



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: US History/Ms. Brown

Homeroom:



7<sup>th</sup> Grade US History  
Standard # – Do Now – Day #18

**Aims:** SWBAT annotate primary and secondary sources and identify evidence of innocence and/or guilt for the Spanish Conquistadors during the conquest of the Americas in preparation for a mock trial

**DO NOW**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions in complete and historically accurate sentences. You must attempt each question, there should be absolutely no blank spaces. Be sure to provide examples and evidence to support your answers. **Annotate the text as you read.**

The Indians are the most sincere, they do not possess any wickedness or deceitfulness at all...Into this herd of sheep...there came some Spaniards who behaved like wild beasts. And Spaniards have behaved in no other way during the last forty years for they are still acting like savage beasts, killing terrorizing, torturing and destroying the native people, doing all this with the strangest and most varied new methods of cruelty, never seen or heard of before, and to such a degree that this island of Hispanola, once so populous (over three million, has now a population of barely two hundred people.

*-excerpt from A Brief Encounter of the Devastation of the Indies, by Bartolome de las Casas*

1. How does de las Casas describe the Native Americans?

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2. What opinion does de las Casas have of the Spaniards?

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## Columbus' Men

*From A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn*

### The Indictment:

You are charged with the mistreatment and murder of thousands, perhaps millions, of Taino Indians

Without you, Columbus' orders to enslave and kill Tainos would have been empty words.

There is no evidence that Columbus personally captured slaves or killed anyone with his own hands. You are the ones responsible for the enslavement of first hundreds, then thousands, of Taino Indians.

You did the dirty work. You raped women. You set dogs on infants. You cut the hands off Tainos who didn't deliver enough gold. You whipped Tainos if they didn't work hard enough in the mines.

Without you there were no crimes.

You may try to blame your superiors, Columbus or even King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. But because someone orders you to commit a crime does not free you of the blame for committing it. You could have said no. There were Spaniards, like the priests Antonio de Montesinos and Bartolome de las Casas, who refused to mistreat Indians and spoke out on their behalf. Why didn't you?

Without the soldier there is no war. Without you there would have been no genocide.





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**Beginnings**

Once a nomadic people, the Aztecs began to build permanent settlements about 1325 C.E. (This was long after the first Americans, crossed over the Beringia land bridge and populated the Americas.) Tenochtitlan and the Aztec Empire lasted for about 200 years, until their conquest by the Spanish in the year 1521.



According to legend or myth, they were told by one of their gods to settle where they saw an eagle perched on a cactus, eating a snake. After a hundred years of wandering, they finally found this sign. They saw the eagle, the cactus, and the snake on a small island in the shallow waters of Lake Texcoco. In obedience to the god's instruction, they started to build the city of Tenochtitlan (today part of Mexico City).

**Encounter with the Europeans**

The Aztec calendar predicted events would happen. The Aztecs predicted that Quetzalcoatl, a god-hero for the common people, would come from the east and all the kings would fall. The Spaniard Hernando Cortes came that very day. When Cortes came in 1519, Montezuma II was the king of the Aztecs. So when Cortes arrived, Montezuma assumed he was Quetzalcoatl, the god-hero, so he sent Cortes many gifts of gold and jewels.

Dona Maria was a Native American woman who learned to speak Spanish. She translated between the Aztec and Mayan Native Americans and Cortes. Other Native Americans who disliked the Aztecs helped the Spanish build ships small enough to sail into Tenochtitlan.

After Montezuma died in the fighting, Cuauhtémoc became the last Aztec king.

- 1. About how many years did the Aztec empire last?

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- 2. What year were the Aztecs conquered by the Spanish?

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3. What is the name of the Aztec capital? What did it look like?

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4. Who is Hernando Cortes?

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5. Who was the Aztec king when Hernando Cortes arrived?

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6. Who was the last Aztec king?

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**B. The first encounter between Cortes and Montezuma From the Florentine Codex**  
(Chapter 16, *By Fray Bernardino de Sahaguan*)



When Montezuma went to meet them, (the Spaniards) at Huitzillan, there upon he gave various things to the war leader, the commander of the warriors, he gave him flowers...

Then Cortes said in reply to Montezuma, "Is it not you? Is it not you then? Montezuma?"

"O our lord, be doubly welcomed on your arrival in this land, you have come to satisfy your curiosity". (Montezuma)

"Let Montezuma be at ease, let him not be afraid, for we greatly esteem him. Now we are truly satisfied to see him in person and hear him, for until now we have greatly desired to see him and look upon his face. Well, now we have seen him, we have come to his homeland of Mexico. But he will hear what we

have to say.



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Thereupon, the Spaniards took Montezuma by the hand. They came along with him, stroking his hair to show their good feeling. And the Spaniards looked at him, each of them giving him a close look.

7. Who did Montezuma think Cortes was? Why?

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8. What is the tone between the two men in the first encounter? What does Montezuma say to Cortes? What does he do?

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9. What does Cortes say and do to Montezuma?

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10. What prediction can you make about the relationship between the Aztecs, (Montezuma) and the Spaniards, (Cortes)? Why?

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**C. The Fight and Conquest of Aztecs at Tenochtitlan**

The True History of the Conquest of New Spain (Chapter 128, “La Noche triste”)  
*From Diaz Del Castillo*

Many squadrons attacked us both by day and night and the powder was giving out, and the same was happening with the food and water, and the great Montezuma being dead, they were unwilling to grant him peace and truce, which we had demanded of them.

In order to bring out the gold and divide it up and carry it Cortes ordered his servant named Cristobal Guzman and other soldiers who were his servants to bring out all the gold and jewels and silvers, and he gave them many Tlazcalan Indians for the purpose and they placed it in the hall. Then Cortes told the Kings officers to take the gold belonging to his majesty and he gave them seven wounded and lame horses and one mare and many friendly Tlaxcalans more than eighty in number, and they loaded them with parcels of it, as much as they could carry, for it was in very large bars...Then Cortes says, “Bear witness for me that I can do no more with this gold. We have here in this apartment and Hall over seven hundred thousand pesos in gold, and as you have seen, it cannot be weighed nor

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placed in safety. I now give it up to any of the soldiers who care to take it; otherwise it will be lot among these dogs.

Many of our soldiers had already crossed and while we were in this position, a great multitude of Aztecs charged toward us, removing the bridge and wounding and killing our men who were unable to assist each other, and as misfortune is perverse at such times, one accident followed another, as it was raining, two of the horses slipped and fell into the lake. When I and others of Cortés’s Company saw that, we got safely to the other side of the bridge, and so many warriors charged on us, that despite all our good fighting, no further use could be made of the bridge.



Fearing that they would not fail to kill us, we advanced along the causeway, and we met many squadrons armed with long lances waiting for us, and they used abusive words against us, and they cried, “Oh villains, are you still alive?” and with the cuts and thrusts we gave them, we got along, although they then wounded six of those who were going along.

11. Whose point of view is this passage, (who is telling the story)?

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12. What did Cortes want? What did he make the Native Americans do?

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13. What two groups of people are fighting?

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14. Were the Aztecs successful with their resistance movement? Why or why not?

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*(Chapter 18, Spaniards and Tlaxcalans have to fight their way out of Tenochtitlan)*

When the above (war) had been done, the Spaniards attempted to find out about the special storehouse of Montezuma, and he took them to his storehouse, named Totocalco, which means bird house. The Spaniards went along joyfully, thinking that they would find much gold there, on arrival, they took everything out of Montezuma's own storehouse, where there were many previous items of gold, silver, and precious stones and they took it all. They removed all the gold and stones room the rick feathers and put the feathers in the middle of the courtyard for their friends to take.

15. What did the Spaniards take from the Aztecs, (the special storehouse of Montezuma?)

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**D. Cuauhtémoc, the Last Aztec King**

Cuauhtémoc (From The Florentine Codex)

Here it is told how the men of Tenochtitlan surrendered to the Spaniards and what happened when they were among them.

And when they had gotten to see him, (Cuauhtémoc) there, and when he was on land, all the Spaniards came to see. They came to take him. The Spaniards grasped



him by the hand, took him up to the roof and they put him in front of Cortes, the war leader. And when they had proceeded to stand him before Cortes, they looked at Cuauhtémoc, stroked his hair, and then seated him next to the Captain.

Then they fired the cannons, they hit no one, but they aimed over the common people, the shots just went over the heads of the Indians. Then they brought out a cannon, put it in a boat, and took it to the home of another Indian. When they arrived, they took it up on the



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roof. Then again they killed people, many died there. But the Aztecs only fled and the war came to an end.

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For their part, the Spaniards along every stretch of the road robbed people. They looked for gold, they cared nothing for jade. They looked for it everywhere. And the Spaniards seized and picked out beautiful women...to be raped.

And also some men were singled out-those who were strong, grown to manhood and next the young boys. They would become the messengers, their servants, their runner. On some they branded their cheeks. On some they marked the cheek or the mouth.

Cuauhtémoc Taken Prisoner *(From Cortes's Third Letter)*

They made a signal that the cacique was there, that the men might now discharge their arrows, instantly our people leaped into the canoe, and seized Cuauhtémoc and the lord of Tacuba, together with other distinguished persons that accompanied the cacique. Immediately after this occurrence the captain delivered to me on a terrace adjoining the lake, where I was standing, the cacique of the city with the other noble prisoners, who, as I bade him sit down, without showing the asperity of the manner, came up to me, and said in his own tongue, "That he had done all that was incumbent on him in defense of himself and his people, until he was reduced to his present condition, that now I might do with him as I pleased". He then laid his hand on a dagger that I wore, telling me to strike him to the heart. I spoke encouragingly to him and bade him no fears. Thus the cacique being taken a prisoner, the war ceased at this point, which it pleased God our Lord to bring to a conclusion on Tuesday, the thirteenth of August 1521. So that from the day when the city was first invested, the 30<sup>th</sup> of April in that year, until it was taken, seventy five days had elapsed, during that time your majesty will see what labors, dangers and calamities your subjects endured, and their deeds afford the best evidence how much they exposed their lives.

16. Who is Cuauhtémoc? What did he say to Cortes when he was captured?

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17. Why is August 13<sup>th</sup> 1521 an important day?

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