

Montezuma II

(circa 1466-1520)



The Europeans at first supposed that all the people in the Americas were wild and savage, because of the reports by Leif Ericson and Columbus. But this was not so; for in Mexico there were Aztec Indians, who had fine houses and a well built city. In this city lived little Prince Montezuma.

Mexico

Aztec

Montezuma

Montezuma's palace was as grand as those in Spain. He dressed in robes of beautiful colors, and wore

rings upon his fingers and bracelets upon his wrists, and around his neck were strings of beautiful shells. No boy in the city could shoot an arrow or throw a spear as well as he. And when the boys played at games, he was the most skilful of them all.



On the map above, color Mexico red.

These Aztec people were proud of their prince and of their fine city, Tenochtitlan, with its high walls and its temples studded with pearls and precious stones. The city was built on

an island in a great lake. Across the lake were fine bridges. There were so many of them that they looked like the spokes of a great wheel, with the city at the hub.

Tenochtitlan

- 1. The city of Tenochtitlan was built on a/an ____.**
- a. island**
 - b. mountain**
 - c. peninsula**
 - d. valley**

When Prince Montezuma was born, he was placed in a little cradle and kept there for three days. Everybody came to look at him and to admire him, but no one except his nurse was allowed to touch him until after the fourth day.

On the fourth day, the little prince was taken up by his nurse and given his first bath, for now he was to have a name.

After he was bathed and wrapped in a beautiful robe, the nurse

carried him into a great hall in the palace.

"This child shall be called Montezuma," the nurse cried in a loud voice. Then three boys, who had been chosen because they had loud voices, shouted three times, "Montezuma! Montezuma! Montezuma!" In this way, the little prince was named.

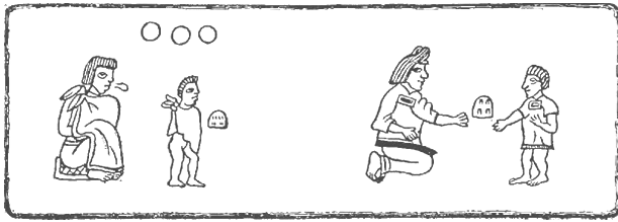
- 2. Montezuma was named on the ____ day.**

- a. first**
- b. second**
- c. third**
- d. fourth**

The birth of a prince was a great event to the Aztec people; so they made pictures of Montezuma when he lay in his cradle and when he was being named.

They were so pleased with Montezuma, that they went on making pictures of him until he was a warrior grown. On the next page is a picture of the little prince when he was three years old. We know that he was three years old by the three circles. The man in the picture is his father. The half-circle shows that his father is telling

Montezuma that he is now old enough to eat bread; but that he must eat only half a roll. The mother in the picture is showing one of the little princesses her half-roll.



Next is a picture of Montezuma's father, and of Montezuma when he was four years old. His father is teaching him to carry a basket so that he may grow to be a useful boy. You see that he is now allowed to eat a whole roll. The little girl, also, is being taught by her mother to do some useful work.



Here is still another picture of Montezuma and his father. Montezuma is now five years old. His father is teaching him to carry on his back a heavy weight hanging from his head.

This is to make his muscles grow strong, so that he will hold up his head as a strong lad should. The little princess is now learning to use the spinning wheel.



3. What is the little princess learning to use?



In the next picture, Montezuma is seven years old. His father is teaching him to fish with a net; for of course, a prince must never be idle. Then, too, he must know how to do everything that his people know how to do. The princess has learned to use

the spinning wheel, and now each of the children has a roll and a half a day.

Sometimes Montezuma did not behave very well. Here is a picture of his father threatening the young prince with punishment. Do you see those little sharp thorns in the picture? The father will stick them into Montezuma's shoulders if he is not a good boy. See the tears running down Montezuma's face! He is promising his father that he will be good, and that he will never do so again if his father will spare him this time. If the princess is not a good girl, her punishment will be a thorn in her hand.



punishment

But alas! Poor little Montezuma! He must have forgotten his promise; for here is another picture which tells

us how one day when he was nine years old, Montezuma's father did punish him with the thorns. And the princess must have been doing something wrong, for she, too, is being punished.



The little thing like a tongue in front of the faces in the picture is meant to show that the father and mother are speaking.

The Aztecs kept the story of what their people did by means of pictures which they painted upon the walls of the temples. Some of the walls were covered with pictures. From time to time, the priests explained them to Prince Montezuma.

"Surely a prince must know the story of his own people," the priests would say.

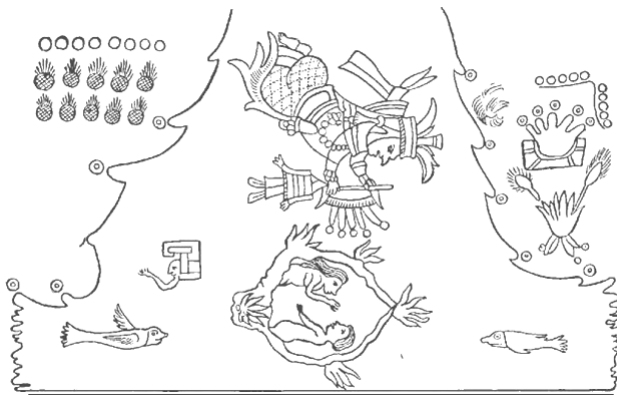
There was one group of pictures that Montezuma liked very much. The group told of four terrible plagues

which once came upon the Aztecs, and destroyed nearly all the people.

plague

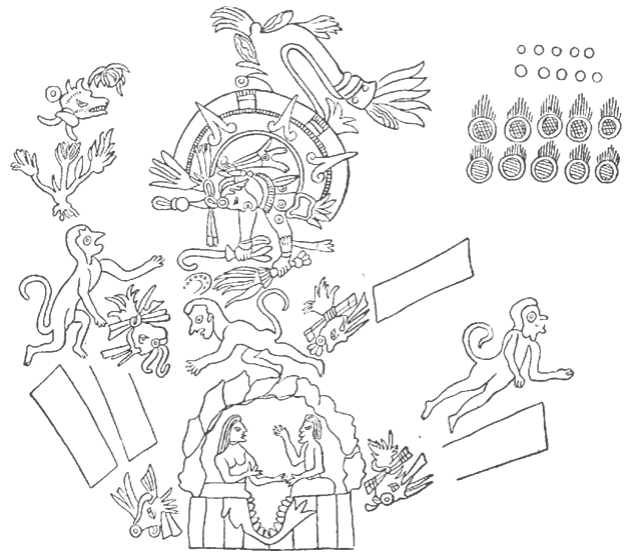
The prince studied these story pictures until he could repeat them as well as the priests.

Here are the four pictures, and here is the story as little Montezuma used to tell it:



"The first picture tells of a great flood that came to destroy my people. Those who were not drowned were changed to fishes. I see the rain god at the top of the picture pouring water from the rain-making machine down upon my people. But one man and one woman escaped, and hid in a cave; and

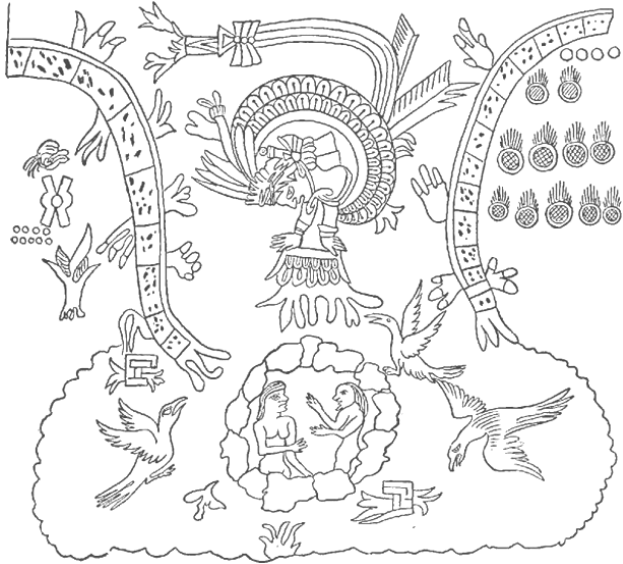
so my people were saved a first time. After this there was peace in my land for four thousand eight years. I know that by the circles in the corner of the picture; for each little circle means one year, and each of the larger, blacker circles means four hundred years.



4. Write four thousand eight using numerals.

"The second picture tells of a great wind that came to destroy my people. Some of them were at this time changed into monkeys with long tails. But again one man and one woman hid from the wind god, and so my people were saved a second time. Then there

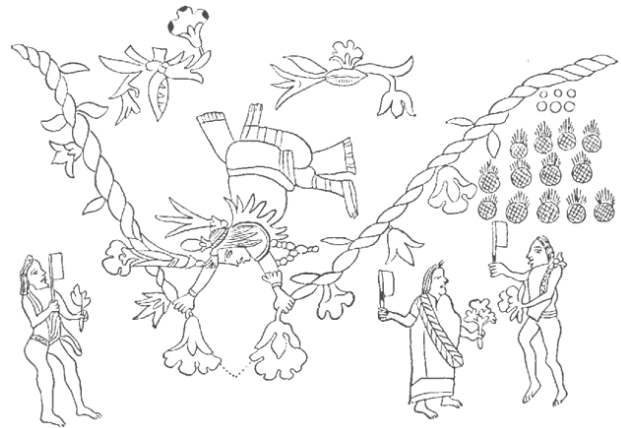
was peace in my land for four thousand ten years, as I can read from the circles in the corner of the picture.



5. Write four thousand ten using numerals.

"The third picture tells of a great fire that came to destroy my people. At the top of the picture is the fire god with his fan in his hand. Flames are coming out of his head, and his tail is a long line of fire. But again one man and one woman hid in a cave, and so my people were saved a third time. Then there was peace in my land for four thousand four hundred four years, as I

can read from the circles in the corner of the picture.



6. Write four thousand four hundred four using numerals.

7. Where did the people hide during the great fire?

- a. airplane
- b. cave
- c. lake
- d. mountain

"The fourth picture tells of a great famine that came to destroy my people. In the picture I see the famine god reaching down to snatch away the grain and fruit of the earth. But the famine god did not get all of the grain and fruit. The reapers saved enough to

keep them from starving, and so my people were saved a fourth time. After this, there was peace in my land for five thousand two hundred and six years, as I can read from the circles in the corner of the picture.”

8. List the four plagues.

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By and by, when Montezuma grew to be a man, he was made king over the Aztec people. He no longer played with the boys of the city, but sat upon a golden throne in a grand hall. He wore a golden crown upon his head and sat in a golden chair, and his feet rested upon a golden stool.

You should have seen Montezuma when he ate his dinner. First his servants came and stood before the throne, then each servant offered some dainty dish to the king. The king looked at the dishes and

chose the one he liked best by pointing at it with a long golden rod. Then the servant placed the dish upon a golden table and the other servants turned and went away. Then Montezuma sat in a golden chair at the golden table, and ate his dinner from a golden plate, all by himself.

servant

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Montezuma proved to be a good, kind king. His people loved him and were happy.

One day, some Spanish ships came to the country of the Aztecs, what is now called Mexico. The natives were afraid when they saw the ships coming toward the shore. "What can these strange things be?" they asked each other.

9. Ships came to Mexico from ____.

a. England

b. Portugal

c. Spain

"They have wings."

"And there are white men in the towers!" Then the people ran to tell King Montezuma what had happened.

"I will send presents to these strangers," said he. "But tell them that they must not come into my city."

The Spaniards did not care for what the king said, but marched straight on until they came to Montezuma's wonderful Aztec city, Tenochtitlan.

"There must be much gold in this city," said the Spaniards. "We will take it." And they began at once to fight with the Aztecs.

The Aztecs fought well, for they were brave and they loved their city. But the Spaniards had guns and gunpowder, which made them stronger in battle than the Aztecs.

Soon Montezuma was killed, and the city fell into the hands of the Spaniards. They broke into the houses and the temples, hoping to find great treasure; but the Aztecs had hidden it away.

"Bring the son of this King Montezuma to us," said the Spaniards.

The young prince was brought.

"Where have you hidden the treasure?" the Spaniards cried.

But the brave prince would not tell.

"Speak! Or we will burn you with red-hot irons."

Still not a word from the brave son of King Montezuma.

The hot irons were brought.

"Will you tell us where the treasure is?" the Spaniards asked again.

"Never!" cried the prince.

Then the Spaniards burned him with the red-hot irons as they had said they would. Still he would not tell where the treasure was.

"Stone him!"

"Lash him!"

"Pierce him with the sabres!" cried the Spanish soldiers.

But to the very end, the prince would not tell, and the Spaniards went away without any treasure.

Spaniards

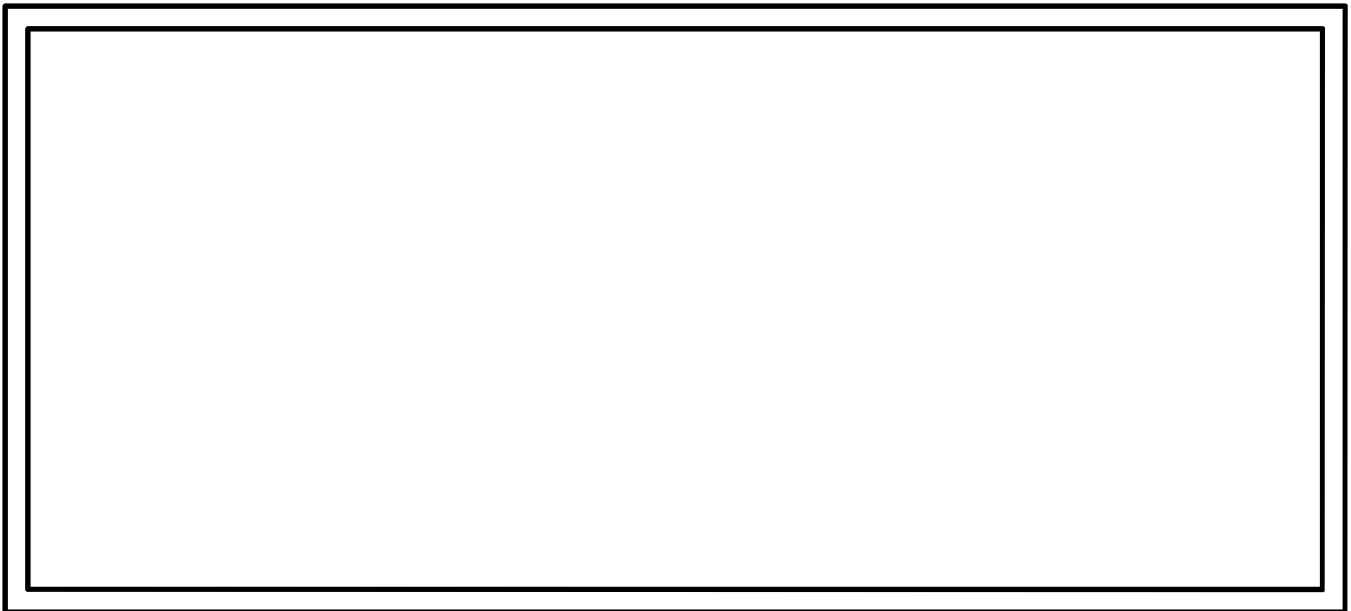
"We have found a great city," was all the Spanish leader, Hernán Cortés, could say.

Find each term in the word search puzzle.



- Aztec
- famine
- fire
- flood
- gold
- Hernan Cortes
- Mexico
- Montezuma
- plagues
- Spaniards
- Tenochtitlan
- wind

Illustrate a scene from the life of Montezuma.



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