

## **Lesson 2: The Meeting—Spaniards and Aztec/Mexica**

**Duration:** Two Sessions 45min.—1hr.

**Objective:** The objective of this lesson is to introduce the students to information on the meeting between the conquistadors and the native people of Mexico. Students will examine a map and drawings depicting different events, noting similarities and differences between the two cultures as depicted in the drawings. Students will also label and illustrate in order a three-panel series depicting any of the historical events, as learned through discussion and reading. This helps with sequencing and allows for different learning styles.

### **Materials:**

- *Do New Mexico*, by Amy Headley and Victoria Smith
- Drawing of Cortez meeting the Aztec/Mexica
- Drawing of battle between Spaniards and Aztec/Mexica
- Primary Source Map and rendition of Tenochtitlan
- Map Analysis worksheet
- Venn Diagram template
- 4”X12” strips of white construction paper

**Lesson:** This lesson will begin with a 5-10 min. review of Lesson One, including highlights of book and revisit the map. I will write a quick brainstorming list of new information learned, as elicited from students. We can refer back to this or add to it as we go.

Next, we will read and discuss pgs. 38,39 in *Do New Mexico*, to gain basic content knowledge of the Aztec/Mexica culture and results of their encounter with Hernan Cortes and the conquistadors. Since the authors fail to mention Moctezuma as the leader of the Aztec/Mexica, I plan to have students write in his name in the text. We will also read a one-page biography on Cortes.

We will do a whole group analysis of Cortes’ map of Tenochtitlan, using a map analysis worksheet, and look at a rendition of the city at its peak, as the Spaniards may have seen it.

Students will then break into groups of 2-4 to look at drawings. There will be a quick review of primary and secondary sources, and I will also have the drawings on the overhead (yes, we still use overheads with great frequency!). Initially we will look at the drawings together, analyzing the action. I will give them some background on the drawings as well. Then each group of students will have the two drawings, and they will use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast.

We will then share the diagram information on the overhead, with groups able to make corrections or add information as needed. This will act as a group assessment.

The final assessment for this lesson will consist of individual students creating a series of illustrations depicting contact between the Spaniards and the natives. Each drawing must have a caption or label giving a brief description of the events, in order. I will screen for historical accuracy.

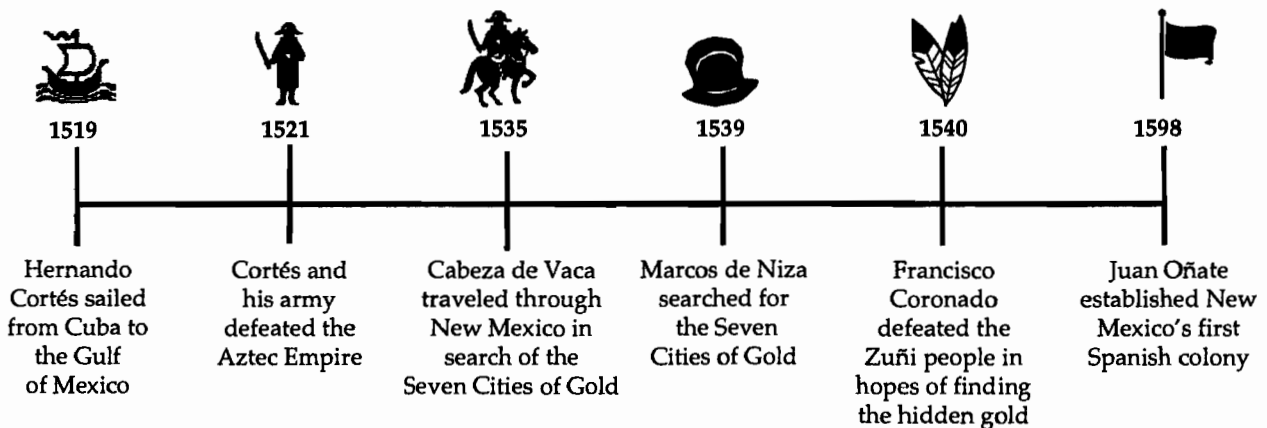
**ELL Support:** This activity lends itself well to ELL, because there is group work involved, with a certain amount of modeling. The illustrated information works for any student, and instead of writing a complete caption about the events, just key names and vocabulary could be used.



# SPANISH IN NEW MEXICO



You have just finished reading about New Mexico's early Native Americans. Until the 1530s, Native Americans were the only groups of people living in New Mexico. In fact, the only people living in all of North America were Native Americans. In the 1500s, things began to change for the Native Americans. They were visited by people they had never seen before. These strange visitors were interested in making changes in the Native Americans' way of life. Who were these people and what did they want? In order to understand, it is important to travel back to the 1500s, to the country of Mexico. Study the time line below to help you on your journey.



## THE AZTEC EMPIRE

In the 1500s, the Aztec people lived along the Gulf of Mexico, just south of New Mexico's Native Americans. The Aztecs were fearless warriors who created a huge **empire** that included many cities and towns. They built this empire by **defeating** other groups of people. The Aztecs would take control of their land and make them pay yearly taxes. Warfare was considered a religious duty by the Aztecs. Prisoners taken during war were **sacrificed** to the gods. The Aztecs created their own calendar, built large temples for religious ceremonies, and created huge **sculptures**.

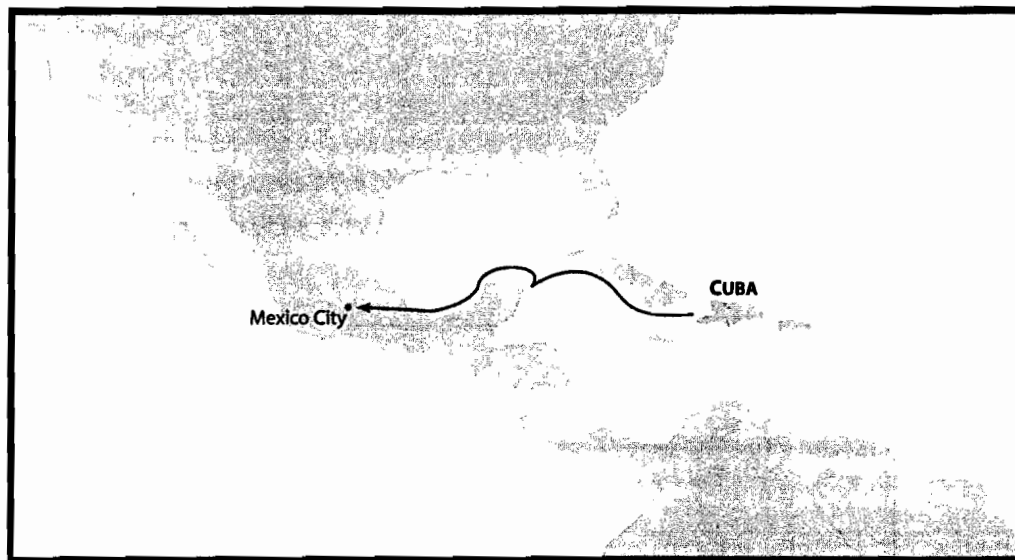
## AZTEC FARMERS

The Aztecs were farmers who practiced slash-and-burn **agriculture**. They chopped down trees and burned a section of forest, then planted crops in the clearing. The ashes from the burned trees **fertilized** the soil. Aztec farmers also dug canals to irrigate their crops. They turned **shallow** lakes into farmland by scooping up mud from the lake bottoms to form islands. The seeds were planted in the islands. Wet mud was added regularly to water the crops.

## HERNANDO CORTÉS

In 1519, a Spanish soldier named Hernando Cortés was sent from Cuba to the Gulf of Mexico. Cortés was instructed by Cuba's rulers to explore the area known as Mexico, trade with the people found there, and bring slaves back to Cuba. He was given a few weapons, 16 horsemen, and 400 soldiers for his journey.

When his ship landed in Mexico, Hernando Cortés disobeyed the instructions of Cuba's rulers. He didn't plan to explore, trade, or take slaves back to Cuba. He decided instead to take control of Mexico and set up an empire for himself. Cortés was able to easily recruit Native Americans who had been defeated by the Aztecs and were being forced to pay taxes to them. It took three months and 300 miles for Cortés and his large army of volunteers to reach the capital of the Aztec Empire.



## DEFEATING THE AZTECS

Hernando Cortés was greeted warmly by the Aztec **emperor**. He was given expensive gifts and welcomed into the emperor's home. The emperor had no idea what Hernando Cortés had planned. Cortés immediately took the emperor prisoner and demanded that the Aztec's pay a **ransom** for the emperor's safe return. The Aztecs began collecting treasures to pay the ransom, but the plan fell apart after the emperor was struck in the head with a rock and died.

After the death of their emperor, the Aztecs attacked Cortés and his army. Cortés fought back and formed a **blockade** around the entire city. The Aztecs were unable to get food or water. Thousands of Aztecs starved to death or died from disease. After the defeat, Cortés and his army destroyed the Aztec buildings and built Mexico City right on top of the ruins.

Hernando Cortés became a wealthy man. More importantly, he helped **expand** the Spanish empire in America by taking control of Mexico. The Spanish named their empire New Spain. Soon, the power of New Spain would be felt by the Native Americans in New Mexico and the rest of the Southwest.

	<h1>EXPLORERS</h1> <h2>OF THE MILLENNIUM</h2> <p>• the greatest adventurers of the past thousand years •</p>			
<a href="#">HOME</a>	<a href="#">TIMELINE</a>	<a href="#">HALL of FAME</a>	<a href="#">LINKS</a>	<a href="#">BIBLIOGRAPHY</a>

## HERNÁN CORTÉS (1485-1547)

Hernán Cortés was a Spanish explorer who is famous mainly for his march across Mexico and his conquering of the Aztec Empire in Mexico.

Cortés was born in the Spanish city of Medellín in 1485. When he was a young man, he studied law, but he soon gave that up to seek his fortune in the New World that was just being discovered by Columbus and others.

First he went to the island of Santo Domingo (now known as the Dominican Republic) in 1504. He was only 19 years old at the time. He stayed there for seven years, then took part in the Spanish conquest of Cuba in 1511. He became mayor of Santiago de Cuba and stayed there until 1518.

Cortés was eager for more power and conquests, so he talked the Spanish governor of Cuba into letting him lead an expedition to Mexico in 1519. Mexico had just been discovered by the Spanish explorer de Córdoba a year before.

At that time, Mexico was ruled by the Aztec Empire and its leader, Montezuma II. Cortés arrived in Mexico in March 1519 with a group of about 600 men and a few horses. He soon learned of the Aztecs and began to make his way inland to the Aztec capital city, Tenochtitlán. Along the way, he made friends with a native group called the Tlaxcalans, who were enemies of the Aztecs. The Tlaxcalans helped Cortés against the Aztecs.

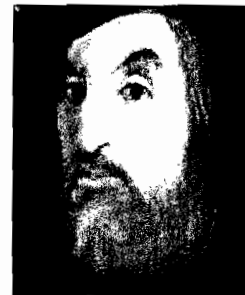
In November of 1519, Cortés and his men reached the Aztec capital and met Montezuma. The Aztecs may have thought that Cortés was a god-king, and so they treated him and his soldiers well. However, Cortés was afraid that the Aztecs might soon try to get rid of him, so he took Montezuma hostage and asked for a huge ransom of gold and jewels.

It turned out that Cortés was right and the Aztecs finally drove him and his men out of their city in June of 1520. But Cortés regrouped and returned in the summer of 1521 to capture Tenochtitlán.

Soon after, he began to build Mexico City on the Aztec ruins and brought many Europeans over to live there. It soon became the most important European city in North America. Because of his conquests and all the gold and jewels he had collected, Cortés was very popular back home in Spain and so he was made governor and captain general of New Spain in 1523. But he wasn't done exploring.

In 1524, he led a group into Honduras and stayed in that area for two years. By 1528, the Spanish government was worried that Cortés was getting out of control in the Americas, and so he had to give up his governor's job and was sent back to Spain. He spoke to the king, who was persuaded to send Cortés back to Mexico in 1530, but with less power and freedom than before.

In 1536, Cortés explored the northwestern part of Mexico and discovered the Baja California peninsula. He also spent time exploring the Pacific coast of Mexico. This was the last major expedition by Cortés. In 1539, he went back to Spain, and spent much of the rest of his life there before he died near Seville in 1547.



*Cortés was a Spanish explorer.*

*[Try a Cortés quiz question.](#)*

*[Looking for more information? Try:](#)*

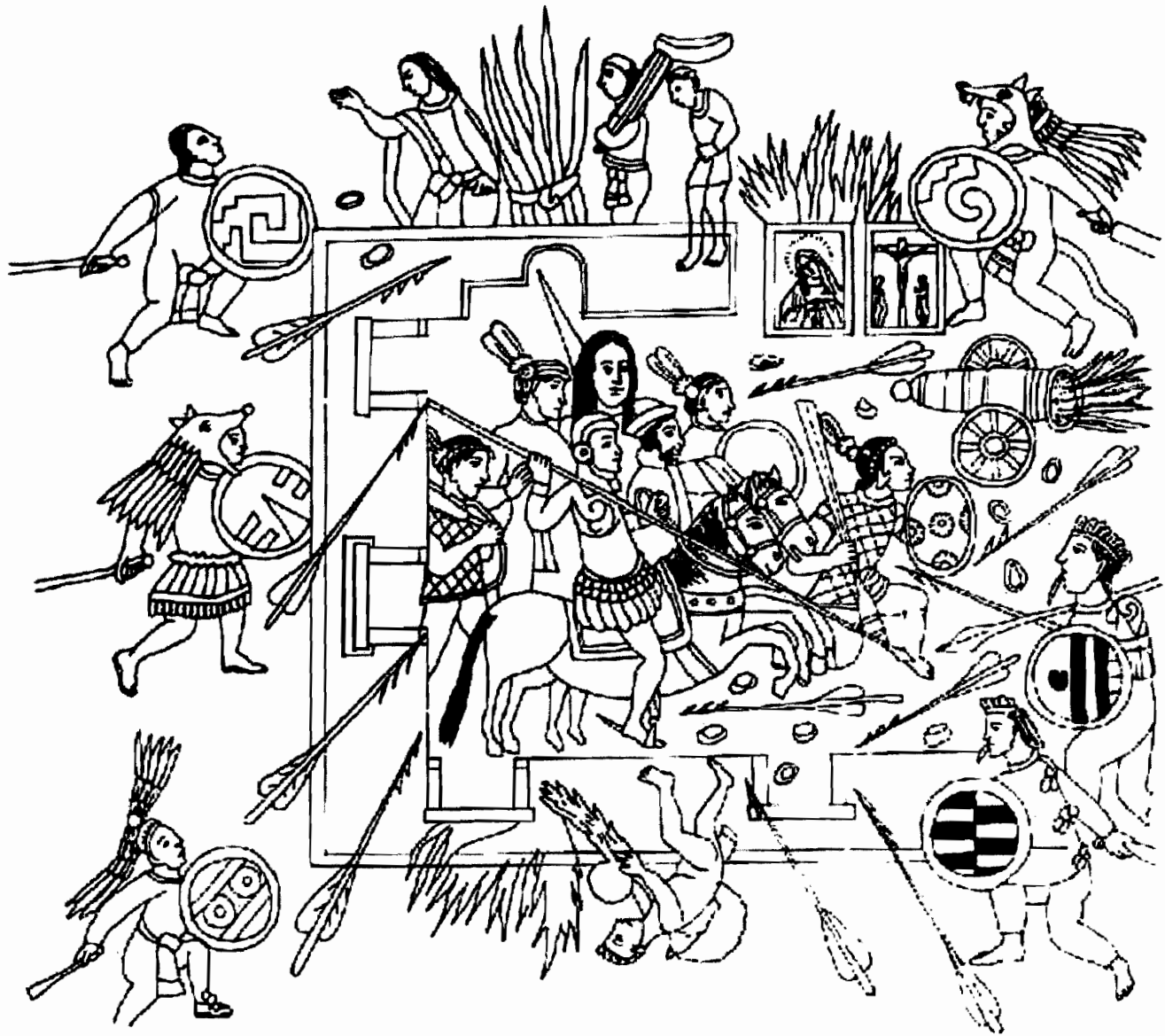
*[Hernán Cortés links](#)*

Lesson 2

## Map Analysis Worksheet

1.	TYPE OF MAP (Check one): <input type="radio"/> Raised Relief map <input type="radio"/> Topographic map <input type="radio"/> Political map <input type="radio"/> Contour-line map <input type="radio"/> Natural resource map <input type="radio"/> Military map <input type="radio"/> Bird's-eye map <input type="radio"/> Artifact map <input type="radio"/> Satellite photograph/mosaic <input type="radio"/> Pictograph <input type="radio"/> Weather map <input type="radio"/> Other
2.	UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE MAP (Check one or more): <input type="checkbox"/> Compass <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten <input type="checkbox"/> Date <input type="checkbox"/> Notations <input type="checkbox"/> Scale <input type="checkbox"/> Name of mapmaker <input type="checkbox"/> Title <input type="checkbox"/> Legend (key) <input type="checkbox"/> Other
3.	DATE OF MAP: _____
4.	CREATOR OF THE MAP: _____
5.	WHERE WAS THE MAP PRODUCED? _____
6.	MAP INFORMATION A. List three things in this map that you think are important. 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ B. Why do you think this map was drawn?  C. What evidence in the map suggests why it was drawn?  D. What information does this map add to the textbook's account of this event?  E. Does the information in this map support or contradict information that you have read about this event? Explain.  F. Write a question to the mapmaker that is left unanswered by this map.



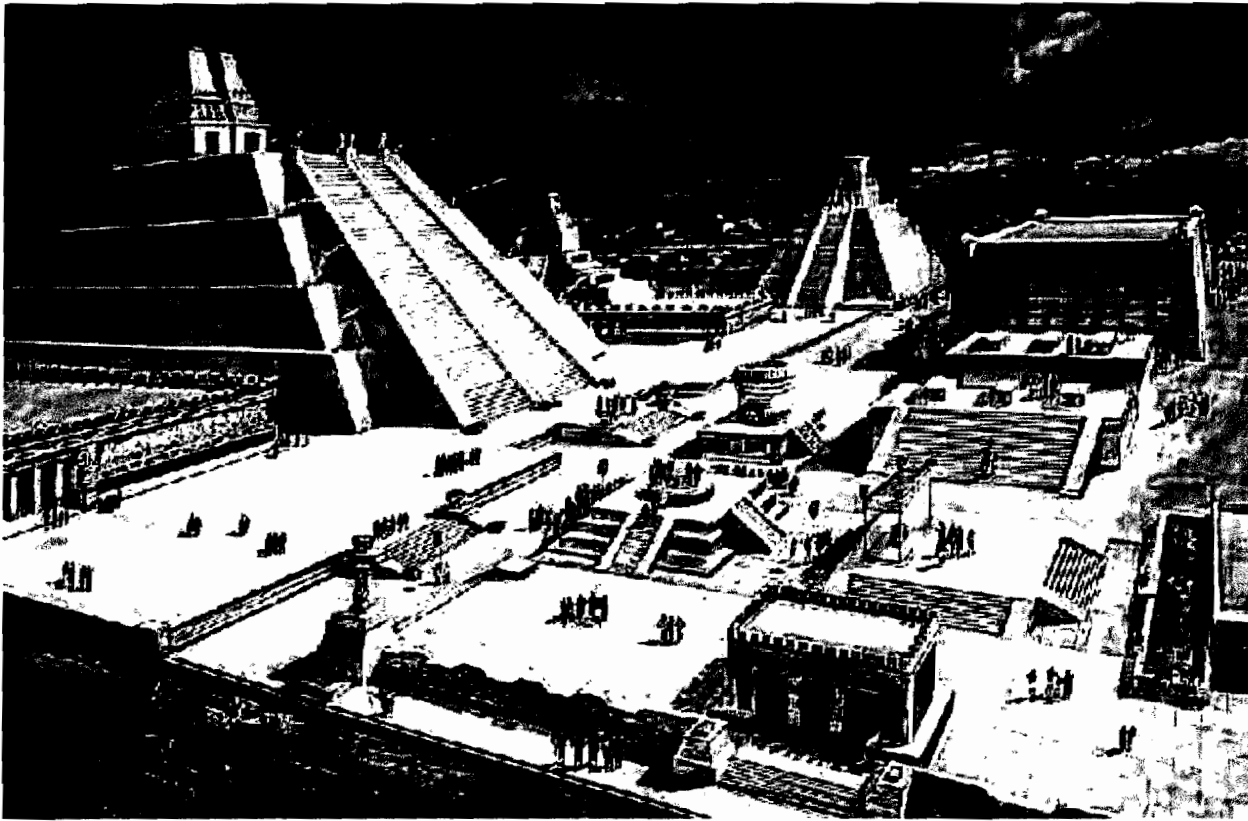


This scene from the Lienzo de Tlaxcala portrays the Spaniards and their allies besieged in the palace by Aztec warriors. The defenders group in the courtyard and a cannon is fired against an Aztec formation charging the principal entrance.



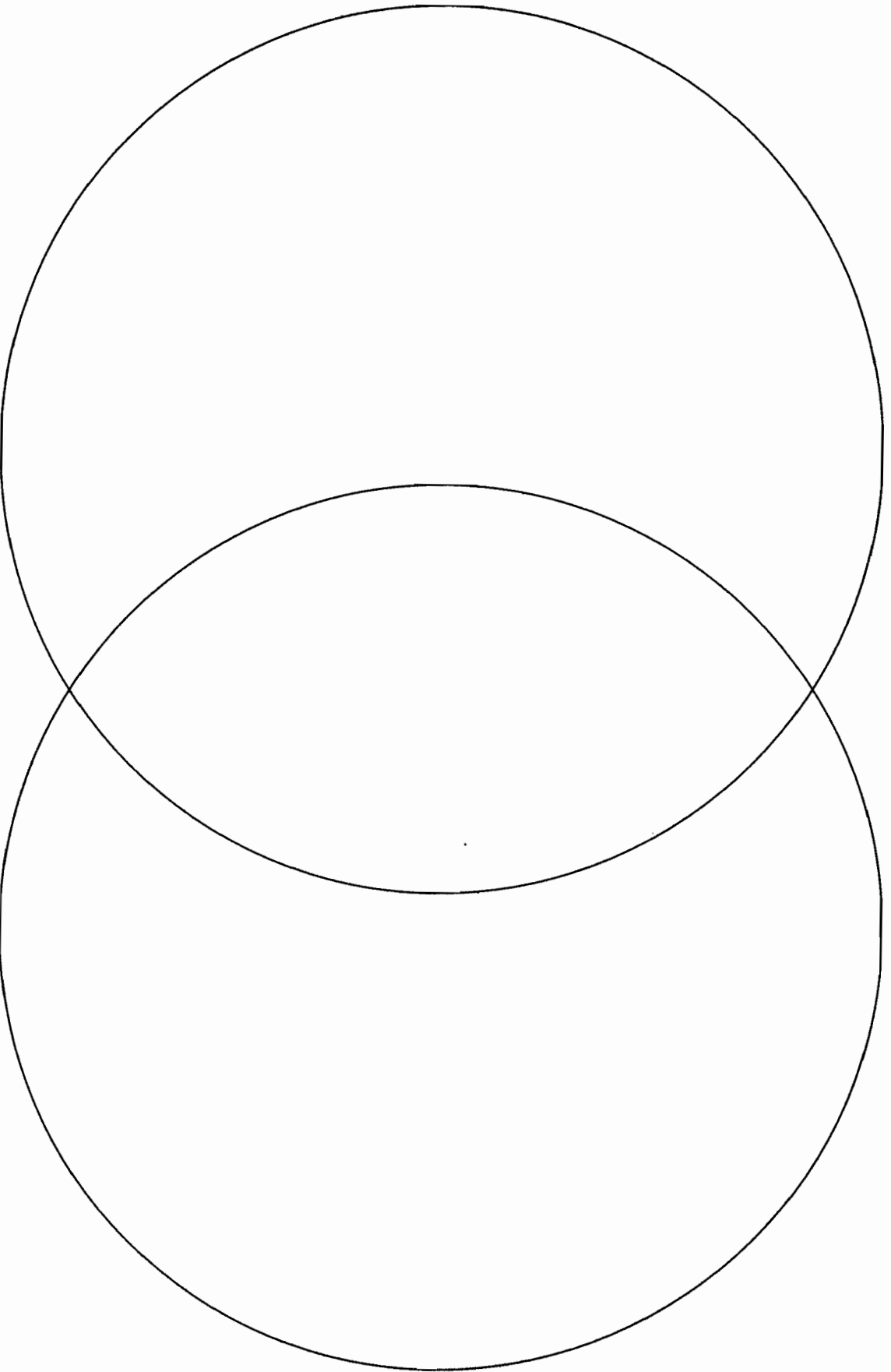


Lesson 2



Lesson 2

# Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer



**read write think**  
© copyright 2004 NC TETRA. All rights reserved. ReadWriteThink  
materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.

Lesson 2