

Objective sight words (heritage, military, annual, collect, debts, empire, invaded, cavalry, infantry, stampede); concepts (the history and significance of Cinco de Mayo)



### Vocabulary

heritage	empire
military	invaded
annual	cavalry
collect	infantry
debts	stampede

## Cinco de Mayo

By: Sue Peterson



Because Texas was once a part of Mexico, it has a strong Mexican heritage. That is why Texas celebrates the popular Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo. In fact, many towns and cities throughout Texas have festivals to celebrate Mexico's most famous military victory.

About 4,000 Mexican soldiers fought the much larger French army at Puebla, Mexico, on the morning of May 5, 1862. In honor of this victory, Cinco de Mayo is celebrated as an annual holiday.

The French had landed in Mexico along with Spanish and English troops to help collect debts from President Benito Juarez. While the English and Spanish made deals and left, the French stayed. They wanted to rule the Mexican empire. The French invaded Mexico, traveling from the port of Vera Cruz to attack Mexico City to the west.

Under the command of Texas-born General Zaragoza and the cavalry under the direction of Colonel Diaz (later to be Mexico's president and dictator), the Mexicans waited. Diaz took his cavalry out to meet the French, and the French could not overcome the Mexicans.

The remaining French infantry tried to overpower the Mexicans, but there was a thunderstorm that frightened hundreds of cattle, which in turn started a stampede. When the battle was over, many French soldiers were wounded and killed, and the cavalry was chased away. The Mexicans had won a great victory.

Cinco de Mayo celebrates freedom and liberty. Many people think Cinco de Mayo is when Mexico declared independence. That is not true. Mexico declared



independence from Spain on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, 1810, and it took 11 more years before the first Spanish soldiers were forced to leave Mexico.

Freedom and liberty are worth fighting for and they are worth celebrating, especially on Cinco de Mayo. Viva! el Cinco de Mayo!



## Practice

### **Multiple-Choice Questions** (Put an X in front of the correct answer.)

1. When did Mexico declare independence?  
 a. 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1800  
 b. 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1810  
 c. 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1850  
 d. 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1910
2. What does the holiday of Cinco de Mayo celebrate?  
 a. power  
 b. trading  
 c. freedom and liberty  
 d. exploration
3. What do you think the phrase “Viva! El Cinco de Mayo!” means?  
 a. Happy Birthday!  
 b. Good Luck!  
 c. Long Live the 5<sup>th</sup> of May!  
 d. Victory, Victory, Victory

### **Definitions** (Write the meaning of each word as it is used in the text.)

1. heritage
2. annual

### **Extended Response** (Answer in complete sentences.)

1. Why does Texas have a long Mexican heritage?
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2. Explain why Cinco de Mayo is considered Mexico's most famous military victory.

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3. Describe the invasion leading up to the Mexican victory, detailed in the text.

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## Answer Sheet

Answers for Matching, Multiple-Choice Questions, and Extended Response

### Cinco de Mayo

#### Multiple-Choice Questions

1. b
2. c
3. c

#### Extended Response (Accept reasonable answers.)

1. Since Texas was once part of Mexico, it has a long Mexican heritage. That is why popular Mexican holidays are celebrated throughout the state of Texas.
2. Cinco de Mayo is considered Mexico's most famous military victory because about 4,000 Mexican soldiers fought against a much larger group of enemy soldiers to win and gain freedom.
3. See text for information about details of the invasion.