

10

• A Deadly Meeting



FIGURE 10-1 The Spanish marching into the Valley of Mexico. How are the Spanish conquistadors different from the Aztec soldiers you saw in earlier chapters?

WORLDVIEW INQUIRY

How might differences in worldview contribute to the dominance of one culture over another?

1519. Merchants travelling in the far reaches of the Aztec Empire had brought rumors to the emperor, Moctezuma, about the arrival of strangers on the coast.

Moctezuma had just spent a sleepless night. He was in his palace awaiting the arrival of his council of nobles and priests. He needed to discuss a grave situation with them.

Several months ago Moctezuma had sent officials to investigate reports of mysterious strangers in nearby territories. Now the officials had returned bringing stories of men in odd clothing and sailing boats as big as mountains. They rode animals that looked like giant deer and they carried sticks that shot fire. They were gathering supporters from surrounding tribes and heading toward Tenochtitlan.

Who were these strangers? What did they want of the Aztecs? Should Moctezuma welcome them into his empire, or send his army against them? He had to decide quickly — the strangers and their allies would soon be entering the Valley of Mexico.

In the end, Moctezuma decided to send a small group of Aztecs to greet the strangers and give them valuable gifts, including a mask made of turquoise and a fan of quetzal feathers. Surely these gifts would please them.

Based on what you have learned about Spanish and Aztec society, what aspects of technology, religion, and culture do you think might affect the meeting between them?



In This Chapter

A chain of events causing massive upheaval was about to hit the mighty Aztec world. In Unit 1 you read about the gradual changes that were taking place in Renaissance Europe. In Mexico, however, change would be rapid and violent. In Europe, people were learning from contact with one another and the exchange of ideas. In Mexico, contact between two peoples brought devastation to one of them. What was so different about the situation in Mexico? How did the worldviews of the leaders of both sides contribute to the outcome?

Cortés, the Conquistador

How does a leader's worldview affect his/her choices and decisions?

What's in a WORD?

Conquistador, meaning "conqueror," was the term the Spanish leaders in the Americas used to describe themselves. What does this word reveal about the intentions of these Spanish fighting men and adventurers?

The man who was leading Spanish troops toward Moctezuma and the Aztecs was Hernán Cortés. Cortés grew up in Spain during a period of great change. The defeat of the Muslims and the Inquisition had produced political and religious unity in Spain. Cortés believed that these changes made Spain a better place in which to live.

Cortés was an adventurous and ambitious young man. He had heard people talking about the gold that Columbus brought back from the Caribbean islands. Cortés decided to go to the Caribbean, where Spain was building colonies on a number of the larger islands. At the age of 19, he set sail for what was known as the "New World."

In many ways, Cortés embodied the Spanish worldview of his time. It was this worldview that drew Cortés to confront and eventually conquer the Aztec peoples.



FIGURE 10-2 Hernán Cortés, the young conquistador

EXPLORING SOURCES

Cortés as a Youth

He was a source of trouble to his parents as well as to himself, for he was restless, haughty, mischievous, and given to quarrelling, for which reason he decided to seek his fortune [abroad].

Francisco Lopez de Gomara, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*.

- Judging from this description of Cortés, what do you think his attitude was to those in authority?



FIGURE 10-3 The Caribbean Region in the Early 1500s. Locate Tenochtitlan on the map. Based on its location, why would it be such an important site for the Spanish to conquer?

SKILL POWER

Maps are made for many reasons. When you approach a map you need to ask yourself questions about the purpose for which it was made. You also need to consider your own purpose in looking at it. Ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of this map? How do the title, legend, and content contribute to understanding its purpose?
- What can I do with the information on this map? How can it help me make a timeline of Spanish settlements in the Americas? What does it tell me about the peoples Cortés might meet on his way to Tenochtilan?
- Based on the information in the map, generate two or three questions you can research to learn more about the Indigenous peoples living in the Caribbean before the Spanish arrived.

A Not-So-Secret Formula

Cortés believed that the Caribbean would be a good place to make his fortune. When he arrived on the island of Hispaniola (the present-day countries of Dominican Republic and Haiti) in 1504, the governor immediately gave him a large farm. “But I came to get gold,” said the disappointed Cortés, “not to till the land like a peasant.” What does this comment reveal about his worldview?

Later Cortés was asked to join an expedition to conquer Cuba, an island just west of Hispaniola. He eagerly accepted. With just 300 men, the Spanish conquered Cuba using their usual formula.

FYI...

Cortés’s desire for gold inspired the story behind the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl*. A group of pirates are cursed after stealing Aztec gold from Cortés.

The Conquistadors' Formula

1. An expedition would set out from a recent colony.
2. After landing in a new region, the Spanish would try to meet peacefully with the first groups of Indigenous people they encountered. Their aim was to discover which group in the area was the most powerful.
3. The Spanish would invite the leader of that powerful group to a meeting to exchange gifts. Then the Spanish would seize the leader and threaten to kill him unless his followers obeyed their orders.
4. If they did have to fight, the Spanish would try to do so on open ground. Their horses, armour, and weapons gave them a huge advantage.
5. The leader of the expedition would remain as governor of the new colony and his second-in-command would organize the next expedition. The Indigenous peoples would be forced into slavery.

Think IT THROUGH

What makes a hero? What makes a villain? List some criteria for each. You will come back to these criteria later in the chapter.

FAST FORWARD

Roméo Dallaire: Hero

When you think of modern day heroes, whom do you think of? Many Canadians and others around the world consider Roméo Dallaire a hero. He was sent to Africa to be the Force Commander with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda. His role was to oversee the transfer of power to the newly elected Rwandan government. But he and his troops walked into a genocide.

Genocide is the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. The Hutu and Tutsi peoples of Rwanda had a long history of fighting between them. Dallaire suspected that some Hutus were plotting genocide against Tutsis and he asked for permission to take pre-emptive action against them, but his request was denied. In the 100 days of the battle, the Hutus killed between 800 000 and 1 171 000 Tutsis.

Dallaire pleaded for international support to Rwanda and was denied repeatedly. The UN ordered him to withdraw, but he refused. Under terrifying conditions, he stayed and ordered his soldiers to defend Tutsi neighbourhoods. His actions saved the lives of 20 000 Tutsis.



FIGURE 10-4 In 2005, Roméo Dallaire received the Pearson Peace Medal from the Governor General of Canada.

1. Do you think Roméo Dallaire is a hero? Why or why not? Review your criteria for a hero from the “Think It Through” box. Based on what you learned about Dallaire, are there any changes you would like to make to your criteria?
2. In 2004, the CBC asked viewers who they thought was “The Greatest Canadian.” Use the Internet to find the list. Do you think the list contains mostly heroes? Do you agree that the list reflects the greatest Canadians? Why or why not?

Two Images of Cortés

Many sources other than the written word are valuable tools for understanding earlier times. Much can be learned about a particular era, event, or person through works of art. You have just read about Cortés; now look at how he is portrayed in two different works of art. One was made during his lifetime and the other in 1951. As you look at each work, consider the background of the artist who created it and how this might affect how he portrayed Cortés.

About the Artists

Christoph Weiditz made the portrait of Cortés on the top right. He was a German artist who met Cortés back in Spain after the conquest of Mexico. To reward Cortés for enriching and expanding the Spanish Empire, King Carlos I (Charles I) of Spain made Cortés a noble. The king commissioned Weiditz to make this engraving of Cortés.

The Mexican artist Diego Rivera did the painting on the bottom centuries later. (Rivera also painted the mural called *The Great City of Tenochtitlan* on page 164). He is considered a hero in his native Mexico for painting political works that glorify the Mexican people. This painting shows Cortés reaching out his hands to give gold coins to one of his lieutenants.

Think IT THROUGH

1. Refer back to the questions in the Building Your Skills: Analyzing Images on page 21. Use them to discuss these portraits.
2. Compare how Cortés is portrayed in these images. Use specific details from the portraits in your answer.
3. As you know, a work of art presents more than the bare facts. It presents a point of view. Based on what you know about the artists, why do you think the portraits are so different?
4. Sometimes people's ideas about a historical figure change over time. How might this factor contribute to the differences in these portrayals of Cortés?



FIGURE 10-5 Hernán Cortés by Christoph Weiditz, 1529



FIGURE 10-6 Hernán Cortés by Diego Rivera, 1951

Recognizing Cause and Effect

In our day-to-day lives, we are constantly dealing with cause-and-effect relationships.

For example, suppose you play on a hockey team. Your team trains hard all year long, and this training helps you to win most of the games you play. Training and winning—which is the cause and which the effect?

A **cause** is an incident or series of incidents that lead to something else. An **effect** is the result or consequence of one or more causes. The training you did is the cause that led to the effect of your winning.

Sometimes there can be several causes of any one effect. For example, maybe the way you train is not the only reason you win games. Maybe the other teams in the league do not train very hard at all, or perhaps they have lots of injured players. Similarly, any one cause can have several effects. Your training hard could have effects other than just winning games. It could also increase your respect for yourself and your teammates.

Note that a cause leading to a specific effect such as winning games can also lead to a more general and wide-ranging result, such as winning a championship, or getting more people to try out for the team. This can be expressed in a simple organization chart.

CAUSE	EFFECT	MAJOR RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning the championship • More people try out for the team



FIGURE 10-7 This all-star team features top players from a number of schools. What qualities do you think all-star players need to have to achieve results?

Try It!

Now let's apply this idea to Cortés and the Aztecs. What were the causes of Cortés wanting to conquer the Aztec society? As you read in the last chapter, the desire for gold, glory, and spreading Christianity were motivators for the Spanish. What was the effect of these causes?

Now think about what one or more major results of this cause-and-effect relationship may have been. Complete the following chart as you read the rest of the chapter.

CAUSE	EFFECT	MAJOR RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for gold and glory • Wanting to build the Spanish Empire • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving homeland • Risking lives • Fighting deadly wars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People die • A major civilization is destroyed

The Richest Men Who Ever Crossed the Seas

Cortés remained in Cuba, second in command to Governor Velázquez. After eight years, he grew restless again. He wanted to learn more about the Yucatan Peninsula, a large landmass to the west of Cuba. Velázquez sent out two expeditions to learn about this unknown area. The expeditions brought back reports that caused great excitement. It seemed that there was a civilization in this new land that was stronger, more advanced, and wealthier than any group of people the Spanish had yet encountered.

This was the opportunity Cortés had been waiting for. He got Velázquez to help finance an expedition to the Yucatan. Cortés scoured Cuba for experienced soldiers and used loans to buy ships. In a few months, he had 11 ships, 508 fighting men, 100 sailors, 200 Indigenous slaves, and 16 horses.

EXPLORING SOURCES

Reports from Mexico

Look at the sources below. As a Spanish conquistador on Cuba, how might you have responded to the reports and items being brought to you from the Yucatan peninsula? How might these items have influenced your plans?



FIGURE 10-8 The temple pyramid at Zempoala (sem-poh-WAH-lah). The architecture of the Indigenous peoples of Mexico was far superior to anything Spanish explorers had yet encountered.



FIGURE 10-9 On their expeditions, the Spanish saw many pieces of intricately worked gold jewellery and sculpture.

Think IT THROUGH

What does the phrase “waging a just and good war” reveal about Cortés’s intentions on his expedition? How does it reflect the attitudes and behaviour of the Spanish conquistadors in the Americas?

Before leaving the harbour in Cuba, Cortés stood on a packing crate, and made a speech to his forces. He wanted to inspire them to face the dangers and hardships that were ahead. According to an eyewitness, Bernal Diaz, Cortés said:

I know in my heart that we shall take vast and wealthy lands. We are waging a just and good war, which will bring us fame. Almighty God, in whose name it will be waged, will give us victory. . . If you do not abandon me, as I shall not abandon you, I shall make you the richest men who ever crossed the seas.

Then, just as Cortés was setting sail, Velázquez arrived and tried to cancel the expedition. He was worried that Cortés would get all the glory for his discoveries and not recognize his authority over the new lands Cortés might conquer. But Cortés ignored the governor and continued on his way.

Cortés Arrives in Mexico

Before striking inland to the Aztec Empire, Cortés established a town, La Villa Rica de la Veracruz, on the coast of Mexico, and declared an independent government. This meant that he was now responsible to King Carlos I rather than Velázquez. He sent one ship to Spain with all the treasure he had collected so far and then sank the other ten. This made it impossible for any soldiers who were loyal to Velázquez to defect from his expedition and return to Cuba.







Over to YOU

1. Historians may say that Cortés’s leadership was affected by living in Spain during a time of social and religious change, but he might not have been aware of that himself. It is often difficult to know how living in the time you do affects your worldview. Pretend you are living in the year 2075. What do you think people would say affected Prime Minister Harper’s worldview during his time as leader? Think of different criteria like international relations, Canada’s economy, and religious and cultural diversity in Canada right now. In paragraph form, answer the question: “How did the worldviews of Canadians influence Harper’s policy decisions?”
2. Name someone you know who has good leadership abilities. What qualities do they possess?
 - a. Create a business card for this person with a slogan that highlights his or her leadership qualities.
 - b. Is a follower as responsible for his or her actions as a leader? Look at today’s newspaper and cut out an article on someone you think is a follower. Is it harder to find news on a follower than a leader? If so, what does that suggest about our worldview?
3. Imagine you were a fighter in Cortés’s army. Write a diary entry about Cortés’s decision to sink his ships. Now imagine you were an Aztec who witnessed the ships sinking. Write a brief message to Moctezuma about the event.
4. Fighting for precious resources continues today. Develop a list of five resources that you think are the most valuable. Conduct Internet research to see if people have ever fought for this commodity. On a map or series of maps, plot where/when/who was involved in the fight. What was the outcome of the most recent conflict?

An Unequal Fight

How can weapons affect the outcome of a war? What are the most powerful weapons today? Both the Aztecs and the Spanish had powerful tools of war, but they weren't evenly matched. Which side do you think had the technological advantage?

In what ways did technology and disease contribute to the Spanish dominance over the Aztecs?

Aztec Weapon	Spanish Weapon	
<p>War Club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A war club could cut like a knife, but shattered against very hard surfaces like Spanish armour. • It was designed for swinging or chopping, but was so heavy that a soldier had to use both hands to swing it. 	<p>Sword</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These steel swords were double-edged, needle pointed, and sharp as a razor. • With this metre-long weapon in his hand, a fighter could both slash and stab at an enemy with deadly effect. His other hand was free to carry a shield or hold the reins of his horse. 	 <p>FIGURE 10-10 Aztec war club</p>  <p>FIGURE 10-11 European swords</p>
<p>Wooden Spear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spear ends were sharpened wood that had been hardened in a fire. • The Aztecs would try to get in close to the enemy and thrust the spears at unprotected areas, such as the eyes and throat. 	<p>Halberd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A halberd was over two metres long and had a spear blade, an axe point, and a hook. 	 <p>FIGURE 10-12 Aztec spear</p>  <p>FIGURE 10-13 A halberd</p>
<p>Atlatl (Spearthrower)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An atlatl was a piece of jointed wood that allowed an Aztec soldier to throw a short spear great distances, with much more force than using his arm alone. • The Aztecs also had bows and arrows, and slings. 	<p>Crossbow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A crossbow could shoot a wooden arrow with such force that it could penetrate even the thickest armour. 	 <p>FIGURE 10-14 An atlatl</p>  <p>FIGURE 10-15 A crossbow</p>

Weapons Unknown to the Aztecs

The Spanish also brought with them a kind of weapon that took the Aztecs completely by surprise: **muskets**, which were long rifle-like guns that were fired from the shoulder, and cannons. These firearms were, by then, common in Europe but unknown in Mexico. When the Aztecs first heard firearms go off, they thought it was thunder and lightning.

After he got news of the Spanish landing, Moctezuma sent ambassadors to their camp to find out what they wanted. Cortés ordered his men to fire their weapons before the ambassadors left.

EXPLORING SOURCES

The Impact of New Weapons

Cortés made a point of showing off muskets and cannons as soon as possible. The Aztec ambassadors had brought sketchers (or “painters”) with them to record their meeting with the Spanish. The Spanish also wrote and drew their versions of events.

All this was carried out in the presence of the two [Aztec] ambassadors, and so that they should see the cannon fired, Cortés made as though he wished again to speak to them ...and the [cannons] were fired off, and as it was quite still at that moment, the stones went flying through the forest resounding with a great din, and the two [ambassadors] and all the [others] were frightened by things so new to them, and ordered [their] painters to record them so that Moctezuma might see.

Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico 1571–1521*.



FIGURE 10-16 Cortés armed 13 of his men with muskets. This drawing shows Aztec ambassadors leaping into the sea as a Spaniard fires his musket.

- This image was taken from the *Florentine Codex* in which the Aztecs recorded the history of this time. How does it reflect the Aztec perspective?
- What message do you think Cortés wanted the ambassadors to take back to Moctezuma?
- How might the Spanish have hoped to gain an early advantage over the Aztecs through these actions?



FIGURE 10-17 Cortés brought with him 14 light cannons that could fire round stones.

Nuclear Weapons

In the Battle of Crécy that took place during the Middle Ages, an English army using the longbow scored a devastating victory over French forces three times its size. At the beginning of World War II, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were able to defeat and occupy Poland in a little more than a month because of their superior weapons. In both of these cases, it was military technology that led to the success of the victors.

In 1945, near the end of the war, the US government decided to use a completely new kind of weapon against Japan: the atomic bomb. It unleashed destruction that had never before been experienced on Earth. On August 6, a US bomber dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima; some 70 000 residents were killed and another 130 000 wounded. Three days later a second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki with similar results. The atomic bomb has never been used since in war.

Two Opposing Opinions

The dropping of these bombs, particularly the one on Nagasaki, has been hotly debated over the years. The following two quotations present arguments on both sides of the issue. The first is from Admiral William Leahy, an advisor to US President Truman.



FIGURE 10-18 This is the mushroom cloud after the atomic bomb was dropped over Nagasaki. What do you think might be some reasons why the atomic bomb has never been used again?

It was my opinion that the use of barbarous weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war . . . The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender . . . My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children.

The second opinion is from Colonel Paul Tibbets, commander of the air force squadron that dropped the bombs.

As for the missions flown against Japan on the 6th and 9th of August, 1945, I would remind you that we were at war.

Our job was to win. Once the targets were named and presidential approval received, we were to deliver the weapons as expeditiously [quickly] as possible, consistent with good tactics. The objective was to stop the fighting, thereby saving further loss of life on both sides. The urgency of the situation demanded that we use the weapons first—before the technology could be used against us.

Think IT THROUGH

1. What were Admiral Leahy's reasons for being against using the atomic bomb?
2. What arguments did Colonel Tibbets give to support the dropping of the bombs?
3. By using superior technology in a war, one side can maintain or achieve dominance over the other side. Also, the dominant side gets to keep or spread its beliefs and values, in other words, its worldview. How does this explain why one side in a war might be willing to use devastating weapons?

The Horse as a Weapon

The third military advantage the Spanish had over the Aztecs was the horses they brought with them. Because the Aztecs and other Indigenous peoples had never seen horses, Cortés was able to use the animals to great advantage. Their size, power, and speed fascinated the Aztecs. As well, the Spanish were such well-trained riders that they could hold the reins with one hand and attack an enemy with a weapon using the other. The Aztecs, on foot, could not compete.

FIGURE 10-19 Cortés made a point of exercising his horses whenever he met a group of Indigenous peoples for the first time. Why do you think he did this?



EXPLORING SOURCES

An Aztec Description of the Horse

The “stags” came forward carrying the soldiers on their backs. . . . These animals wear little bells, they are adorned with many little bells. When the “stags” gallop, the bells make a loud clamour, ringing and reverberating. These “stags,” these “horses,” snort and bellow. They sweat a very great deal, the sweat pours from their bodies in streams. . . . They make a loud noise when they run; they make a great din, as if stones were raining on the earth. Then the ground is pitted and scarred where they set down their hooves. It opens wherever their hooves touch it.

The Florentine Codex.

- Why do you think the Spanish put bells on the horses?
- What can you tell about the impression made by the horses on the Aztecs?

The Role of Disease

In Chapter 1 you saw that the Black Death was an important factor in bringing about change to European society at the beginning of the Renaissance. In the conflict between the Aztecs and Spanish, disease gave the Spanish the advantage. At a critical point, a smallpox **epidemic** broke out in Tenochtitlan, killing vast numbers of Aztecs and weakening their ability to resist the Spanish assault.

European explorers, traders, and settlers also brought smallpox, measles, and other diseases to the Americas. In North America, for example, smallpox reached the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) lands in 1679, killing millions. Disease also travelled from the Americas to Europe.

What's in a **WORD**?

An “epidemic” is a disease that spreads rapidly and affects many individuals at the same time.

Zoom In > Why Did Smallpox Devastate the Aztecs?

Although no one knows for sure, it is thought that a Spanish slave brought smallpox to Mexico. The Spanish themselves had been exposed to the disease in Europe and, over time, had built up some immunity, or resistance, to the smallpox virus. Because they had some immunity, some Spanish never caught the disease, and of those who did, not all died. However, since the Aztecs had never

been exposed to the disease before, they had no immunity.

- What was the primary effect of the epidemic?
- What was the secondary effect?
- Why do you think there is no mention of medical help?

The sick were so utterly helpless that they could only lie on their beds like corpses, unable to move their limbs or even their heads. They could not lie face down or roll from one side to the other. If they did move their bodies they screamed in pain. A great many died from this plague, and many others died of hunger. They could not get up to search for food, and everyone else was too sick to care for them, so they starved to death in their beds.

An Aztec who survived the destruction of Tenochtitlan gives an eyewitness account of the smallpox epidemic.

FIGURE 10-20 This drawing from the *Florentine Codex* shows an Aztec victim of the smallpox epidemic in Tenochtitlan. Even the Spanish were surprised at the devastating effects of the disease. “They died in heaps,” said a doctor with Cortés.



Pandemic Awareness Today

In Chapter 1, you learned about the devastating effects of the Black Death in Europe. In this chapter, you have learned what happened when smallpox arrived in Tenochtitlan. Both these events were considered “pandemics.” What exactly is a “pandemic” and what can be done about it? Pandemic by itself simply means “wide-spread” or “general.” In news reports, you may hear it used in a phrase, as in “flu pandemic.”

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a “pandemic flu” is a new disease that would affect people even in the most remote corners of the Earth. The WHO provides three criteria to determine whether a flu is pandemic:



FIGURE 10-21 In 2003, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) arrived in Canada. During the outbreak, there were 8098 probable SARS cases around the world, including 774 deaths. In Canada, there were 438 probable SARS cases, primarily in Ontario, but cases were also reported in British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan. All told, 44 Canadians, all Toronto residents, died of SARS.

1. A new flu germ develops to which humans have no immunity.
2. Infected humans become very sick (and sometimes die).
3. The flu is contagious and spreads from person to person easily.

Think IT THROUGH

1. The Alberta Government’s Department of Health and Wellness has a three-step plan in place in the remote possibility that a flu pandemic emerges. Visit the government’s Web site and identify two ways the government is working to prevent a pandemic.
2. What can Alberta citizens do to help?

Over to YOU

1. What do you think was the most significant thing that caused the collapse of the Aztec Empire—technology or disease? Write a diary entry from the point of view of a Spanish conquistador on the most significant cause of the collapse. Then write an entry from the point of view of an Aztec soldier.
2. Research the impact of smallpox on First Nations and Inuit in the area that became Canada. Create a graphic organizer to show the consequences of a major epidemic.
3. In your class, create an electronic bulletin board to allow your classmates to post comments and have a

discussion about the following question: *How might the Americas be different today if the First Nations and Inuit peoples had had immunity to diseases brought by the Europeans?*

4. Albert Einstein said, “It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.” What do you think this quotation means? Does it apply to the Spanish during their conquest of Mexico? Do you agree or disagree with this quotation related to our society? Create a collage to show your position. Give evidence to support your position.

Invasion

In Ronald Wright’s book, *Stolen Continents*, he writes: “Of all the European and American nations that clashed in the 16th century, the Aztecs and Spaniards had the most in common. Both were warlike, mercantile [trading], avaricious [greedy], and quick to resort to force. Both believed they had a divine mission to rule the world.”

Both the Aztecs and the Spanish were used to having power, and sometimes they took advantage of that power. In Chapter 7, you read that the Aztecs collected tribute from the peoples they conquered. They also engaged in “flower wars” with their neighbours, which were ritual battles aimed at getting victims to sacrifice to the Aztec gods. These practices made some of their neighbours enemies, a fact that Cortés would use to his advantage.

Spanish Strategy

After establishing his colony on the coast, Cortés decided that it was time to march to the heart of the Aztec Empire, Tenochtitlan (Teh-noch-TEE-tlahn). On the way, he and his army encountered a number of other Indigenous peoples. Before Cortés could proceed, he needed to either befriend or conquer these people.

Using an Intermediary

When Cortés’s forces defeated the Tabascan people, they were given gifts of food, clothing, gold, and slaves. One of the slaves was a young woman named Malinche. Originally from a noble Indigenous family, she had been sold into slavery after her father died. She, more than any other Indigenous person in Mexico, would give Cortés the key he needed to overcome the Aztec Empire.

Cortés needed someone to act as an **intermediary**, that is, a link, between him and Moctezuma. Malinche could speak both **Mayan** and **Nahuatl** (NAH-wahtl), the language of the Aztecs, and in a short time she learned to speak Spanish. She converted to Christianity and afterward was known as Doña Marina. She became Cortés’s advisor and spy. Without her help, Cortés could not have succeeded.

How did the worldviews of the Spanish and Aztecs influence the strategies they used against one another?

Think IT THROUGH

Reread the Wright quotation and look at the worldviews icon. Which elements of the icon are represented in this quotation? Explain.



FIGURE 10-22 This is a contemporary portrait of Malinche by Argentinian-born artist Rosario Marquardt. The symbol near Malinche’s mouth is a reference to the symbol showing speech in some Aztec codices. How does this painting reflect her role? Why might a Latin-American artist show Malinche as “two-faced”?

FYI...

In today's Mexican popular culture, people use the term "malinchismo" to refer to the practice of preferring foreign things to things that are Mexican. The term comes from Malinche's name.

The March to Tenochtitlan

Cortés continued on his march to Tenochtitlan. Each group he met viewed the arrival of the Spanish differently, so Cortés was forced to constantly adapt his strategy.

- ◆ The Totonacs invited Cortés to Zempoala, their capital city, and complained about the tribute the Aztecs collected. Cortés agreed to give them protection from the Aztecs in exchange for warriors.
- ◆ The Tlaxcalans (tlahsh-CALL-lahns) fought the Spanish, but the Spanish soldiers held them off and offered to make peace. The Tlaxcalans agreed, and added 1000 of their own soldiers to the Spanish forces.
- ◆ The Cholulans (choh-LOO-lahns) were loyal allies of the Aztecs. Malinche overheard a conspiracy to attack the Spanish and she alerted Cortés. As a result, the Spanish conquered the Cholulan people.

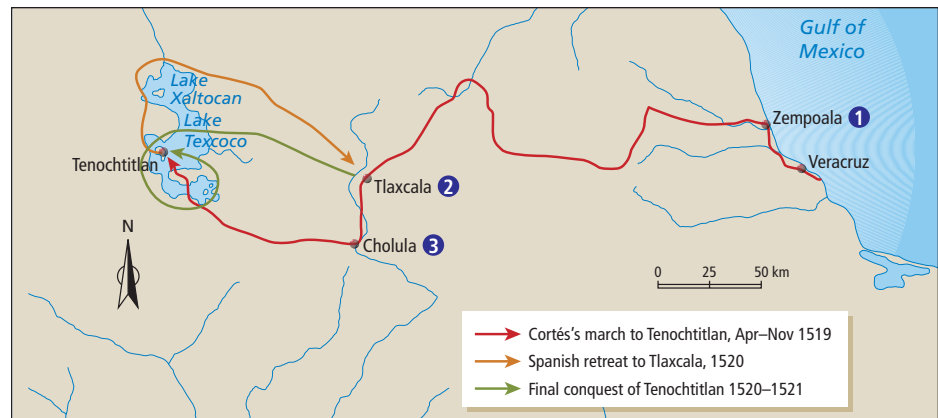


FIGURE 10-23 The March to Tenochtitlan. This map shows Cortés's progress through Mexico.

FAST FORWARD

The Power of Information

Today, countries gather and analyze information in order to get advance warnings of any potential security problems. In Canada, the largest security organization is called the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (abbreviated as CSIS). Its French name is Service canadien du renseignement de sécurité (SCRS). It was founded by an act of Parliament in 1984.

CSIS's mission statement reads: "The people of CSIS are dedicated to the protection of Canada's national security interests and the safety of Canadians." That means that CSIS seeks out any

activities related to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and tries to prevent dangerous situations that threaten the security of Canadian citizens. If CSIS thinks that you are engaged in such activities, it can electronically bug your conversations, secretly open your mail, search your home, and invade your confidential records.

Think IT THROUGH

In your view, how might the powers of an organization like CSIS threaten people's rights if misused?

Aztec Strategy

In a crisis situation is it better to act, to make the first move, thereby shaping how events will unfold? Or is it better to sit back and wait—to give you time to see what the other side will do before deciding how to act yourself? Moctezuma chose the second course. As the Spanish drew closer and closer to Tenochtitlan he waited and thought about what to do.

FYI...

Moctezuma's younger brother begged him not to open Tenochtitlan to the Spanish. But Moctezuma would not listen.



FIGURE 10-24 This image of the meeting between Cortés and Moctezuma appeared in an Aztec codex.

Think IT THROUGH

Cortés had entered a city of 200 000 people with a force of 400 Spaniards, 6000 Tlaxcalans, and a dozen horses. What aspects of his personal experience and worldview made him think that he could take over the Aztec capital and empire?

EXPLORING SOURCES

Moctezuma's Decision

Moctezuma allowed Cortés to enter Tenochtitlan, exchanged gifts with him, and welcomed him with the following speech:

My lord, you are weary, you are tired. You have come to your land; you have arrived in your city, Mexico. You have come to rest beneath your canopy; you have come to your seat, to your throne . . . If only one of them [the past Aztec rulers] were here to witness, to wonder at what I now see myself: To see what I see: I the last, I the reigning one of all our lords. No, I am not dreaming; I am not sleepwalking . . . I am seeing you now, I set eyes on your face!...Come now and rest; take possession of your royal palaces; give comfort to your body. Enter your land, my lords!

Malinche translated Moctezuma's speech for Cortés. And then Cortés replied:

Be assured, Motecuhzoma, have no fear. We love you greatly. Today our hearts are at peace.

- What does Moctezuma's speech reveal about his attitude toward Cortés? How do you account for his response?



FIGURE 10-25 Aztec fire dancer Lazaro Arvizu performed at the Assembly of First Nations conference in Vancouver in 1999. Aztec fire dancers perform dances that are 500 years old. Through their dances, they represent the splendor of Aztec culture and preserve their historical and cultural identities.

The Battle for Tenochtitlan

Cortés and his forces were taken to live in the palace of Moctezuma's late father. Then the Aztecs showed them the glories of their city. As you read in Chapter 8, the Spanish were particularly amazed by the market. They saw more evidence of the golden treasures of the Aztecs. Their reaction was recalled by an Aztec elder: "[The Spanish picked up the gold jewelry] and they seemed transported by joy, as if their hearts were illuminated and made new. They hungered for that gold." This wealth and the desire to lead this mighty society finally caused Cortés to attack.

The Spanish placed Moctezuma under house arrest in his palace. They looted gold from the royal palaces and melted it down. They then forced Moctezuma to make himself a subject of Spanish rule.

News came that more Spanish troops had arrived on the coast. They had been sent by Governor Velázquez to arrest Cortés. Cortés left Tenochtitlan with some soldiers and set off for the coast to deal with this threat. He left Pedro de Alvarado in charge in Tenochtitlan. Alvarado gave the Aztecs permission to hold a festival, but then he had his troops massacre all of the dancers.

Cortés defeated Velázquez's forces and convinced them to join him in the fight against the Aztecs. When Cortés returned, Tenochtitlan was in an uproar. He forced Moctezuma to speak to his people to calm them, but they threw stones at their emperor. Shortly after this, Moctezuma died either as a result of these injuries or by being strangled by the Spanish. The Aztecs attacked the Spanish and their allies, killed many of them, and drove the rest out of Tenochtitlan.



FIGURE 10-26 Mexican archaeologists examine the site where one of 14 stone carvings were found in the archaeological area of the Templo Mayor in Mexico City's main square, January 31, 2005.



FIGURE 10-27 After having destroyed the aqueduct, the Spanish later found they needed to bring in water to the city. They had to build new aqueducts.

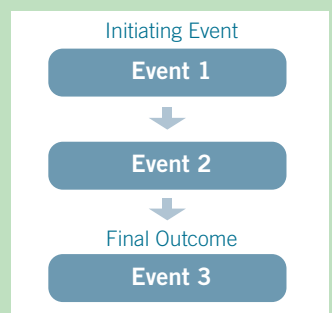
By the time Cortés returned and attacked Tenochtitlan with a stronger force about six months later, the smallpox epidemic had killed off 25 percent of the Aztec population. The Spanish cut the aqueducts to the city and after a siege of about 80 days the Aztecs were defeated. The Spanish tore down the city as they captured it.

Only 60 000 Aztecs survived in the city, which lay in ruins around them. The Aztec Empire had ceased to exist. In its place, Cortés would lay the foundations for another Spanish colony in the Americas.

SKILL POWER

With historical events, it is often important to understand the order of events in order to understand why things turned out the way they did. This is true for the conflict between the Aztecs and the Spanish. Create a vertical sequence chart using the information on pages 232 and 233 and important events earlier in the chapter up to the battle for Tenochtitlan. Find images on the Internet or draw your own images to illustrate your chart.

- Based on your chart, what do you think were the three most important events? Why?



The Last Days of the Aztecs

This is a poem translated from Nahuatl about the defeat of the Aztecs. What images does the poet create in your mind as you read? What does the poem tell you about the state of the Aztec people by the end of the siege?

- What aspects of the Aztec worldview are mentioned in this poem? How have they let the Aztecs down?

In the roads lie the broken spears . . .

Without roofs are the houses,

And red are their walls with blood. Maggots swarm in the streets and squares . . .

The waters have turned crimson, as if they were dyed . . .

In shields was our defence,

But shields could not hold back the desolation.

We have eaten . . . lumps of adobe,

Lizards and rats,

Soil turned to dust, and even the worms.

Over to YOU

1. If you could advise Moctezuma to change one of his decisions, what would you tell him? Create a T-chart to show what parts of his worldview shaped the decision he made and what parts of your worldview shape the advice you offer him.
2. Use the three-point rating scale below to indicate the extent to which the actions of Cortés, Moctezuma, and Doña Marina were responsible for what happened to the Aztecs. Provide reasons for your rating.
3. Select one important decision you have made in the past month. Create a cause-and-effect chart to show the consequences of your decision. Create a second chart to show what could have happened if you had made a different decision.
4. Write and deliver a newscast from the Aztec point of view during the Spanish conquest. Be sure to include details on weaponry and smallpox in your report to the class.

1. minor responsibility

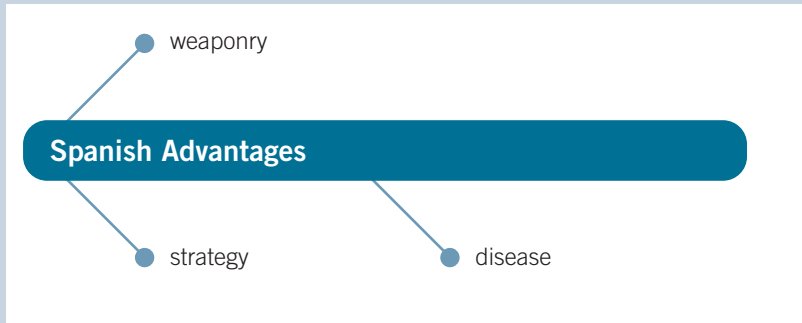
2. considerable responsibility

3. significant responsibility

Explore the Big Ideas

The Aztecs fought hard to protect their civilization, but the Spanish had three advantages the Aztecs could not overcome.

1. How did weaponry, strategy, and disease contribute to the eventual downfall of the Aztec society? Use a fishbone organizer to gather your information.



2.
 - a. How did Cortés's worldview contribute to the strategy he used on the Aztec peoples?
 - b. How might the battles' outcomes have been different if the Aztecs and Spanish had had equal sets of weapons?
 - c. What was the role of the Indigenous allies that Cortés enlisted?
 - d. As you read in Chapters 7 and 8, the Aztec society was one filled with great pride—pride in their achievements, in their hierarchy, and in their warrior society. What effect do you think smallpox had on their sense of pride?

3. In small groups, brainstorm and list at least five types of rapid change a country may experience. Categorize each as a positive experience or a negative experience.

Group the changes based on similar characteristics such as change caused by war, natural disaster, etc. Create a collage on the positive or negative consequences of rapid change.

4. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the changes that

took place in Renaissance Europe to what happened to the Aztecs.

- a. Add a third circle to compare and contrast what happened to the First Nations of Canada.
 - b. Which two events are most similar? Which two are most different?
5. When asked: "Why did history unfold differently on different continents?" author Jared Diamond explains it was because of *guns, germs, and steel*. Using evidence and information from this chapter create the front page of a

newspaper with an article on how each of guns, germs, and steel allowed history in the Americas to unfold in a unique way. Give each article a headline to grab the reader's attention. Consider creating illustrations and editorials as well.

6. What reasons might each of the following have for thinking that Cortés was a hero or a villain: a Spanish fighter, an Aztec soldier, a Mexican today? Compare the criteria each would use with the criteria you established on page 218.