

# Chapter 1 The Rise of the Aztecs

## FOCUS

The underlined sentence states an important idea about how people live. As you read pages 11 and 12, find out about how the Aztecs' way of life changed when they moved to their new home.

## Arriving in the Valley of Mexico

Miguel's father began to explain about the Aztecs, for whom the great soccer stadium was named. The story of the Aztecs began a long time ago.

### A Wandering People

"The early Aztecs were **nomads**, people who move from place to place without a permanent home," he said. "They were **hunter-gatherers**, people who look for, rather than grow, their food. About 1250 A.D., the Aztecs moved from northern Mexico south into the great Valley of Mexico, the region around today's Mexico City."

"Why did they decide to settle here, in central Mexico?" asked Miguel.

"An ancient legend of the Aztec people stated that they would find a homeland in a place where they saw a great eagle sitting on a prickly pear cactus, eating a snake. The Aztecs believed this land was promised to them as a home by their god, Huitzilopochtli (wee-tsee-loh-POHCH-tee)."

"Weren't there already people living here?" Miguel asked.



## ACTIVE READER

**1 Infer** Why are most nomads also hunter-gatherers?

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**2 Recall** Where did the Aztecs live before they moved into the Valley of Mexico?

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**3 Hypothesize** What might be another reason why the Aztecs moved into the Valley of Mexico?

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## Web Quest

The Aztecs migrated into the Valley of Mexico in the 1200s A.D. What was happening in other parts of the world at this time? Use the Internet to make a list of other world events that took place in the 1200s A.D.