

CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO
READING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY
The Turning Point of a Continent: The Battle of Boyacá

August 7, 1819, stands as one of the most defining moments in the geopolitical history of the Americas. The Battle of Boyacá was not merely an isolated military victory; it was the strategic masterstroke of Simón Bolívar's Liberation Campaign of 1819, which effectively dismantled Spanish colonial dominance in New Granada and altered the destiny of South America.

Executing a bold grand strategy, Bolívar led his army across the high-altitude wilderness of the Pisba Paramo—a military feat often compared by historians to Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. Upon descending into the fertile Boyacá valley, Bolívar capitalized on localized civilian intelligence and logistical networks to intercept Colonel José María Barreiro's Royalist forces before they could unite with the viceregal garrison in Santafé de Bogotá.

At the Teatinos River, Bolívar and his key sub-commanders, Generals Francisco de Paula Santander and José Antonio Anzoátegui, executed a flawless tactical encirclement. Santander's division aggressively charged the narrow Boyacá Bridge, isolating the Royalist advance guard, while Anzoátegui's forces struck the main body from the flank and rear. Within two hours, Spanish command structures collapsed, resulting in the capture of Barreiro and over 1,600 imperial soldiers.

The geopolitical repercussions were instantaneous and profound. Upon hearing news of the disaster at Boyacá, Viceroy Juan de Sámano fled Bogotá in panic, abandoning the viceregal treasury and government archives. The liberation of New Granada provided the indispensable economic base, military manpower, and political legitimacy necessary to officially proclaim the Republic of Gran Colombia and finance subsequent campaigns in Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Thus, the modest stone bridge in Boyacá became the recognized birthplace of continental liberty.

1. What historical military feat is Bolívar's crossing of the Pisba Paramo compared to in the text?

- a) Caesar crossing the Rubicon
- b) Hannibal crossing the Alps
- c) Napoleon invading Russia

2. Multiple Choice: What was the primary geopolitical outcome of the Battle of Boyacá?

- a) The temporary truce between Spain and Colombia.
- b) The total dismantling of Spanish colonial dominance in New Granada.
- c) The immediate crown declaration of Bolívar as King of South America.

3. Multiple Choice: What reaction did Viceroy Juan de Sámano have upon hearing of the defeat?

- a) He launched a counter-attack from Bogotá.
- b) He fled Bogotá in panic, leaving behind the treasury.
- c) He signed a formal surrender at the Teatinos River.

4. True or False: The Battle of Boyacá lasted for over twelve hours of continuous artillery fire.

(True / False)

5. True or False: Freeing New Granada provided the financial base needed for subsequent independence campaigns.

(True / False)