived in Tenochtitlan the [Spaniards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spaniards) had a large army. On November 8, 1519, they were peacefully received by the Aztec Emperor [Moctezuma II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moctezuma_II), due to Mexican tradition and diplomatic customs. Moctezuma deliberately let Cortés enter the heart of the Aztec Empire, hoping to get to know their weaknesses better and to crush them later. He gave lavish gifts in gold to the Spaniards. But quickly Cortès learned that Spaniards on the coast had been attacked, and decided to take Moctezuma as a hostage in his own palace.

After the Spanish massacred Aztecs at a religious ceremony at a temple, the Aztecs fought back and chased the Spanish back to the coast. Cortes lost most of his treasure and men. However, Cortes received reinforcement from the Spanish and slowly pushed back toward Technochtitlan. A small pox epidemic (the Spanish brought the disease with them from Europe) wiped out a large amount of the Aztec population which hurt the Aztec’s ability to resist. With the assistance of their allies, Cortés's men finally prevailed with reinforcements arriving from the Spanish colony of [Cuba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba). Cortés began a policy of [attrition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attrition_warfare) (wearing down an enemy) towards the island city of [Tenochtitlán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenochtitl%C3%A1n) cutting off supplies and subduing the Aztecs' allied cities. Cortes and his army of Spaniards and natives who hated the Aztecs then stormed the city. Almost every building and rooftop was occupied by Aztec warriors. The Spanish fought through the city street by street, and were slowed, though not stopped, by fierce Aztec resistance. The Aztecs cut the hearts out of every Spanish person they killed.

Eventually the Aztecs surrendered on August 13, 1521. However, even after the surrender, the Spanish continued to slaughter the citizens and loot the city for gold. Hundreds of thousands of Aztecs died. Estimates show that in 60 years, 80% of the population died. The Aztecs became a colony of the Spanish, and the natives the Spanish were allies with came under Spanish rule.

1. **Who did the Conquistador Conquer?**
2. **What problems did the Conquistador have?**
3. **How was your Conquistador able to conquer?**
4. **What were the long term results of his conquest?**

**Francisco Pizarro**

In 1532 Francisco Pizarro landed with a Spanish army in the coasts near Ecuador to take gold, silver and emeralds. Conquistador Hernando de Soto joined him and together they first defeated the Punian natives and then moved to conquer the Incas.

Pizarro decided to lead an excursion into the interior of the land and established the first Spanish settlement in Peru calling it [San Miguel de Piura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piura) in July 1532. The Spanish wanted to meet with the The Incan Emperor Atahualpa, but he refused because he had a much larger army (and the advantage of being in the mountains) and said, “I will be no man’s tributary.” The Spanish with a much smaller army beat the Incas. They captured Atahaulpa, executed his royal guard and then took him prisoner and forced the Incas to fill one room with gold and two rooms with silver for his release. After the Incas did this, Pizarro killed Atahualpa anyway.

A year later, Pizarro invaded the capital city of Cuzco with the help of natives who did not like the Incas. The natives helped Pizarro’s men through the Andes Mountains and jungles. The Incas tried to stop them, but the Spanish technology was too much. In addition, the Spanish brought diseases that the Incans were not immune to, and these diseases (such as small pox) destroyed the Incan population. 93% of the Incan population was destroyed by disease. The rest, by warfare. In the end, Spanish technology and disease, along with tribes who did not like the Incas led to the defeat of the Incas.

Pizarro wrote back to the King of Spain, "*This city is the greatest and the finest ever seen in this country or anywhere in the Indies... We can assure your Majesty that it is so beautiful and has such fine buildings that it would be remarkable even in Spain.*"

With the Incas defeated, he founded the city of Lima (January 15, 1535), the colony of Peru’s new capital. As Pizarro and his men took over portions of South America they plundered and enslaved countless people. As Pizarro and the Spanish subdued the continent and brought it under their control, they forcefully converted many to Christianity, claiming to have educated them in the ways of the "one true religion." It took just one generation for the entire continent of South America to be under Christian influence.

1. **Who did the Conquistador Conquer?**
2. **What problems did the Conquistador have?**
3. **How was your Conquistador able to conquer?**
4. **What were the long term results of his conquest?**