Goods Across an Empire

How conquest connected trade and wealth

6.C.3.5.D "Describe how the Aztec conquest of other Indigenous peoples created extensive trade networks and wealth."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about required tribute and circle two details about trade. Use your marks to trace how conquest brought goods and wealth to Aztec rulers.

From Conquest to Market

1. In the 1400s, the Aztec rulers of Tenochtitlan joined with two nearby city-states to build an empire in central Mexico. Their armies conquered many Indigenous towns, though some towns fought back. Conquered communities often kept local leaders but had to send regular tribute to the alliance. Tribute was not a friendly gift. It was a required payment, sometimes made in cotton cloth, food, or feathers. Officials recorded what each province owed. This system brought goods from distant places into the hands of the empire's rulers.

2. The flow of goods helped connect places that produced different things. People in one region could grow cotton, while people elsewhere gathered cacao beans or made fine cloth. Merchants traveled between towns to buy and sell goods, and large markets brought many buyers and sellers together. At Tlatelolco, next to Tenochtitlan, shoppers could find products from across the empire and beyond. Tribute and trade were different: rulers demanded tribute, while merchants exchanged goods. Still, conquest brought more regions under Aztec control and strengthened links among their markets.

3. Conquest did not invent trade. Indigenous communities had traded long before the empire grew. But Aztec expansion gave rulers access to more goods and helped merchants reach more places. Rulers could store tribute, use it to support soldiers and officials, or give prized items to allies. Markets also helped Tenochtitlan grow wealthy as goods passed through the area. The benefits were unequal. Merchants could gain customers, and rulers gained power, but families in conquered towns had to supply tribute even when they needed those goods at home.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did conquering towns bring goods from distant places to Aztec rulers?

2. How did merchants and markets connect places across the growing empire?

3. Why could conquering regions that produced different goods strengthen trade networks?

4. How could the same system add to Tenochtitlan's wealth while placing a burden on conquered families?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a conquered town that produces salt and a nearby town that weaves cloth. In four sentences, explain how tribute and trade could connect these towns to Tenochtitlan and add to rulers' wealth. Include one cost for families in the conquered town.

ANSWER KEY

Goods Across an Empire

GRADE 6 · 6.C.3.5.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about required tribute and circle two details about trade. Use your marks to trace how conquest brought goods and wealth to Aztec rulers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did conquering towns bring goods from distant places to Aztec rulers?	**Conquered towns had to send regular tribute, such as cloth, food, or feathers, to the alliance.**
2	How did merchants and markets connect places across the growing empire?	**Merchants traveled between towns to exchange goods, and markets such as Tlatelolco brought buyers and sellers together.**
3	Why could conquering regions that produced different goods strengthen trade networks?	**Expansion brought more regions under Aztec control and strengthened links among markets where people could exchange different goods.**
4	How could the same system add to Tenochtitlan's wealth while placing a burden on conquered families?	**Rulers gained tribute and Tenochtitlan gained wealth as goods passed through its markets, while conquered families had to give up goods they might need.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The conquered town must send some of its salt as tribute, adding to the rulers' wealth. Merchants could take other salt to the nearby town and exchange it for cloth. They could bring cloth to the market at Tlatelolco, connecting both towns to the area around Tenochtitlan. Families in the conquered town would have less salt to use or trade because they had to pay tribute.

Accept other plausible routes for goods if the response distinguishes required tribute from exchange. The sample describes a possible outcome, not a documented event.