

## De Soto expedition worksheet: Teacher's Guide

Date	Place	Other information
<i>May 1539</i>	<i>Near what is now Tampa Bay, Florida</i>	About 600 men, a few hundred horses, packs of dogs, and a large herd of pigs
<i>Winter of 1539-1540</i>	Apalachee, near Tallahassee, Florida	<i>Group wintered in this place</i>
<i>March 1540</i>	<i>Near what is now central Georgia</i>	Meeting between the Ichisi and De Soto
<i>Spring 1542</i>	<i>Not mentioned directly in this article</i>	<i>De Soto died of a fever</i>
<i>June 1543</i>	Down the Mississippi River	<i>Survivors loaded into seven boats and sailed down Mississippi</i>
<i>July 1543</i>	<i>Gulf of Mexico</i>	311 survivors

1. In what ways have archaeologists and historians teamed up in researching the De Soto expedition?

*Students should explain that the archaeologists have been excavating sites to find traces of the Spanish expedition. Historians are examining the five documents, three of which were by members of the group.*

2. What do you think the Ichisi may have thought when they first saw the De Soto soldiers?

*Answers will vary, but students should include various emotions perhaps including fear, wonder, anger, concern.*

3. How do you think the Spanish could have replied to the following Ichisi questions?

*Answers will vary to these questions.*

- Who are you?

*Students may conclude that the Spanish may have tried to explain that they were from across the sea.*

- What do you want?

*Most students will write or say that the Spanish were interested in gold and other riches.*

- Where are you going?

*This question will be the most ambiguous as the students may conclude that the Spanish were interested in any riches and where to find them, or that they may have been looking for a land route to Mexico.*

4. What evidence from the article can explain why the Native Americans would have resented the Spanish very early on in the expedition?

*Students should have noticed in the article that natives were taken as slaves by the Spanish. They may also say that violent battles took place.*

5. What evidence has convinced some archaeologists of the authenticity of two of the De Soto sites?

*A pig jaw — earlier expeditions did not have pigs. Also, there were early 16th century Spanish artifacts. According to the article, “Archaeologists have found Spanish pottery and jars, links of chain mail, copper coins, colored chevron beads, and one tubular blue glass bead known as a “Nueva Cadiz” after a town in Venezuela where identical ones have been found.” At the second site, “the discovery of two bones with evidence of wounds inflicted by an edged metal weapon...”*

6. Why do you think that the author of the article states that “De Soto’s men were the first, and possibly the last, Europeans to see the great Indian chiefdoms of what archaeologists call the ‘Mississippian period’”?

*Answers will vary. Hopefully, students will recognize that the De Soto expedition went to areas of southeastern United States that had never been explored by Europeans. But they also helped*

*to cause the end of many of the native cultures by bringing disease to the Native Americans. This information will be more fully explained in the last section of the “Two Worlds: Prehistory, Contact, and the Lost Colony” module of the digital textbook.*

7. Why do you think that the Spanish exploration in the Southeast had such a disastrous impact on the native cultures?

*Answers will vary, but once again, hopefully the students will think that the Europeans brought disease to the native cultures.*

8. Put yourself in the place of the Spanish soldiers that accompanied De Soto. What would you have been thinking about and feeling during the years of the expedition?

*Answers will vary. Students should understand that the attitudes of the soldiers would have changed greatly during the five years of the journey. They may have started out feeling hopeful and curious with some fear of the unknown. There may have been anger as they had violent encounters with the Native Americans. When De Soto died, the soldiers could have felt fear and despair, particularly as more members of their expedition died along the journey. From about 600 members at the beginning of the trip, nearly half died before the 311 survivors floated into the Gulf of Mexico.*