

## Analyzing the Spanish Conquest of the Inca

**Directions:** Read aloud the events described below, and ask your teacher any questions you have. Then read the eight information cards your teacher gives you. Each card represents a factor that helps explain why the Spanish were able to conquer the Inca. Discuss the Critical-Thinking Question, and decide where to place each card on the spectrum below. Your group may switch the positions of the cards as many times as you would like during the discussion. Your final spectrum must have all eight cards lined up next to each other. Finally, write an explanation for your placement of the factors by completing this sentence on the back of each card: "This was a more/less important factor because..."

**1** In 1513 a group of Spaniards reached the west coast of the Isthmus of Panama under the direction of their leader Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. There an Indian chief told Balboa that far to the south lay a golden land. As Balboa prepared to find that land, some of his men killed him. Eventually, Francisco Pizarro, one of the men who had turned against Balboa, was in charge.

**2** Pizarro's first two expeditions to find the golden land failed. He did not succeed until his third expedition. Landing at Tumbez on the coast of Ecuador in 1532, he and a group of 167 men and 62 horses marched southward into Peru and into the Inca stronghold of Cajamarca, high in the Andes mountains.

**3** Pizarro convinced Atahualpa, the Inc ruler who had just emerged victorious after defeating the armies of his brother Huascar, to meet him at Cajamarca. Atahualpa, thinking the Spaniards posed little threat, led his army into the middle of deserted Cajamarca. It was a trap.

LESS IMPORTANT FACTORS

**4** The Spaniards hid behind the buildings at Cajamarca. When the Incas entered the city, the Spaniards sprung from their hiding places yelling "Santiago!" The Spanish war cry echoed off the royal buildings of Cajamarca for over two hours of bloody fighting. When the battle was finished, the victorious Spaniards held the key to the power of the vast Inca empire. Atahualpa was their captive. Pizarro threatened to execute Atahualpa if his subjects did not fill a room with gold. Within eight months, a 22 by 18 foot room 9 feet high was filled with gold. Twice as much silver was obtained. The treasure was three times greater than the Aztec treasure Cortés captured in 1521.

**5** The Spaniards did not keep their word to the Inca. Once the treasure was amassed, Pizarro ordered his men to strangle Atahualpa. Now the Spaniards started their march south to the Inca capital of Cuzco. Along the way they encountered resistance from Inca forces who did not recognize the authority of another Inca leader who had been crowned by the Spanish. Although the Inca warriors put up a fierce resistance to the Spanish invaders, they proved no match for their European opponents. The Inca warriors were terrified at the sight of well-armored Spanish fighters mounted on war-horses and were outmatched by Spanish firearms and steel swords.

**6** When the Inca rulers had been captured, the Spaniards found that the mass of Indians quickly obeyed their rule. Accustomed to loyal obedience under the complete control of the Inca empire, the Indians served their new masters unquestionably.

**Critical-Thinking Question:** Which factors were more important and which were less important in explaining why the Inca were conquered by the Spanish? Place each of your cards in the appropriate location along the spectrum to represent your answer.

MORE IMPORTANT FACTORS

