Chapter 12 Literature Connections - "The Eagle on the Prickly Pear"

Background: "The Eagle on the Prickly Pear" is the legend of the founding of Tenochtitlán, the capital city of the Aztecs, in 1325. According to this legend, the Mexicans [Aztecs] received a command from the god Huitzilopochtli (WEE•tsuh•loh•POHCH•tlee). The name Huitzilopochtli means "hummingbird on the left." Hummingbirds represented reincarnated warriors. Huitzilopochtli was identified with the warrior sun, who, according to Aztec belief, kept the universe from being destroyed by waging a daily battle across the sky against the forces of darkness. He told them, "Go where the cactus grows, on which the eagle sits happily." There they should build themselves a homeland. After almost 200 years of wandering, they found their new home in the Valley of Mexico. It is now the site of Mexico City.

1. Why was the god Huitzilopochtli important to the Aztec?
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2. According to legend what were the Aztec told to do?
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3. Identify from the story what happened at each of the following locations. (Page 405)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Childbirth</th>
<th>Bath</th>
<th>Reeds and Bushes</th>
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4. What do you think was the significance of the white trees, reeds, rushes, frogs, fish and snakes in the place called Reeds and Rushes? (Page 405)
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5. Why did they say "Here must be the place"? (Page 405)
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6. What did Cuauhcoatl see in his dream? Why did he want to tell the elders? (Page 406)
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7. What did the Mexicans (Aztecs) see once they returned to the edge of the caverns? (Page 407)
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8. Why do you think the eagle bowed to the Mexicans (Aztecs)? (Page 407)
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9. How did the Mexicans feel and say once they were told "this is the place"? (Page 407)
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