

MESO-AMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS

Grade Level: Fifth Grade

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Length of Unit: The following three lessons could take anywhere from 5-7 days per lesson

I. ABSTRACT

This unit focuses on the cultures of the ancient Indian civilizations of the Maya, Inca and Aztecs, which were found in Mexico and along the Pacific Coast of South America. Students will identify specific locations of these three civilizations as well as contributions that they made to our modern day society. In addition, the influence of the Spaniards (in particular, Cortes and Pizzaro) will be analyzed as a devastating force that changed these civilizations forever.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Understand how the location of ancient civilizations impacts a people and their culture.
2. Recognize ideals inspire a people's sense of purpose through their myths, legends, values and beliefs.
3. Recognize and appreciate the contributions of ancient civilizations.

B. Content

1. The locations of the Meso-American civilizations
2. Ancient Maya lived in what is now Southern Mexico and parts of Central America.
 - a. Accomplishments as architects and artisans: pyramids and temples
 - b. Development of a system of hieroglyphic writing
 - c. Knowledge of astronomy and mathematics; development of a 365 day calendar; early use of the concept of zero.
3. The Aztecs as a warring culture, at its height in the 1400's and early 1500's, Aztec Empire covered much of what is now Central Mexico.
 - a. The island city of Tenochtitlan: aqueducts, massive temples, etc.
 - b. Montezuma and his role as a conquering force
 - c. Ruler-priests; practice of human sacrifice
4. The Incas ruled an empire stretching along the Pacific coast of South America
 - a. Built great cities (Machu Picchu, Cuzco) high in the Andes mountains, connected by a system of roads.
5. Spanish Conquistadors: Cortes and Pizzaro
 - a. Advantage of Spanish weapons (guns, cannons)
 - b. Diseases devastate native peoples

C. Skills

1. Students will do hands-on activities that enhance their understanding of these ancient civilizations:
 - a. Illustrating
 - b. Solving Mayan math problems
 - c. Creating sequence stories
 - d. Drama demonstrating understanding of material, i.e., meeting of Montezuma, the Aztec King, and Cortes
 - e. Orally retell stories

2. Students will be able to locate on a map of South America the Inca Empire and its major cities.
3. Students will be able to explain the transportation systems that linked the two major Inca cities.
4. Students will be able to explain how Pizzaro conquered the Inca Empire.
5. Students will locate the Aztec Empire on a map of central Mexico.
6. Students will be able to describe the island city of Tenochtitlan and what it is like today.
7. Students will be able to identify the name of Montezuma and what it meant to the Aztecs.
8. Students will be able to list contributions that all three ancient civilizations have made to modern society.
9. Students will be able to analyze the affects of the Spaniards upon the Meso-American civilizations.

III. **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

A. For the teacher

1. In ancient times, three Meso-American civilizations dominated the central part of Mexico and the Pacific Coast of South America. Through archeological findings, ancient artifacts and writings, we know that they were here long before Europeans.
2. The earliest of these civilizations was the Maya, dating as far back as 500 BC. They settled in Guatemala and other parts of Mexico. Their descendants live there today. The Maya were an accomplished people, especially advanced in mathematics and architecture. They developed a system of hieroglyphic writing unlike no other. Their knowledge of astronomy and the development of a 365-day calendar had religious overtones. The Mayans developed the concept of zero before the Europeans and they developed their own form of place value.
3. Another civilization of ancient times was the Incas. This empire ruled along the Pacific Coast of South America and included the construction of two major cities – Machu Picchu and Cuzco. They were skilled stonemasons and built more than 14,000 miles of curving roads connecting them with tunnels and rope bridges all without modern day tools. Many of their sacred stone structures had religious overtones since that they believed that the Gods created man out of stone and that some of their ancestors and past leaders had been turned back into stone. They worshiped the sun, Inti, as their main god. When their highborn leaders died, their mummies were brought out and seated in places of honor.
4. Lastly, the Aztecs were a great warrior nation that ruled a large empire in central Mexico from the late 1300s until 1519, when the explorer Hernando Cortes arrived on their shores from Spain. The Aztecs concentrated their power in the magnificent city of Tenochtitlan, much of which now lies under modern day Mexico City.
5. The Aztecs began as a group of hunters and gatherers but developed into a warrior culture. The great island city of Tenochtitlan, which was the center of their culture, now lies under present day Mexico City. They were great builders creating aqueducts and massive temples. Religion was not something separate from work or school. It touched every aspect of life. The Aztec emperor was considered a kind of god. The Aztecs believed in ruler priests and in the practice of human sacrifice. They believed that they had to offer their gods the gift of human blood. The victims were usually prisoners of war and slaves. The priests would plunge a knife into the victim's chest and rip out of the still beating heart

to give to the gods. Human sacrifice was sometimes numbered into thousands all at one time. In the end, Montezuma II, king of the Aztecs, was overthrown by Cortes to gain control of the empire.

6. The clash between these civilizations and European explorers and conquerors brought destruction to the native peoples in what was, for Europeans, a “New World.” Cortes landed in the Yucatan peninsula and ruled over Aztec Mexico by 1521. Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru in 1524, and succeeded with domination over the Incas by 1532.

B. For the students

1. The students are previously exposed to the location of the continents of North and South America. Students should have knowledge of the land bridge and its significance to the nomadic life of the Native Americans. Students should have an understanding of the location of the Andes Mountains in South America.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. *What Your Fifth Grader Needs to Know*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (pp. 107-116).
- B. *New True Books – Inca, Maya and Aztec* by Patricia McKissack.
- C. *The Days of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas* by Louis-Rene Nougier.

V. LESSONS

Lesson 1 – Inca Civilization (2-3 days)

A. Daily Objectives

1. Lesson Content
 - a. Geographical awareness: location of Inca Empire
 - b. Great cities of the Inca Empire and the transportation systems that connected them.
 - c. The force of Pizzaro as a conquering enemy.
2. Concept Objectives
 - a. Understand how the location of ancient civilizations impacted a people and their culture.
 - b. Recognize the contributions of ancient civilizations.
3. Skill objectives
 - a. Students will be able to locate on a map of South America the Inca Empire and its major cities
 - b. Students will be able to summarize the transportation systems that linked the two major cities.
 - c. Students will be able to explain how Pizzaro conquered the Inca empire.

B. Materials

1. Overhead /transparency markers
2. Transparency of South America showing two cities, Machu Picchu and Cuzco (Appendix A).
3. Blank map of South American for assessment (Appendix B)

C. Background Notes

1. The Incas ruled a large empire along the Pacific coast of South America during the same time that the Aztecs controlled most of Central America. (See “The Inca Empire” in *What Your 5th Grader Needs to Know*).
2. In 1532, Pizzaro and his soldiers landed on the Pacific coast of South America and captured the Inca king while Pizzaro received millions of dollars in gold from the Inca Empire. The Inca king was killed, empire conquered, which resulted in a complete takeover by Spanish rule.

- D. Key Vocabulary
1. suspension bridge – a rope bridge
 2. llama – mountain pack animal
 3. chasquis - Messengers who used the roads to carry communication between Cuzco and its regional capitals.
- E. Procedures/Activities
1. Review with students previous knowledge concerning the location of the Mayan, Aztec and Inca civilizations (should have background knowledge of location of Central and South Americas from first grade).
 2. Tell the students that we are going to learn about an ancient civilization that built suspension bridges from rope.
 3. On an overhead (Appendix A), show the students the location of the Inca civilization, pointing out the two major cities, Cuzco and Machu Picchu.
 4. Read to students “Highways, Messengers, and Buildings” (pages 29-32) from *The Incas New True Book*.
 5. Explain to students that the Incas traveled by foot on either suspension bridges or rock roads that connected the two major cities. Emphasize that these methods of transportation were needed in order to send packages and messages between the two cities.
 6. Explain to students what a suspension bridge is, ask if they know what one is, if they have ever been on a suspension bridge.
 7. Define two modes of transportation between the two cities: llama and chasquis.
 - a. Llama – used as a pack animal (compare to our trucking system today)
 - b. chasquis – Messenger – ran between posts set up and built (compare to Pony Express)
 8. Read from *A New True Book – The Inca*, pages 39-43. Include a discussion of the aftermath of Pizarro’s revolt against the Incas and diseases that ran rampant. Also discuss weapons of battle used by Pizarro’s soldier such as guns and cannons.
- F. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Have students write a summary comparing the Inca transportation system with our current transportation system. What ideas from the Incas do we use today?
 2. Give the students a blank map of South America (Appendix B) and have them color in the Inca region and identify the two cities – Machu Picchu and Cuzco.
 3. Have students illustrate and explain through writing, the battle for the Inca Empire showing Pizzaro as a conqueror.
- G. State Standards (Colorado)
1. (3.1) Explaining how the cultures of the earliest civilizations spread and interacted.
- H. Cumulating Activity
1. Show video: *Secrets of Lost Empires Inca*.
 2. Review and discuss the Geo Safari card on the Incas. Have students draw their own Inca village depicting at least two modes of transportation i.e., suspension bridges, runners, llamas.

Lesson 2 – The Maya Civilization (3-4 days)

- A. Daily Objectives
1. Lesson Content
 - a. Geographical awareness of where the ancient Maya lived and where descendants are today
 - b. Accomplishments as architects and artisans: pyramids and temples

- c. Development of a system of hieroglyphic writing
 - d. Knowledge of astronomy and mathematics; development of a 365-day calendar; early use of concept of zero
 - 2. Concept Objectives
 - a. Recognize and appreciate the contributions of ancient civilizations.
 - 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. The students will do hands-on activities that enhance their understanding of the Mayan as people of importance.
- B. Materials
 - 1. Student copies of a map of North and South America (Appendix A)
 - 2. Clay
 - 3. Stick pretzels
 - 4. Beans
 - 5. Land of the Maya (Appendix C)
 - 6. Mayan Number Signs (Appendix D)
 - 7. More Mayan Math (Appendix E)
 - 8. Kids Discover Magazine
 - 9. Card of daily life, *The Maya*
 - 10. Ancient World book on *The Mayas*
 - 11. Book: *A New True Book, The Maya*
 - 12. Book: *The Ancient Maya*
 - 13. Book: *Journey Into Civilization: The Mayan*
 - 14. Book: *Look Into the Past: The Maya*
 - 15. String
- C. Background Notes
 - 1. The Maya, in Central America was the earliest of the three civilizations starting as far back as 500 BC
 - 2. Peoples of Guatemala and other parts of Mexico still call themselves Mayan and speak the Mayan language.
 - 3. The code to Mayan hieroglyphics has mostly been solved which gives insight as to the breakdown of the culture.
 - 4. Days and numbers were associated with deities who influenced people's lives.
 - 5. First people who used place value to write their numbers.
- D. Key Vocabulary
 - 1. Astronomy – study of the stars and planets.
 - 2. Hieroglyphs – complex system of pictures in writing
 - 3. Civilization – organized society with its own culture, government and laws
 - 4. Irrigation – a method of supplying water to crops using man-made canals and ditches
 - 5. Architecture – stone monuments and buildings
 - 6. Glyphs – symbols to represent people, gods, or cities
- E. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. Hand out Appendix A – map of North and South America
 - 2. Explain that the ancients lived in the area of what we call Guatemala and Mexico today; a classroom map would also help in locating areas
 - 3. Read from Kids Discover, *The Mayan*, pages 16-17 and discuss what the Mayan descendants are like in modern times.
 - 4. Hand out Appendix C and oral and/or choral read giving a general overview.
 - a. Define orally “civilization” as given in the reading.

5. Using the book, *Journey into Civilization - The Mayan* read from Page 12 explaining different types of architecture, those monuments and buildings that were unique to the Maya.
 - a. Refer and show pictures from the book *Look Into the Past, The Maya*, pages 8-9. Compare these structures with those of Egyptian pyramids; emphasize these pyramids have religious overtones.
 6. Read from *Journey into Civilization The Mayan*, p. 8 and explain how the Mayans drained areas to build irrigation canals, and why this helped them in farming. Discuss where, in modern times, are irrigation canals used? Possible answer might be an area of dry climate.
 7. Tell the students that the Mayas were the only Native American people to develop a full writing system writing their characters on pottery, wood, stone, alters, walls, and on ornaments.
 - a. Give each student an amount of clay that they can shape into a block.
 - b. Help students to understand that the writing characters used are hieroglyphs, or some times called glyphs.
 - c. With a pencil or pen, have the students design their own symbol to represent themselves, then punch a hole through the clay and add string to wear as a pendant.
 8. Emphasize that the Maya calendar was based on astronomical observations (take time to review meaning of astronomy).
 - a. Explain that the Mayas had two cycles of time: vague year of 365 days and the ceremonial year made up of 260 days.
 - b. Reveal that the Mayas knew the best time for harvesting by watching eclipses of the Sun and Moon.
 9. Using the board, write out numbers and signs from Appendix D.
 - a. Explain that the Mayan had the concept of zero long before the Europeans did.
 - b. Hand out beans and pretzels and let students set up numbers from #9.
 - c. Demonstrate how the ancients used place value; use page 18 from the book, *The Maya*, moving signs up one line instead of ones.
 - d. Hand out Appendix E (More Mayan Math) and let students work in partners.
- F. Evaluation/Assessment
1. The students will create a sequence story using a piece of lightly colored construction paper divided into four parts. Each part will contain a picture drawn and colored about a contribution of the Maya from the lesson. The student will write a sentence under each section describing what is happening.
- G. State Standards (Colorado)
1. (3.2) Describing and giving examples of basic elements of culture and social organization.

Lesson 3 - Aztec Civilizations (4-5 days)

A. Daily Objectives

1. Lesson content
 - a. The Aztecs as a warrior culture
 - b. The island city of Tenochtitlan with its aqueducts, massive temples and pyramids
 - c. The role of Montezuma as ruler of the Aztec empire
 - d. The religious belief of the Aztec emperor as a god and the practice of human sacrifice

2. Concept Objectives
 - a. Recognize inspire a people's sense of purpose through their myths, legends, values and beliefs.
 - b. Recognize and appreciate the contributions of ancient civilizations.
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. The students will describe the ancient island city of Tenochtitlan.
 - b. The students will listen and be able to retell information about Montezuma II, the Aztec king, is read.
 - c. Students will analyze the role of religion as it guided the life of the Aztec people.
- B. Materials
1. Map of Mexico and Central America (Appendix F)
 2. Webbing Example – (Appendix G)
 3. Handout: “Aztec Important People” (Appendix H)
 4. Test – Appendix I
 5. Handout: “Meso-American Person Pattern” (Appendix J)
 6. Chart Paper/markers
 7. Construction paper/scissors/glue/fabric/beads/crayons, etc.
 8. Nova. *500 Nations – The Rise and Fall of the Aztecs*. Burlington, VT: WGBH Videos, 1994.
- C. Background Notes
1. The Aztecs were a great warrior nation that ruled a large empire in central Mexico from the late 1300s until 1519, when the explorer Hernando Cortes arrived on their shores from Spain. The Aztecs concentrated their power in the magnificent city of Tenochtitlan, much of which now lies under modern day Mexico City.
 2. The Aztecs began as a group of hunters and gatherers but developed into a warrior culture. The great island city of Tenochtitlan, which was the center of their culture, now lies under present day Mexico City. They were great builders creating aqueducts and massive temples. Religion was not something separate from work or school. It touched every aspect of life. The Aztec emperor was considered a kind of god. The Aztecs believed in ruler priests and in the practice of human sacrifice. They believed that they had to offer their gods the gift of human blood. The victims were usually prisoners of war and slaves. The priests would plunge a knife into the victim's chest and rip out of the still beating heart to give to the gods. Human sacrifice was sometimes numbered into thousands all at one time. In the end, Montezuma II, king of the Aztecs, was overthrown by Cortez to gain control of the empire.
- D. Key Vocabulary
1. Codex – a type of ancient painted book
 2. Motecuhzoma – Emperor of the Aztecs
 3. Tenochtitlan – Great city now called Mexico City
 4. Mola – Ancient civilization art work
- E. Procedures/Activities
1. Hand out map of Mexico and Central America (Appendix F) – students will shade in area marked Aztecs. Discuss and recognize area as encompassing modern day Mexico City.
 2. Read from *New True Book – The Aztec*, pages 9-11 noting the map on page 10, which shows the location of Tenochtitlan. Have students mark this on their map of Mexico and Central America (Appendix F).

3. Read from *New True Book – The Aztec*, pages 14-15, explain that Tenochtitlan was an island city connected to the main land by three causeways, each wide enough to allow 10 soldiers to march side by side. (Teacher may want to draw this on the board, see *Look Into the Past The Aztec*, page 10). Add that the causeways were a system of drawbridges that could be lifted in the case of attack. Explain that at least two causeways carried an aqueduct that supplied the city with fresh water. Explain that an aqueduct carried water through pipes. This assured them of getting fresh water to the city. Each aqueduct carried two pipes sending water to fountains and reservoirs placed throughout the city.
4. Read from *Look Into the Past The Aztecs*, page 11, showing picture of the great temple of Huitzilopochtli, the sun god. Recognize that the present temple has been rebuilt to show what an Aztec temple looked like. This temple was the central point of the great city of Tenochtitlan. Note that the Aztecs built large 4-sided pyramids for their gods. At the top of each pyramid, was the temple where ceremonies took place and sacrifices were made.
5. Read from *The Aztecs* by Nicholson and Watts, p. 12, describing the Aztec pyramids and their purposes. Show picture on page 12.
6. Read from *See Through History The Aztecs*, p. 14-16. This describes the purpose for the most religious building in Tenochtitlan.
7. Students, with help from teacher, will illustrate a webbing (see Appendix G) of Tenochtitlan and what was inside this great city. (See text above, page 16-17).
8. Teacher will read the following to the students:
 - a. At the top of Aztec society was the king. In 1502, a new king was chosen. He was Montezuma II and his name meant Courageous Lord. The Aztec believed that one of their god-spirits, Quetzalcoatl, had a white skin and a beard. This spirit sailed away on a raft made of snakes but promised to return. In 1519, Montezuma II was told that white skinned, bearded men were coming. Montezuma believed the Aztec spirit, Quetzalcoatl, had returned. At first the strangers were welcomed. Montezuma sent gifts of gold and silver, hoping Cortes and his men would take the gifts and go away. However, when the Spaniards saw the riches, nothing could turn them back. Soon, however, Montezuma learned that their leader, Hernando Cortes was not an Aztec spirit. Cortes' motive was to conquer the New World for the king of Spain. Aztecs were greatly outnumbered by the Spanish soldiers. Bows and arrows were no match for Spanish cannons and crossbows.
 - b. Montezuma II had ruled for 16 years when Hernando Cortes landed. Cortes, who could not believe his good fortune, cleverly managed to rule the Aztecs through Montezuma. The Aztecs thought that Montezuma was betraying them and he was killed. Cortes then attacked the city and in August 1591 claimed Mexico for Spain. After 200 years, the mighty Aztec empire lay in ruins. The Aztecs then came under Spanish rule.
 - 1) After reading the story to the students, teacher re-tells story through drawing pictures on the board. The teacher will ask for volunteers to act out the story using dialogue. This can be accomplished in 2-3 groups of students at a time.
 - 2) Pass out Aztec Important People (Appendix H) and read while students follow along as a summary.
9. Read Aztec folktale, *Quetzalcoatl Gives Food to the People* (this is a story of the discovery of corn). Story taken from book: *The Aztecs* by Nicholson and Watts, pages 25-29.

10. a. Choose several students to retell the story.
Teacher will explain as follows about ruler priests and human sacrifices (this could be demonstrated either through 2 column notes or the S QR – Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review method). These bullets can be used in an evaluation/assessment.
 - a. Ruler Priests:
 - 1) Aztecs mainly worshiped the sun spirit
 - 2) Aztec priests offered human sacrifices to keep the sun spirit happy
 - 3) Hundreds of priests and priestesses – treated as nobles
 - 4) Priests/priestesses led hundreds of rituals
 - 5) Predicted the future and acted as doctors
 - 6) Taught counting, writing, science, history, art, music, and dance
 - 7) Led very comfortable lives
 - 8) Had to pray and make offerings in the temple every few hours and make sure that the sacred fires were kept lit.
 - 9) Fasted regularly
 - 10) Gave offerings of their own blood by pricking their tongues, ears and limbs with sharp thorns
 - 11) Took part in dozens of important ceremonies throughout year
 - 12) Most important priests were also astronomers
 - 13) Observed the movement of stars using a cross-shaped piece of wood and from their calculations made predictions about the future
 - 14) Most priests worked at temples
 - 15) Part of their job was to perform human sacrifices
 - 16) Other priests led less religious lives as teachers, warriors, and judges
 - b. Human sacrifices
 - 1) The most important part of Aztec religion
 - 2) Aztec gods demanded human sacrifices
 - 3) Aztecs believed that the heart and blood of victims kept their gods strong and powerful, making them able to protect the people and cause their crops to grow
 - 4) Sacrifices were double offerings to the sun and mother earth to encourage them to provide food for humans
 - 5) Most victims were captured enemy soldiers but some victims were Aztec men, women, and children
 - 6) Only way to provide a constant supply of victims was to go to war
 - 7) Also thought that when they sacrificed a brave soldier his strength would pass to their warriors
 - 8) Aztec priests taught the people that Huitzlopochtli, the most important god, was a powerful god who fought with the moon and the stars, to win each new day. He would be defeated if not fed human sacrifices.
 - 9) Biggest sacrifice during Montezuma II's reign occurred when 12,000 enemy soldiers were sacrificed at once.
 - 10) Victims were held by the priests face upwards on the sacrificial stone while another priest cut open the captive's chest and tore out the heart

- 11) Heart was held up to the sun and then put into a sacred dish
- 12) Victims' bodies were rolled down temple steps where they lay in heaps
- 13) In some sacrifices, the limbs and head were cut off and mounted on skull racks
- 14) Most victims went happily to their deaths, sure that they were going straight to the highest heaven!

F. Evaluation/Assessment

1. Single/short answer test (Appendix I) which assess students' understanding of the Aztec civilization.

G. State Standards (Colorado)

1. Describing and giving examples of basic elements of culture and social organization.

VI. **CULMINATING ACTIVITIES** (The following activities encompass all three ancient civilizations. These activities could be used as an art assessment.)

A. Aztec Dance – (1 day)

Directions:

1. Girls on one side ; boys on opposite side facing girls
2. Girls move to right; boys move to left
3. Beginning on right foot, step right, left foot behind right, step right feet together
4. Bend down on left foot, right knee up; right hand up to sky, left hand elbow length to right arm, feet together, both arms down
5. Repeat on left side.
6. Repeat nos. 4 and 5 at least twice.
7. Face forward, repeat nos. 4 and 5 stationery (hand movements only)
8. With feet together, bend both knees and raise both arms to sky.
9. With hands to side, run in place quickly 10 times, then go down on left knee to the ground with right knee up, with both arms up toward sky and yell, "UGH!"

B. Codex (Codices) – (2-3 days)

1. Explain to students that codices were a form of hieroglyphic writing. Give students 1 piece of lightly colored construction paper (long).
2. Students fold paper accordion style (teacher demonstrates) at least 8 flaps.
3. On first flap, students draw 1 symbol that will represent their story, i.e., if story is about bear, draw bear.
4. Students develop a story that can be drawn on each flap of paper.
5. Drawings should be complete and colored – say as much as possible with pictures.
6. After codices are finished, students pair up and try to "read" each other's codex. (Teacher could display finished codices)

C. Mayan, Aztec, and Inca Figures (person pattern) (See Appendix J)

1. Each student receives a person pattern and a piece of long, white construction paper.
2. Students will cut out person pattern and paste in center of construction paper.
3. Person pattern will be decorated with materials such as cloth, beads, ribbon, felt, as well as colored pencils. Students may be as creative as they want with any materials that they bring.
4. The background of student picture will reflect either the Mayan, Aztec or Inca culture.
5. Teacher may display finished pictures.

- D. Show video: Nova. *500 Nations – The Rise and Fall of the Aztecs*. Burlington, VT: WGBH Videos, 1994.
 - 1. State Standards (Colorado)
 - a. Describing and giving examples of basic elements of culture and social organization.

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Map of North/South America
- B. Blank map of South America
- C. The Land of the Maya handout
- D. Mayan Number Signs
- E. More Mayan Math Handout
- F. Map of Mexico/Central America
- G. Webbing
- H. Aztec Important People
- I. Aztec Test
- J. Meso-American person pattern

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Appendix A

Map of NORTH and South AMERICA



Appendix B

South America



APPENDIX C

THE LAND OF THE MAYA

What remains of the great Mayan civilization can be found in the Central American countries of Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize. This homeland encompassed one of the most varied environments on earth. The Northern lowlands are flat with little surface water, while the Southern lowlands and the volcanic highlands are rain forests.

Archaeologists believe that the earliest Maya were nomads who hunted, fished, and gathered nuts, berries, and seeds for food. By the Preclassic or Formative Period (2000 BC to AD 250), the Maya had settled in communities or villages and were farmers. Deep in the tropical rain forests, the Maya cleared the dense bush and planted corn and other crops.

The Maya used their incredible skill in mathematics and astronomy to build monuments and temples, calculate time, and record historic events. Drainage systems, roads, reservoirs, aqueducts, and bridges contributed to life in Mayan cities.


Beginning in AD 800, the Maya abandoned their large lowland cities. Archaeologists have been unable to explain why this happened. There are several theories explaining why this happened including war with Mexican armies, changes in climate, economic problems, famine, and overpopulation. The surviving people moved into the jungle where they lived in small villages.

The first encounter with Spanish explorers was a peaceful one with Christopher Columbus in 1502. Later Spanish explorers believed they had found El Dorado, a legendary city of great wealth. The Spanish conquered and enslaved the native people. Warfare and European diseases brought by the Spanish killed as many as 90% of the Maya. Missionaries tried to convert the Maya to Christianity.

Today, all that remains of this amazing civilization are astounding temples and magnificent cities of ruins scattered throughout Central America. Descendants of the Maya live in large cities and in rural villages. Many ancient traditions of the Maya coexist with modern technology.

Appendix D

Mayan Number Signs

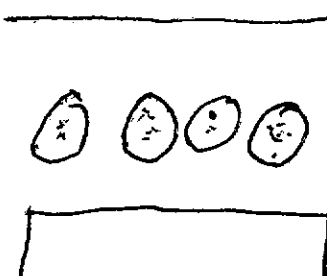
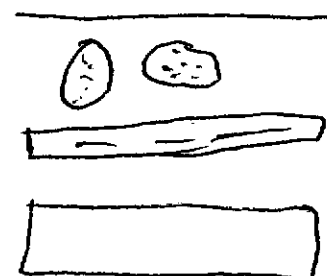
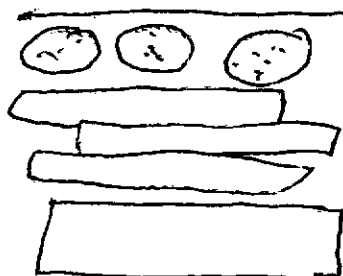

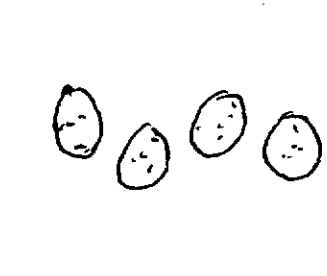
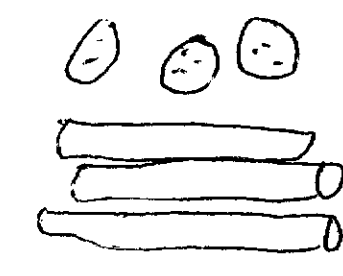
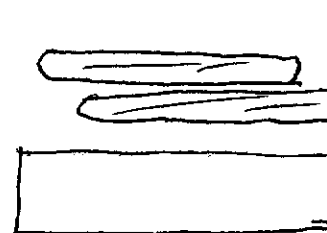
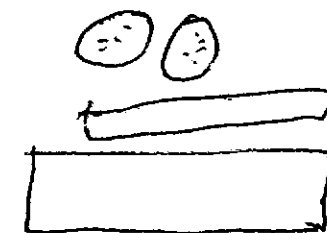
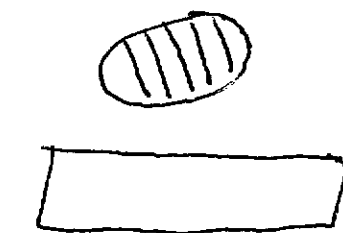
0	1	5	
	.	—	
....	..	—
4	7	10	19

Appendix E

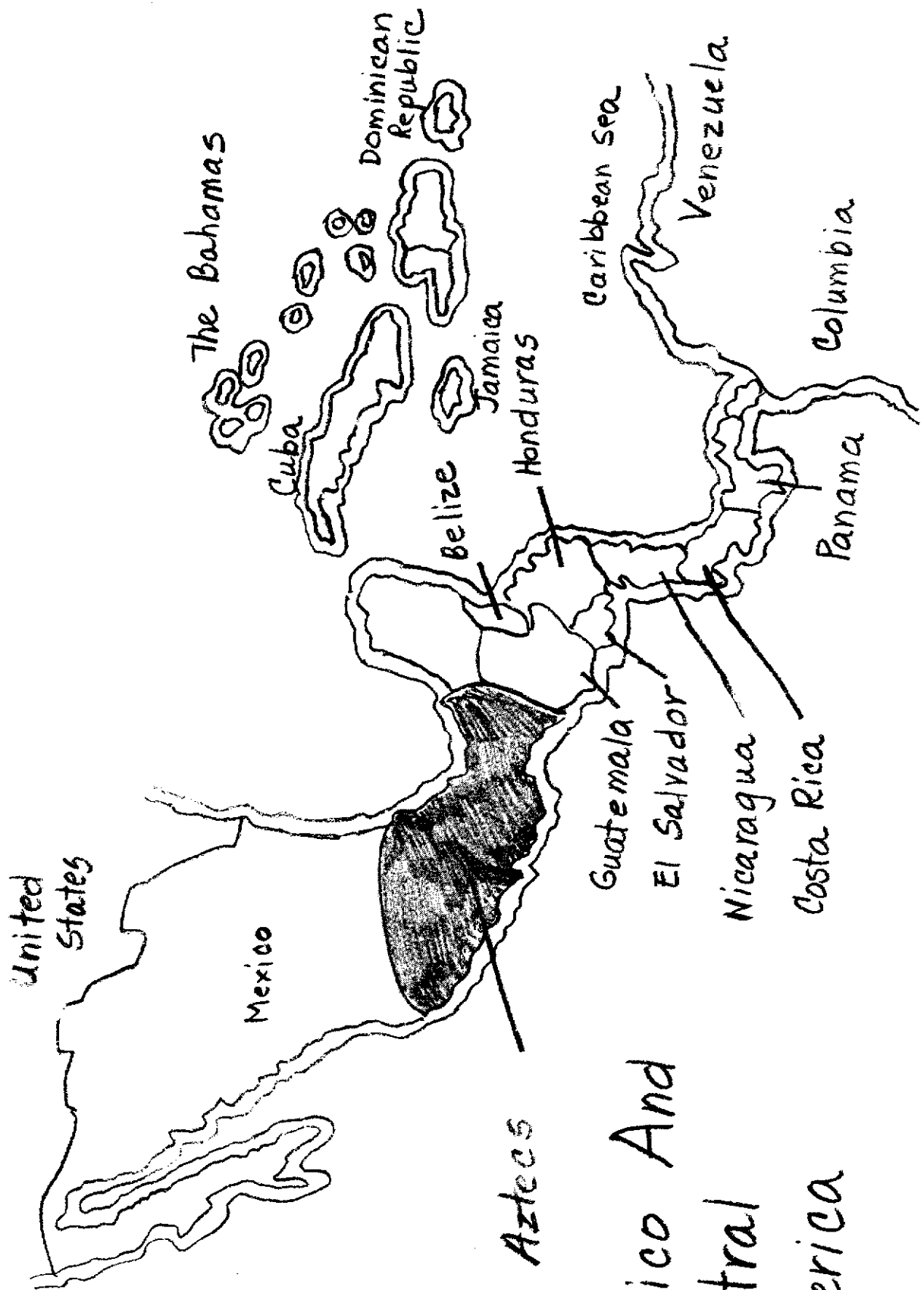
More Mayan Math

1. At the lowest level, each dot is one and each bar is five. This box can hold a total of 19. _____
2. In the next box, each dot represents 20. What does each bar represent? _____
3. What is the highest number that can be written using the first and second boxes? _____
4. The third box begins where the second one ends. One dot in the third box means 400.

5. Follow the example to translate these Mayan numbers into our numbers.

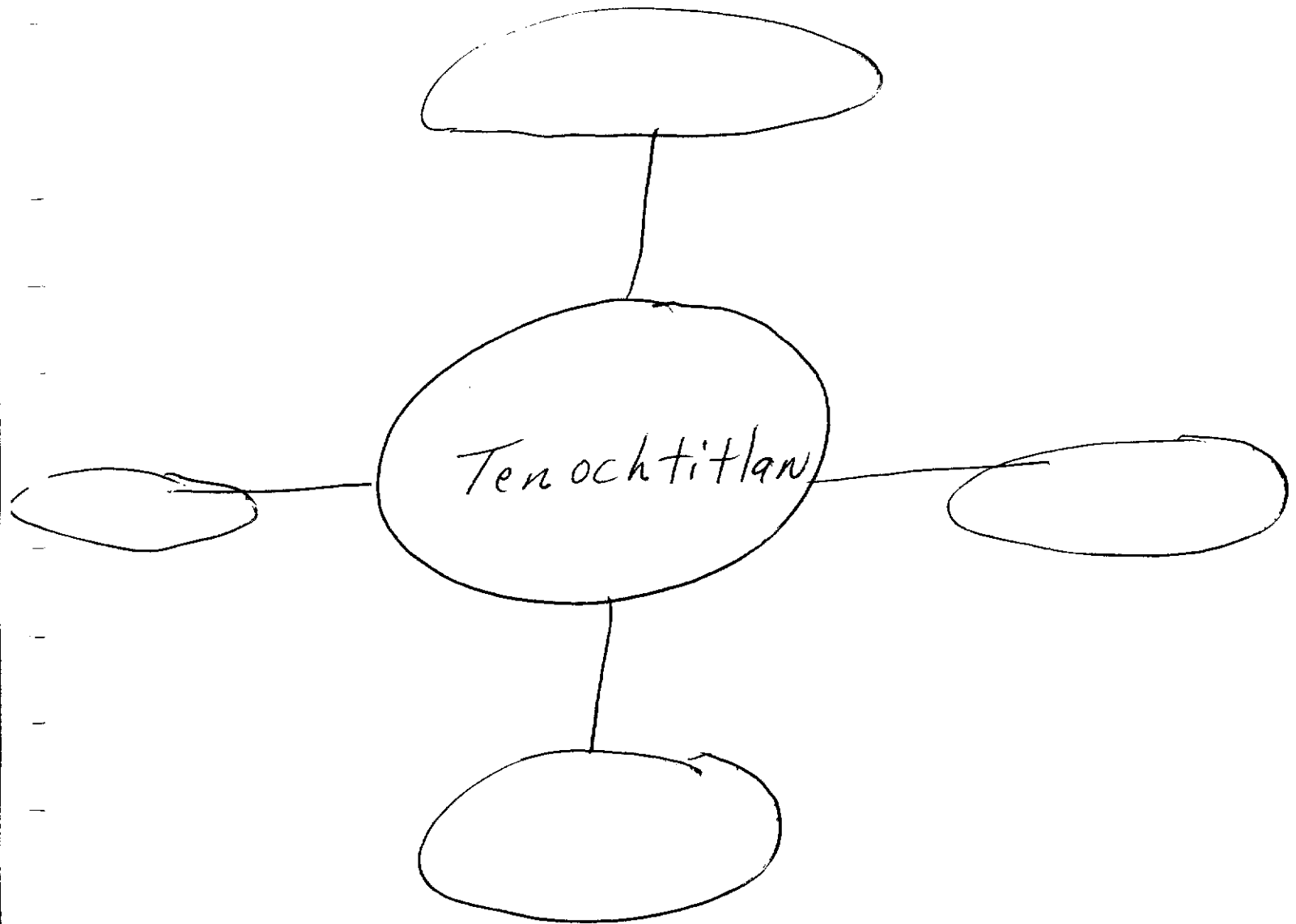
Appendix F



Mexico And Central America

Appendix G

Webbing



Teacher can use this sample on the board.
Students will write in each bubble something
located within the city of Tenochtitlan.

APPENDIX H

Aztec Important People

Hernando Cortes

Hernando Cortes was a Spanish conquistador who came to the New World after Columbus had claimed Central and South America in 1502 for the Spanish crown. He came to the New World seeking fame and fortune. Cortes worked as a planter for seven years in what is now known as Haiti. While he was a soldier on the island of Cuba, Cortes sailed west in 1519 and landed on the Mexican coast. Here, Cortes met up with the Aztec ruler, Montezuma, who thought he was a god and sent him home with many gifts. This only increased Cortes' desire for gold and riches.

Cortes became aggressive with his army and won victory after victory as he approached the Aztec capital city, Tenochtitlan. Montezuma was afraid of the bearded men and allowed them to enter the city. Cortes was treated as a god and soon tricked Montezuma, took him hostage and ruled the city.

In the meantime, Spanish forces had arrived on the coast to arrest Cortes for disobedience because he did not have permission to make the expedition. While Cortes was defending himself on the coast, his officers attacked and killed many unarmed Aztecs during a sacred ceremony. The people revolted. Cortes returned and attempted to calm the revolt. Instead, Montezuma was killed, and Cortes fled the city with his army.

Cortes returned the following year and returned with a new army of Spanish soldiers. After 75 days, the city fell to Cortes. He now controlled and ruled the Aztec Empire. The gold and treasures were all raided and sent back to Spain. Cortes returned to Spain in 1539 and died there in 1547.

Montezuma II

Montezuma, a name whose means "Angry Lord," became the first ruler of the Aztecs in 1502, when the empire was at its height. Montezuma was responsible for the construction of many temples, hospitals and aqueducts. In 1519, the last year of the 52-year cycle on the Aztec calendar, catastrophes plagued the land. Montezuma was convinced that he was destined to see the Aztec world end. Adding to his fear, it was the year 1 Reed on the Aztec calendar. A legend predicted that the god Quetzalcoatl would return from exile that year, reclaim his throne, and destroy the Aztec Empire. At first, Montezuma believed Cortes was that feared god.

APPENDIX I

AZTEC EVALUATION TEST

Name _____

1. Who was the Aztec king?
2. Who was the great white god who came across the sea?
3. What terrible thing did this god bring? (See question No. 2).
4. Why was the practice of human sacrifice so important to the Aztecs?
5. As an Aztec ruler-priest, list five things you may be expected to do.
6. Describe some events one might see at an Aztec temple.
7. What was the purpose of human sacrifices?
8. What modern day city now lies on the great island city of the Aztecs?
9. How was water distributed to the ancient Aztec cities?
10. What part did religion play in the life of the every day Aztec?

***BONUS – WORTH 5 POINTS

Name the great Island City of the Aztec Empire and spell correctly.

Appendix J

Maya, Aztec, and Inca Figures

