

Constructed response writing assignment: Cortes vs. The Aztecs. After reading an article and watching four video segments on Discovery Education.com, each student had to write an on demand paragraph that explained how Cortes was able to defeat the Aztecs. The students needed to be able to read a passage, take notes, listen and watch video segments carefully and create an organized written response. Students are expected to complete all task specific requirements for the response. There were four reasons why Cortes was able to defeat the Aztecs: Military advantages, diseases, belief that Cortes was a “god,” and Native American allies. For example: what were the military advantages & how did the Spanish put those advantages to use; what were the diseases & why did disease have a negative impact on the Aztecs; why did the Aztecs think (there were a couple of examples) of Cortes as a “god;” why would other native tribes be willing to assist Cortes.

Here are a few samples.

Sarah G.

Cortes was able to defeat the Aztecs because he had many advantages. One advantage that he had was horses and weapons. To fight the Aztecs, the Spanish brought with them guns, horses, and cannons and the Aztecs had never seen them before. Another example of how Cortes and his army were able to defeat the Aztecs is that they carried disease. The Aztecs bodies had never been exposed to European diseases, so their bodies were not immune to them, and that caused them to become sick. A third reason how the Spanish defeated the Aztecs is that the Aztecs thought that the Spanish were gods. The Aztecs believed that white men with beards are gods, and the Spanish were white and had beards, so the Aztecs didn't fight as hard. And finally, the last reason why Cortes and his men defeated the Aztecs is that Cortes had allies. The Aztecs had many enemies because they attacked a lot of kingdoms and captured their people, so these kingdoms agreed to help Cortes defeat the Aztecs. Even though the Aztecs put up a good fight to try and save their kingdom, the Spanish had the resources to defeat them.

Dan H.

Cortes' was able to Defeat the Aztecs because he had many advantages that gave him a huge hand up over the Aztecs. First of all, Cortes and his men had superior weapons and armor, which included guns, cannons, and iron armor which was very good protection against the Aztecs' arrows and spears. Also, Cortes' was thought to be the god king Quetzalcoatl, so the Aztecs hesitated at attacking them. Another reason would be that the Aztecs had never seen horses, and they were frightened by the mounted Spanish soldiers. Lastly, and historians say would have probably gave Cortes victory alone, was that many of the Aztecs were infected by European diseases, like small pox and measles. These are some of the many advantages that Cortes was able to defeat the mighty Aztec empire. Another advantage in Cortes favor was that he and his men had the European Fight -to-kill style that the Aztecs did not use. The Aztecs way of fighting was to try to capture the enemy instead of killing them the way the Spanish did. With this fighting style, the Spanish were able to use more brutality to get a greater kill rate on the Aztecs. For these reasons, Cortes had the advantages over the Aztecs, and he was able to defeat them.

Ella H.

Cortez was able to defeat the Aztec nation because of his strong army, weapons, armor, and horses. The Aztecs did not expect the Spaniards and were not very prepared when it comes to war. The Spaniards had a very strong military system consisting of over 600 men. When the Spanish arrived to the capital of the Aztec nation, Tenochtitlan, it was easy for them to strike because the Aztec people were already suffering from Small Pox. With the people weakened Cortez was able to put up a good fight; however the people of Tenochtitlan were very determined not to lose. But once the Spanish brought in their horses the Aztecs were stunned. They had never seen a person riding on a horse and they thought it was some sort of a six-legged, two-headed creature. Because of this, the Spanish automatically had a huge advantage on the Aztec army. The Spaniards were also put ahead with their armor and weapons. The Aztecs only had bows and arrows and that was not enough to even compete with cannons and guns. Moctezuma, the Aztec ruler was at first tricked by the Spanish because he thought that Cortez was a god that came to their land. They then showered the Spanish with gold and food that was greatly needed for the Spanish survival. Because of all the gold Cortez received he knew there was more which made him want to take over the Aztecs even more than before. In conclusion, it was easy for Cortez to take over because of the horses, weapons, and his strong army.

Alexa L.

There are many reasons Cortes was able to defeat the Aztec nation. The first reason Cortes was able to defeat the Aztecs was that they had things that the Aztecs didn't. For example the Spaniards had horses that scared the Aztecs because the Aztecs had never seen them before. They thought that the horse and the man were one person. Another advantage thing that the Spaniards had were guns and canons. Spears and clubs were no match for the canons and guns that the Spaniards had. Also the noise scared the Aztecs and other Native Americans because they had never seen guns and canons before. A third thing that the Spanish had that the Aztecs didn't was smallpox. The Spanish brought smallpox over from Europe. Smallpox was very common in Europe and most of them were immune. The Aztecs weren't immune and many were killed by it and the Aztec army was greatly weakened. The second reason the Spaniards were able to defeat the Aztecs was the Spaniards made powerful allies unlike the Aztecs which were not liked. The Spaniards met and defeated two other tribes- the Tabascins and the Tlaxcala's. The Spaniards were aided with resources and were supplied with the native troops. The tribes new the area and were enemies of the Aztecs. Another ally of Cortes was Mailinai. She was a slave given to the Spaniards by the Tabascins as a peace offering along with other female slaves, food and water. Mailinali was an advisor to Cortes. She also acted as a translator between the Spanish and the other tribes because she picked up on Spanish really fast. A third reason why the Spanish were able to defeat the Aztecs was that the Spanish fought in a different style then most of the tribes. The Spanish fought to kill, but most tribes fought to injure, and then bring back the opposing army to sell as slaves and be rewarded. The fourth and final reason the Spanish defeated the Aztecs was that the Aztecs didn't fight as hard as they could of at the beginning. The Aztecs thought the Spaniards were Gods, so they wanted to respect them. The Spaniards were treated like Gods because in the Aztec religion there was a prophecy that said that their Gods would come and they were white bearded men. The Spanish ability to conquer the Aztecs was because of many things.