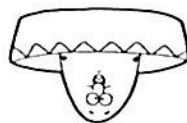


Cinco de Mayo



Cinco de Mayo is Spanish for "fifth of May." It is a national holiday in Mexico, commemorating a day in history when Mexican forces fought gloriously against a foreign army.

In 1862, the French invaded Mexico, using as an excuse the fact that Mexico had not paid its debts to France and other European countries. While the Mexican government was able to come to an agreement with the other European countries, it was not able to meet the outrageous demands of the French government. The French demands were deliberately unfair, for Napoleon III, the emperor of France at the time, was not simply interested in recovering debts. He wanted to build an empire in Mexico.

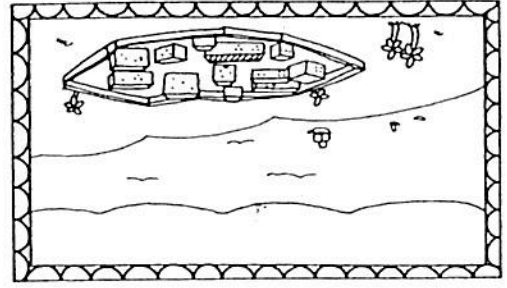
Under Napoleon's orders, French troops invaded Mexico. They came by ship and landed at Veracruz. Then they began their march toward Mexico City. At Puebla, they were stopped by poorly armed Mexican troops who were under the command of General Zaragoza. Against all odds, the Mexicans won. The famous battle took place on the fifth of May or Cinco de Mayo.

The French retreated to await reinforcements. Eventually, they defeated the Mexican troops at Puebla and went on to occupy Mexico City. The president of Mexico, Benito Juárez, made the decision to flee with all the important government papers. Archduke Maximilian of Austria was chosen to be the emperor of Mexico. He and his wife, Carlota, arrived in Mexico in 1864. A few years later, partly because of pressure from the U.S. and because he was in need of his troops in France, Napoleon III decided to withdraw his troops from Mexico. Maximilian decided to stay, but he and his supporters were defeated by Juárez and his army at Querétaro. Maximilian was executed, and Juárez returned to Mexico City and resumed his duties as president. Since that time period, there have been no foreign invasions of North America. It is no wonder that Mexicans and Mexican-Americans alike choose to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, the one time the Mexicans were able to gloriously defeat the French during that period in history.

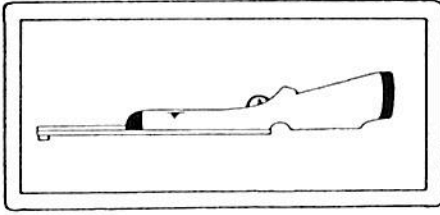
Cinco de Mayo is celebrated throughout Mexico and in some parts of the United States. Festivities include parades and reenactments of the Battle of Puebla. There are also colorful costumes, delightful dances, mariachi music, and plenty of flavorful food. The day often ends with fireworks. Cinco de Mayo is a grand fiesta!

This book will help you to celebrate the holiday, the Mexican people, and their colorful heritage.

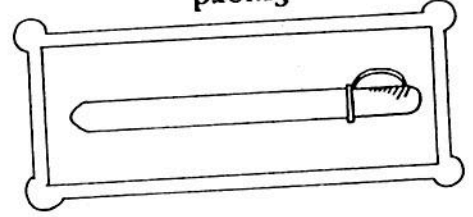
Veracruz



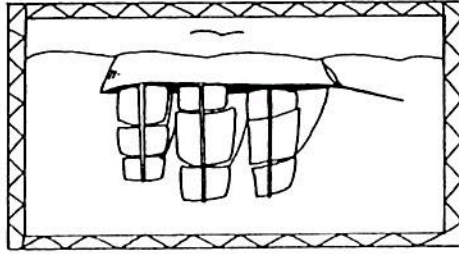
Rifle



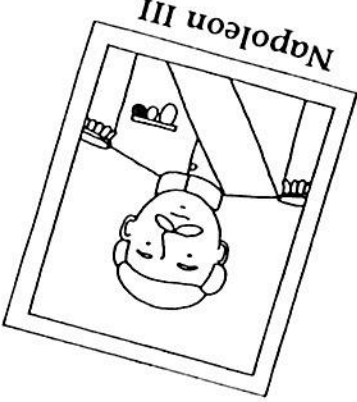
Sword



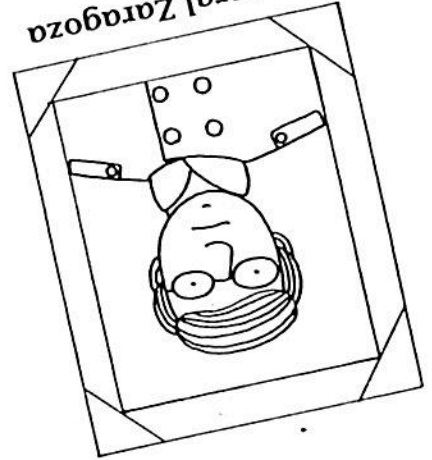
Ship



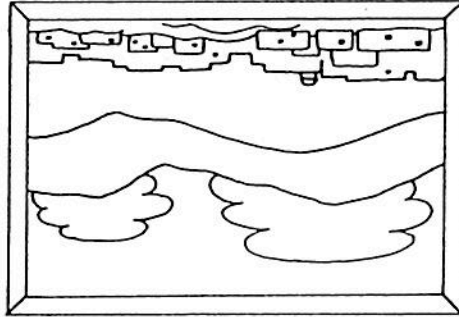
Napoleon III



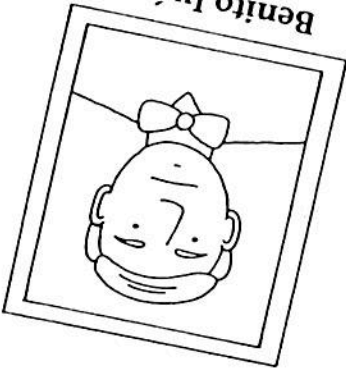
General Zaragoza



Puebla



Benito Juarez



Look at the pictures below. If the picture shows a *person*, color the frame around it *red*. If the picture shows a *place*, color the frame around it *white*. If the picture shows a *thing*, color the frame around it *green*. Red, white, and green are the colors associated with Mexico and its flag.

In 1862, when Benito Juarez was the president of Mexico, French troops were ordered by Napoleon III to invade Mexico. They came by ship and landed at Veracruz. Then they began their march toward Mexico City. At Puebla, they were stopped by poorly armed Mexican troops who were under the command of General Zaragoza. The battle took place on "el cinco de mayo," which is Spanish for "the fifth of May." Cinco de Mayo is now celebrated as a national holiday, commemorating the day when Mexican forces fought gloriously against a foreign army.

In the Year 1862

Name _____

