

# How do we know what we know? *Advanced*

## *Unit 2: The Age of Contact*

Name:  Date:  Period:

### ***Think back . . .***

We learn a lot about the people of the past by studying the artifacts and records they left behind. Think back to **Unit 1: Natural Texas and its People**. What do you remember about why it is often difficult for people today to study the lives and stories of the early American Indians of Texas?

Much of what we believe to be true about early American Indians in Texas, we have learned from the European explorers who encountered them. These accounts have been useful at providing information we would not have otherwise. It is important to recognize, however, that they provide only one side of the story.

Let's take a look at one account written by the first known explorer to encounter American Indians in Texas – a Spanish man named Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.

### ***A little background information:***

Cabeza de Vaca was a Spanish explorer who traveled with several hundred others to the Americas in the early 1500s. Like many Spanish explorers, their primary goal was to search for gold and riches. They started out in the Caribbean on their way to Mexico but got so lost they ended up in Florida and eventually even Texas! Can you imagine being **that** lost? They experienced disease, starvation, capture by various American Indian tribes, and even hurricanes. They lived among several American Indian tribes in Texas for years.

Finally, eight years after they had set out, the few who survived made it to their destination of present-day Mexico City, where they knew they would find many other Spaniards. Cabeza de Vaca wrote a book about his experiences. In English, it is called "*The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*." The excerpts in your activity are from his book.



## Primary Source Activity

There are four primary source excerpts about Cabeza de Vaca's time among various American Indian groups in Texas. Follow the instructions to complete the activity.

**Part I:** Match each Excerpt Card with the Translation card that best restates the excerpt in modern language.

**Part II:** Complete the chart below based on your excerpt and translation cards.

Excerpt	Translation	<b>Summary</b> Write a brief summary of the main idea of the passage in your own words.	<b>Bias</b> What information from this excerpt appears to be fact? What appears to be opinion?
<b>A</b>			
<b>B</b>			
<b>C</b>			
<b>D</b>			

**Part III:** Answer the following comprehension questions about the primary source excerpts.

1. Based on the information provided in Excerpt A, do you think Cabeza de Vaca was living with the Caddo, Comanche, Coahuiltecan, or Jumano? Explain your answer.
2. Does Excerpt B provide information on mobility, shelter, food, or culture? Provide evidence from the passage to support your answer.
3. Which phrase or sentence from Excerpt C means that the tribes Cabeza de Vaca was living with were grouped by family? Explain how you know.
4. How does Excerpt D differ from the other excerpts in this activity?
5. **Make a prediction:** There are a number of other Spanish explorers who wrote accounts about their experiences in the Americas, including their interactions with and thoughts about American Indians. What kind of information, experiences, or opinions do you think we might see in some of these other accounts?