

Francisco Coronado Reading Comprehension

Name _____

Rumors of Seven Golden Cities

Francisco Coronado was a Spanish explorer who visited parts of the American southwest. He was born in Salamanca, Spain around 1510. He left home as a teenager because his parents promised their fortune to his brother. He quickly took to exploring. As governor of New Galicia (a province of New Spain in present-day Mexico), Coronado heard stories of seven golden cities along the Pacific Ocean named Cibola and quickly assembled a simultaneous land and sea expedition. The cities were said to contain houses made out of gold and streets paved with gold. Coronado and a friend, Antonio Mendoza, invested large sums of money in the expedition. In 1540, Coronado, Mendoza, 335 Spaniards, 1300 natives, and four Franciscan monks headed north for the purposes of taking the gold from the Seven Cities of Cibola.

The Search

Coronado divided the expedition into small groups that would begin the arduous inland journey at different intervals so that the grazing areas and water holes along the trail would not be overwhelmed. Coronado and the expedition first crossed into present-day America by following the Zuni River into Cibola (present day New Mexico). Coronado expected to find the fabled seven cities, but instead, found little more than a complex of Zuni Indian pueblos. Nevertheless, a devastated Coronado and his half-starving expedition pushed on into present-day Arizona, where they entered Zuni Indian territory at Hawikuh and demanded entrance into the village. When the Zuni refused, the men of the expedition took their village by force and confiscated all of the food they needed. This incident intimidated Indians of nearby villages, who quickly submitted to the demands of Coronado in future encounters.

Discovery of the Grand Canyon

From Hawikuh, Coronado sent several scouting parties to search for the Seven Cities of Cibola. The first scouting party raided a Hopi Indian Village, that turned out to be as poor as the Zuni villages. Although no gold was discovered, members of the expedition learned of the Colorado River that was located to the west. Coronado then sent a second scouting party to find the Colorado River. Members of this scouting party became the first to find the Colorado River and the magnificent Grand Canyon. Unfortunately, the expedition was unsuccessful in descending the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River, and thus could not link up with the water expedition. They next headed east where they encountered another pueblo village along the Rio Grande in New Mexico. It was near this village called Tiguex, close to present-day Albuquerque, where Coronado and his expedition spent the winter of 1540-1541. During the winter, Coronado clashed with Indians from the village in what came to be known as the Tiguex War. As a result of the war, hundreds of Indians were killed and the pueblo village was destroyed.

Still, No Golden Cities!

During the winter of 1540-1541, Coronado once again heard of a mythical city to the northeast known as Quivira that was said to be full of gold and riches. Coronado and his expedition traveled hundreds

of miles to the village of Quivira in present-day Kansas. Once again, Coronado suffered a crushing disappointment when he found the village and there was no gold. Coronado returned to Tiguex and spent another winter there. On June 29, 1541, Coronado held the first ever Christian mass in the interior of the present-day United States near Dodge City, Kansas. The event is commemorated with a large concrete cross known as Coronado's Cross.

Death in Disgrace

Coronado was soon ordered back to New Spain (Mexico). He remained the governor of New Galicia, but his expeditions had bankrupted him. He died on September 22, 1544, in Mexico City.

1. Which of the following best explains Coronado's motivations to find Cibola?

- a) Wealth and riches
- b) Fame and glory
- c) Power and success
- d) Death and conquest

2. What does Coronado's Cross represent?

- a) A bloody conflict
- b) A religious milestone
- c) A metaphorical crossroads
- d) An unforgiving winter

3. Which statement about Coronado's journey is best supported by the passage?

- a) If Coronado had looked for longer, it is likely he would have found Cibola.
- b) Coronado made his travels as one united group.
- c) Cibola was likely located in the southeast rather than southwest.
- d) Coronado's expeditions had negative consequences for several native tribes.

4. Which location did Coronado visit first?

- a) New Mexico
- b) Kansas
- c) Dodge City
- d) Arizona

5. Was Coronado's choice to split up exploration groups successful?

- a) Yes, because they covered more ground and eventually found Cibola.
- b) Yes, because some groups were untrustworthy.
- c) No, because the divided groups were less effective at survival.
- d) No, because one of the groups was immediately decimated by natives.

6. Which best describes Coronado's state at the conclusion of his journey?

- a) Bankrupted and an outcast
- b) Successful and renowned
- c) Excommunicated for religious treason
- d) Broke, but with political power

7. Which was not a challenge faced by Coronado during his expedition?

- a) Fights with native communities
- b) Problems with crossing the natural terrain
- c) An excess of inedible food
- d) Crushing disappointment

-----Key-----

1. (a)
2. (b)
3. (d)
4. (a)
5. (c)
6. (d)
7. (c)

-----Key-----

1. (a)
2. (a)
3. (c)
4. (c)
5. (b)
6. (d)
7. (b)

-----Key-----

1. (b)
2. (d)
3. (b)
4. (a)
5. (c)
6. (a)
7. (d)