Viewing Guide: Teacher’s Answer Key
Guns, Germs, and Steel: Episode 2

Directions: Before viewing the film, read each question below so you know what information and ideas you should be looking for as you watch Episode 2. Record your answers to each question by providing as many facts, details, and examples as possible to answer each question. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

1. At the time that the Spanish conquistador’s invaded the Inca Empire, they were armed with state of the art weaponry. Describe this weaponry.

   Answers will vary but should include: horses that made them appear like god-like half man, half beast warriors, body armor, guns, and steel swords.

2. What is Jared Diamond’s explanation for why the Spanish had advanced to steel swords while Inca’s were still making tools and weapons from bronze?

   Answer: Because Europe was geographically close to the Fertile Crescent, they inherited the 7,000 years of metal technology that had been developed there. Because they had a diversified society that allowed for specialization, the Spanish devoted time and effort to producing the longest, strongest, sharpest swords possible.

3. How did the battle tactics used by the Spanish conquistadors help the small army defeat the Inca army that outnumbered it by the thousands?

   Answer: The Spaniards begin by surprising the Incas, firing their guns and coming out of hiding on horseback. As they rode, the conquistadors used their swords to hack, cut, and stab the Incas who were panicking and fleeing rather than standing firm. Had the Incas known more about this style of fighting, they could have been victorious by sheer numbers if they had stood their ground against the cavalry.

4. According to Jared Diamond, what made the Europeans “accidental conquerors”?

   Answer: Because of their geographic location and history, the Europeans were the first to acquire guns, germs, and steel, therefore they could conquer other lesser developed civilizations.

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