

Worksheet S6.2.1

Why did the Turks attack Malta in 1565?

**WHY THE TURKS ATTACKED MALTA***(material collected by George Calleja)***Read and answer.**

The Order of St. John was always the biggest enemy of the Turks. The fleet of the Order had always attacked the galleys of the Turks in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the knights often helped other Christian strongholds against the Turks. For this reason, the Sultan Suleiman decided to destroy once and for all this Order which gave him so much grief.

Malta was also in a very good strategic position in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. From here, the knights could easily control the trade routes between the East and the West. If the Order were to lose Malta, it would have been very difficult to find another base in the Mediterranean that had such a good strategic position.

Apart from this there was also the issue of religion. Malta was serving as a shield for Christian Religion against the Muslims. This was due to the fact that if the Muslims won Malta then they could use it as a base from where they could attack Sicily and Southern Europe. So, it was clear that the Turks were going to try and win Malta in order to improve their position in the Mediterranean.

1. The Turks were the greatest enemies of the Knights of St. John. Why?

2. When the Turkish fleet arrived in Malta, La Valette talked to the Knights and the Maltese. What do you think he told them?
