

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 1 • 2

Searching for El Dorado

Rjurik Davidson

Series Editor Rob Waring

Seed
Learning



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El Dorado

Do you like to explore? Do you like to find new places?

For centuries, the Europeans had heard about a beautiful city full of gold in South America called El Dorado.

The Europeans wanted to find this city of gold.



A city of gold

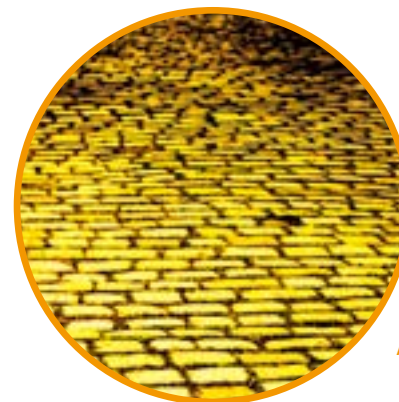


A woman with her gold

Finding this city would make them rich. They imagined a golden city with golden streets. In fact, the Europeans had already found people in South America with gold. So they believed there was a place of great wealth hidden somewhere.



An explorer speaking to the king



A golden street



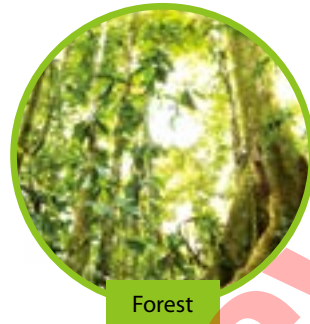
A map of South America

New Land

The explorers traveled by ships to the new land. When they arrived, there were no roads. Instead, there were big mountains and thick forests. They had no maps, and their food and water had to be carried on horses.

Many explorers came to find the gold, including Hernando de Soto and Francisco Pizarro. They traveled thousands of miles to find the lost city.

Hernando de Soto,
a Spanish explorer



Forest



Mountains



Llamas



A ceremony in Bolivia



Andean people today

The new land looked strange. The trees, plants, and flowers were very different. They saw strange animals such as llamas, snakes, birds, and monkeys.

The people were different, too. They had a different culture with different languages and customs. They also had different music and ceremonies.

Looking for Gold

The Spanish found only small amounts of gold. They kept on looking for El Dorado. They believed it was somewhere there.

The Spanish explorer Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada as well as others fought the local people. Many people died because of this gold.



Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, an explorer

The Real El Dorado

The Spanish later heard that “El Dorado” was a person. He was the head of the Muisca people who lived high in the mountains in eastern Colombia.



The Andes Mountains, Columbia



Ancient Muisca Art in Gold

Comprehension Questions

1. What did the Spanish think El Dorado was?
 - (a) A city with a lot of gold
 - (b) A city in Spain
 - (c) A city in North America
 - (d) A city in Asia
2. How did the explorers travel to South America?
 - (a) By horse
 - (b) On a cart
 - (c) With Indians
 - (d) On boats
3. What was different in South America?
 - (a) The people
 - (b) The animals
 - (c) The land
 - (d) All of these
4. The Muisca people used their gold...
 - (a) when a baby was born.
 - (b) when they greeted their friends.
 - (c) when they chose a new king.
 - (d) when they met the Spanish.
5. Why was gold important to the Muisca people?
 - (a) They made jewelry from it.
 - (b) They used it to make an offering to their god.
 - (c) It showed that they were rich.
 - (d) It was shiny.
6. How much gold did the explorers find in Lake Guatavita?
 - (a) More than they expected
 - (b) Less than they expected
 - (c) None
 - (d) Gold dust
7. According to the Muisca people, who was El Dorado?
 - (a) A boy
 - (b) A girl
 - (c) A king
 - (d) A god
8. Who found the lost city?
 - (a) Pizarro
 - (b) Raleigh
 - (c) Quesada
 - (d) No one
9. What does El Dorado mean today?
 - (a) Success
 - (b) A place of riches
 - (c) A flower
 - (d) All of these
10. Where is El Dorado now?
 - (a) In the forest
 - (b) In the mountains
 - (c) In our dreams and hearts
 - (d) In Lake Guatavita

Glossary

- **ancient** very old
- **ceremony** a special event in order to celebrate something
- **empty** to remove the contents of something
- **explorer** a person who goes to far places to look for treasure
- **for centuries** for hundreds of years
- **golden** made of gold
- **jewel** a valuable stone such as a diamond or ruby
- **Lake Guatavita** a body of water in South America
- **legend** an old story people tell about a person or event
- **lifestyle** the way a group of people live
- **modern** new; happening in the present time
- **Muisca** the name for a group of people living in South America
- **object** a thing
- **offering** something you give, especially as a present to a god
- **religious** related to showing love or fear for a god
- **search for** to try to find