

**AGE OF DISCOVERY:
SPAIN: PIZARRO AND
THE CONQUEST OF THE
INCAS 1531-32**



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Description

How were the Spanish able to conquer the Incas so easily? What advantages did the Spanish have over the Incas in terms of technology? Why did Atahualpa discount the threat posed by Pizarro and the Spanish? Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students here will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of how and why the Spanish were able to conquer the Inca Empire of Peru, why the Indians (especially Chief Atahualpa) discounted the Spanish threat until it was too late, and finally what the legacy of the conquest meant for the native population of Peru then and today.

Subjects

European History
World History
US History
Spanish

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Lima, Peru
- Cuzco, Peru
- Urubamba Valley, Peru

Essential Questions

- Who was Francisco Pizarro? Why did Pizarro covet Peru?
- What was the Incan empire? Who was Atahualpa?
- What conditions in the Inca Empire left it ripe for conquest by the late 16th century?
- How was Pizarro able to conquer the Inca Empire with less than 200 conquistadores under his command?
- How was the Andes region changed, both in the short term and in the long term, as a result of the Spanish takeover of the Inca Empire?

Academic Summary

The Governor had ordered his troops to be distributed in the three halls which were in the open court-yard, in form of a triangle; and he ordered them to be mounted and armed until the intentions of Atahualpa were known. Having pitched his tents, Atahualpa sent a messenger to the Governor to say that as it was now late he wished to sleep where he was, and that he would come in the morning. The Governor sent back to beg him to come at once, because he was waiting for supper, and that he should not sup until Atahualpa should come. The messengers came back to ask the Governor to send a Christian to Atahualpa, that he intended to come at once, and that he would come unarmed. The Governor sent a Christian, and presently Atahualpa moved, leaving the armed men behind him. He took with him about five or six thousand Indians without arms, except that, under their shirts, they had small darts and slings with stones. He came in a litter, and before him went three or four hundred Indians in liveries, cleaning the straws from the road and singing. Then came Atahualpa in the midst of his chiefs and principal men, the greatest among them being also borne on men's shoulders. When they entered the open space, twelve or fifteen Indians went up to the little fortress that was there and occupied it, taking possession with a banner fixed on a lance. When Atahualpa had advanced to the centre of an open space, he stopped, and a Dominican friar, who was with the Governor, came forward to tell him, on the part of the Governor, that he waited for him in his lodging, and that he was sent to speak with him. The friar then told Atahualpa that he was a priest, and that he was sent there to teach the things of the faith if they should desire to be Christians. He showed Atahualpa a book which he carried in his hands, and told him that that book contained the things of God. Atahualpa asked for the book, and threw it on the ground, saying: "I will not leave this place until you have restored all that you have taken in my land. I know well who you are and what you have come for." Then he rose up in his litter and addressed his men, and there were murmurs among them and calls to those who were armed. The friar went to the Governor and reported what was being done and that no time was to be lost. The Governor sent to me; and I had arranged with the captain of the artillery that, when a sign was given, he should discharge his pieces, and that, on hearing the reports, all the troops should come forth at once. This was done, and as the Indians were unarmed they were defeated without danger to any Christian. Those who carried the litter and the chiefs who surrounded Atahualpa were all killed, falling round him. The Governor came out and seized Atahualpa, and in protecting him he received a knife-cut from a Christian in the hand. The troops continued the pursuit as far as the place where the armed Indians were stationed, who made no resistance whatever, because it was now night. All were brought into the town where the Governor was quartered.

Next morning the Governor ordered us to go to the camp of Atahualpa, where we found forty thousand castellanos and four or five thousand marcos of silver. The camp was as full of people as if none were wanting. All the people were assembled, and the Governor desired them to go to their homes, and told them that he had not come to do them harm; that what he had done was by reason of the pride of Atahualpa, and that he himself ordered it. On asking Atahualpa why he had thrown away the book and shown so much pride, he answered that his captain, who had been sent to speak with the Governor, had told him that the Christians were not warriors, that the horses were unsaddled at night, and that with two hundred Indians he could defeat them all. He added that this captain and the chief of San Miguel had deceived him. The Governor then inquired concerning his brother the Cuzco, and he answered that he would arrive next day, that he was being brought as a prisoner, and that his captain remained with the troops in the town of Cuzco. It afterward turned out that in all this he had spoken the truth, except that he had sent orders for his brother to be killed, lest the Governor should restore him to his lordship. The Governor said that he had not come to make war on the Indians, but that our lord the Emperor, who was lord of the whole world, had ordered him to come that he might see the land, and let Atahualpa know the things of our faith, in case he should wish to become a Christian. The Governor also told him that that land and all other lands belonged to the Emperor, and that he must acknowledge him as his lord. He replied that he was content, and, observing that the Christians had collected some gold, Atahualpa said to the Governor that they need not take such care of it, as if there was so little; for that he could give them ten thousand plates, and that he could fill the room in which he was up to a white line, which was the height of a man and a half from the floor. The room was seventeen or eighteen feet wide and thirty-five feet long. He said that he could do this in two months.

From Hernando Pizarro (brother of Francisco Pizarro) "Conquest of the Indians", Reports on the Discovery of Peru, Clements R. Markham, tr. and ed. London: Hakluyt Society, 1872

On 16 Nov 1532, after months of diplomacy, espionage and planning, 168 Spanish conquistadores led by Francisco Pizarro attacked an unarmed group of Incan warriors numbering over 3000. The so-called "Battle of Cajamarca" quickly turned into a massacre. By the end of the day, over 2000 Incan lay dead. Another 5000 were taken as prisoners, including Atahualpa, the Incan chief. Within a few months, the entire Incan empire was under Spanish control, Atahualpa was executed (by garroting), but only after he had accepted Christianity, and the Spanish had begun to colonize and exploit their newly conquered territory. As it was elsewhere in the New World, the long-term effect on the Incan population was devastating. By the early 17th century, most of the native population in the Central Andes had died from disease (mostly smallpox, but measles as well). Those that survived often ended up in some form of slavery, including Atahualpa's wife Cuxirimay (who was 10 years old at the time of the chief's death). By 1538, now Dona Angelina (Cuxirimay's Christian name after her conversion) was Pizarro's mistress, eventually bearing him two sons.

How were the Spanish able to conquer the Inca Empire so easily? What advantages did the Spanish have over the Incas in terms of technology? Why did Atahualpa discount the threat posed by Pizarro and the Spanish? Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students here will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of how and why the Spanish were able to conquer the Inca Empire of Peru, why the Indians (especially Chief Atahualpa) discounted the Spanish threat until it was too late, and finally what the legacy of the conquest meant for the native population of Peru then and today.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire in Peru.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the advantages the Spanish had in their interaction with the Incan empire.
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain why the Inca chief Atahualpa discounted the Spanish threat until it was too late.
4. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the short and long term consequences of the Spanish takeover in Peru, both for the native population and for outsiders coming into the Andes region.

Procedures

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: Why did the conquistadores come to the New World after Columbus? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Early European Explorers (15 min)
- Video – History's Turning Points: Conquest of the Incas (25 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire, taking notes as appropriate. (20 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles and sources for homework before class.
- Group Activity – Socratic Seminar: Discussion on how and why the Spanish were able to conquer the Inca Empire of Peru, why the Indians (especially Chief Atahualpa) discounted the Spanish threat until it was too late, and finally what the legacy of the conquest meant for the native population of Peru then and today. (15 min)

III. Closure

- Assessment / DBQ – Essay: Explain in detail how and why the Spanish were able to conquer the Inca Empire of Peru, why the Indians discounted the Spanish threat until it was too late, and what the legacy of the conquest meant for the native population of Peru then and today.

Extension

On tour: Monument of Francisco Pizarro (Parque de la Muralla, Rimac District, Lima)

While on tour, students can visit the Parque de la Muralla in Lima's Rimac district, where they can see a statue of Pizarro. Created by American sculptor Ramsey MacDonald in the 1930s, the monument originally stood in front of the National Cathedral, but was moved in 2004 to the Parque de la Muralla (by the Government Palace) in response to a decades-long struggle by indigenous and mixed-raced groups who saw Pizarro as a criminal who mercilessly conquered the Incan civilization and forcibly imposed Spanish culture on Peru. In some ways, the statue itself stands as a monument not just to Pizarro, but to the struggle for identity present in Latin America since the Spanish conquest.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- www.highplainschautauqua.org/francisco-pizarro.aspx
Francisco Pizarro (website) – from High Plains Chautauqua
- www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Pizarro.html
Hernando Pizarro on the Conquest of the Incas (primary source) – from Nicholas CJ Pappas, Professor of history at Sam Houston State University (TX)
- www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/1540cieza.asp
Pedro de Cieza de Leon: Chronicles of the Incas, 1540 (primary source) – from the Modern History Sourcebook at Fordham University
- www.heritage-history.com/www/heritage.php?Dir=wars&FileName=wars_incas.php
Spanish Conquest of Peru (website) – from Heritage History
- www.spanishwars.net/16th-century-conquest-inca-empire.html
The Conquest of the Inca Empire (website)
- www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/eurvoya/inca.html
The Conquest of the Inca Empire: Francisco Pizarro (website) – from the University of Calgary (Canada)
- www.history.com/this-day-in-history/pizarro-executes-last-inca-emperor
This Day in History: Pizarro Executes Last Inca Emperor (website) – from the History Channel
- www.meridianschools.org/LHMS/Teachers/LP/millerkaren/Lists/Calendar/Attachments/56/Conquest%20of%20the%20Incas%20PowerPoint.pdf
Conquest of the Incas: Pizarro vs. Atahualpa (PowerPoint in PDF form) – from Karen Miller, social studies / history teacher at joint School District No. 2, Boise, Idaho.
- www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes. From Shilpa Duvor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMXMIIBg0bE
History's Turning Points: Conquest of the Incas (video) – from the History Channel. 25 minutes in length.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCBod2jFFyQ
Guns, Germs and Steel – EP2: Conquest (2005) – video from Jared Diamond's critically and academically acclaimed program of the same name. Dr. Diamond, professor of geography and history at UCLA, wrote a book (of the same name) in 1997 in which he argued against the idea that European dominance of the globe over the centuries was due to any type of intellectual or genetic superiority, but rather to environmental differences. In this episode (from the 2005 National Geographic documentary), Diamond examines the story behind the Spanish conquest of the Incas. This episode is 55 minutes, and therefore may be too long for many in-class activities (although it is well worth it). Highly recommended for students and teachers.

Background Information

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Pizarro
"Francisco Pizarro" – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_conquest_of_the_Inca_Empire
"Spanish Conquest of the Inca Empire" – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atahualpa
"Atahualpa" – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cajamarca
"Battle of Cajamarca" – Wikipedia article

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/columbus-1492
Spain and the Age of Discovery – Columbus 1492

Key Terms

- Atahualpa
- Conquest
- Conquistadores
- Incas
- New World
- Peru
- Pizarro

