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# **5th Grade Social Studies (Blizzard Bag)**

## **DAY #2**

**(Only complete if we must go NTI)**

**Instructions: Read the article carefully, then answer each question in 2-3 sentences. Use details from the text to support your answers.**

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***The Spanish and the Fall of the Aztec Empire***

The first European to visit Mexico was Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba in 1517. He came from Cuba with three ships and about 100 men. When he returned to Cuba, he told stories about Mexico, which made the Spanish governor, Diego Velasquez, send another group led by Hernán Cortés.

In 1519, Cortés landed in Tabasco, Mexico. The people there told him about the powerful Aztec Empire, ruled by Moctezuma II. Cortés didn't listen to Velasquez's orders and started his own city, Veracruz, where he trained his soldiers. With about 400 men, he marched toward the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan. A native woman named Malinche helped Cortés by translating for him.

The Aztec Empire was already having problems, so Cortés made allies with some of the Aztecs' enemies, like the Tlascalans. When Cortés arrived in Tenochtitlan in November 1519, Moctezuma welcomed him. The Aztecs thought Cortés might be their god Quetzalcoatl, who they believed would return one day.

Even though the Aztecs had more soldiers, their weapons weren't as good as the Spanish ones. Cortés captured Moctezuma and took control of Tenochtitlan. The Spanish killed many Aztec nobles during a ceremony, and Moctezuma died while he was their prisoner.

The Spanish also brought diseases like smallpox, which killed many Aztecs because they had never been exposed to these illnesses before. One monk who traveled with Cortés said so many people died that entire houses were left full of bodies. By 1520, smallpox had killed nearly half the people in Tenochtitlan.

Moctezuma's nephew, Cuauhtemoc, became the new emperor. The Aztecs fought back and forced the Spanish out of the city. But Cortés got help from the Aztecs' enemies and attacked Tenochtitlan again. On August 13, 1521, Cuauhtemoc was defeated, and the Aztec Empire fell.

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After winning, Cortés destroyed Tenochtitlan and built Mexico City on its ruins. It became the main city for Europeans in the Americas.

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This summary is paraphrased from an article by The History.com Editors published on October 27, 2009 (Revised September 9th, 2020) by History.com

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- 1. Why did Hernán Cortés decide to march toward Tenochtitlan, and how did he gain help from others along the way?**

*Answer:*

- 2. What role did disease play in the fall of the Aztec Empire? Explain how it affected the Aztec people.**

*Answer:*

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3. What did Cortés do after defeating the Aztecs, and why was this important for the Spanish?

*Answer:*