

# The Age of Exploration & First Contact

## Unit 9

**Bellwork INB 170** - Read the passage below and respond to the question. Be sure you ALSO highlight or underline the evidence in the text that helped you answer the question.

- **The excerpt below is from a document produced in 1559 during the reign of King Philip II of Spain.**
- *From New Spain are obtained gold and silver, cochineal (little insects like flies), from which crimson (red) dye is made, leather, cotton, sugar, and other things....Great quantities of gold and silver are no longer found upon the surface of the earth, as they have been in the past years; and to penetrate into the bowels of the earth require greater effort, skill and outlay, and the Spaniards are not willing to do the work themselves, and the natives cannot be forced to do so, because the Emperor has freed them from all obligation of service as soon as they accept the Christian religion. Wherefore it is necessary to acquire slaves, who are brought from the coasts of Africa.*
- **Based on the excerpt and your knowledge of colonial history, which statement identifies the primary motivation for Spanish colonization of the Americas.**
  - a. the potential competition among European powers
  - b. the religious conversion of native populations
  - c. the potential for improvement of the economy
  - d. the profit from the African slave trade

**Also place your NEW  
table of Contents on INB  
168**

## Mastery Objective:

I can locate the major South and Mesoamerican cultures of the Olmec, Maya, Aztec, and Inca on a map and describe when and how each civilization arose.

## What are today's State Standards?

**7.64** Identify the locations of the **Olmec, Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations** and explain the impact of the geographical features and climates of Mexico, Central America, and South America on their civilizations.

**7.66** Create a graphic organizer or concept map explaining **how and where** four important South and Mesoamerican empires arose.

## Strategies/Tasks:

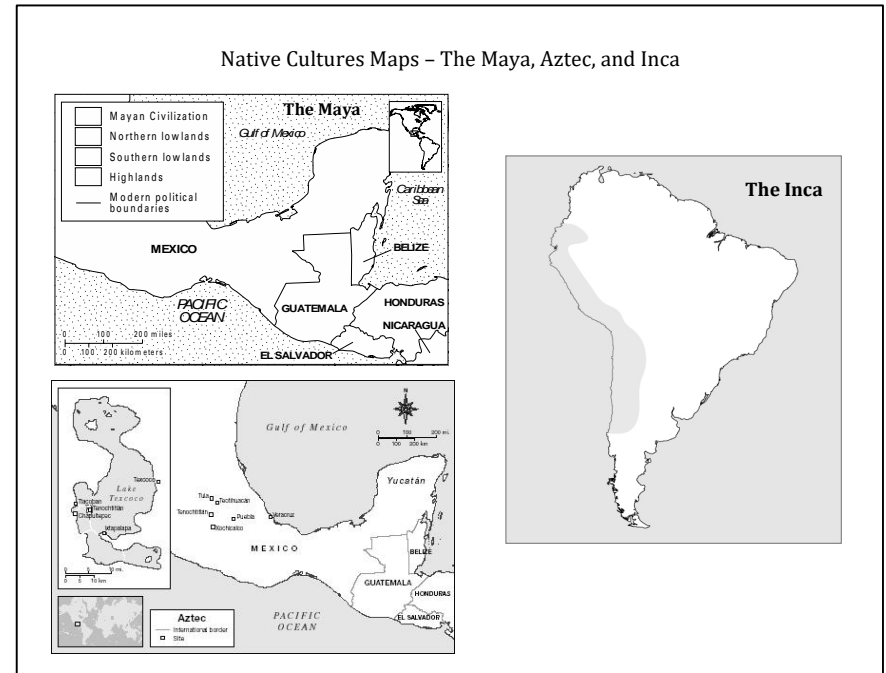
- BW – TN Ready Practice Question
- Map Activity – Native Cultures of South & Mesoamerica
- Graphic Organizer Creation
- Closure – Timeline Creation

## END OF DAY PRODUCT:

**By the end of today's class you should have a partially completed graphic organizer about the civilization of the Maya along with a completed map and timeline.**

# Native Cultures Map Activity – INB 169

- To complete this task you will need to follow the directions for each map **in order**



# Map Activity

- **Outline** the boundary of the Mayan civilization. Then color in the appropriate box on the key to match the boundary color.

- **Label** the Yucatan Peninsula, Petén Jungle, and the four major cities of the Maya...



- **Shade** the northern lowlands, southern lowlands, and highlands. Then shade the appropriate boxes in the key.





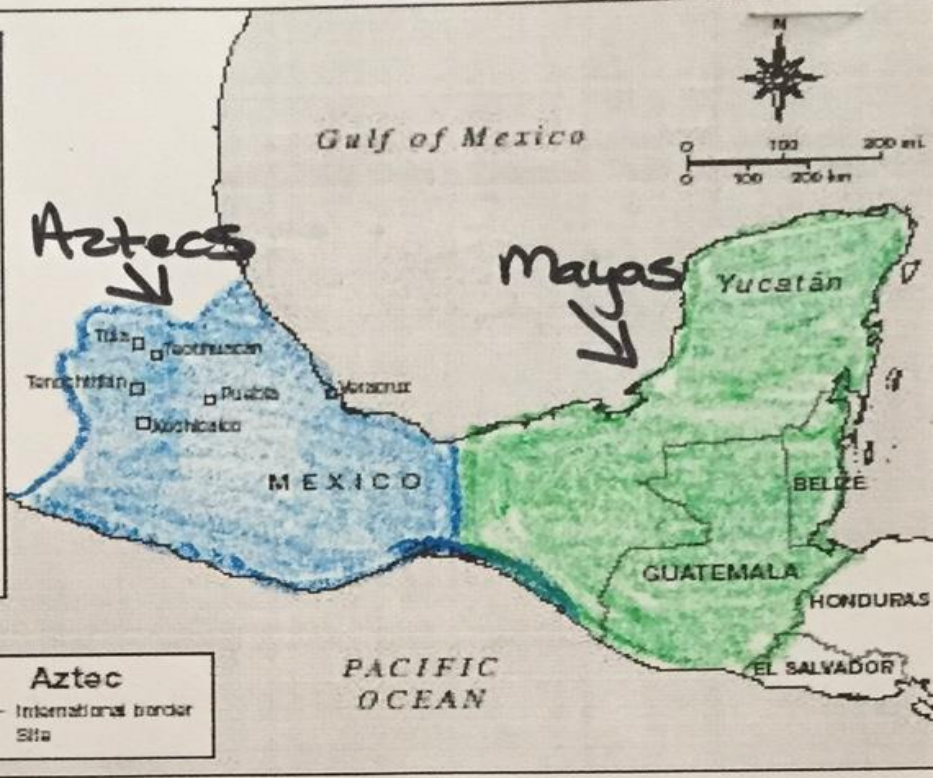
1. Use a crayon to shade the area occupied by the Aztecs
2. Look BACK at the map of the Mayan Civilization and **add shading** for the area controlled by the Mayans in a **second** color.
3. Create a key explaining the colors you used....



 Aztecs  
 Mayas



**Aztec**  
— International border  
□ Site





# The Incan Empire

- Label the CONTINENT “South America”
- Record the date of the Inca Civilization (About 1500)
- Label the Capital city – Cuzco
- Create a symbol to represent the mountains and label them
- Record and complete the following statement: The Incan Empire existed where the modern day countries of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ are today .





# The Incan Empire

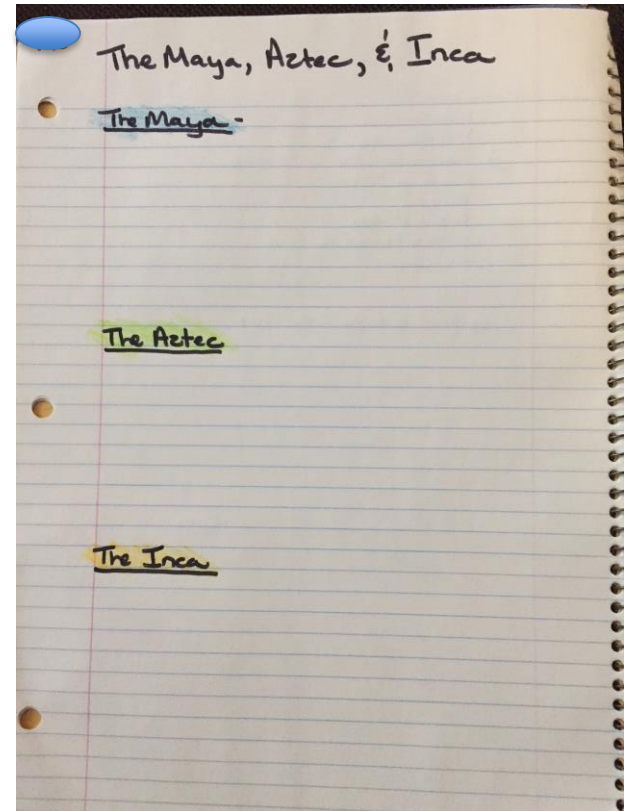
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The Incan Empire existed where the modern day countries of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ are today



# Classwork – *Background for all three groups*

## INB 171

- Create the organizer you see to the right. *Your headings are:*
  - The Maya
  - The Aztec
  - The Inca
- We will be looking for
  - when each civilization existed
  - where each was located
  - what each society was based on
  - why and how each ended.



# The Mayan Civilization

The Mayas were creating an advanced civilization in the Americas around the same time the Roman Empire was declining in western Europe. Mayan civilization reached its height between 300 and 900 C.E. During this time, Mayan culture spread over a great deal of Mesoamerica, including part of present-day southern Mexico, Belize, most of Guatemala, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador.



The landscape in which the Mayas lived varied greatly. In the south, pine forests covered the mountain highlands. In the northern and central regions were rainforests, grasslands, and swamps. These regions are known as the lowlands. Thick jungle covered the southern part of the lowlands. Today, this area is called the Petén (pay-TAYN) region of Guatemala. It is the area in which Mayan civilization reached its highest development.

**The Origins of Mayan Civilization** The Mayas built their civilization, in part, on ideas they inherited from a people called the Olmecs. The Olmecs lived in the jungle areas on the east coast of Mexico. Their civilization reached its peak between 1200 and 500 B.C.E.

Like early civilizations in other parts of the world, the Olmec civilization was based on agriculture. By 2000 B.C.E., people in parts of Mexico had turned from hunting and gathering to farming as their main source of food. A particularly important crop at the time was maize, or corn.

Farming allowed the Olmecs to create permanent settlements. The Olmecs established farming villages throughout the region. They also created trade routes that stretched for hundreds of miles.



By 1400 B.C.E., the Olmecs had a capital city that boasted palaces, temples, and monuments. They were the first Mesoamericans to develop large religious and ceremonial centers. They were also the first to use a solar calendar, or a calendar based on the cycles of the sun. The Mayas would build on all these achievements.

**Three Periods of Mayan Civilization** Mayan civilization began to develop in eastern and southern Mexico around 2000 B.C.E. Historians divide the history of Mayan civilization into three main periods: Pre-Classic, Classic, and Post-Classic.

The long Pre-Classic period lasted from about 2000 B.C.E. to 300 C.E. During this time, the Mayas farmed the land and lived in simple houses and compounds, or groups of buildings.

Gradually, Mayan culture became more complex. As the Mayan population grew, settlements became larger. The Mayas began constructing public buildings for governmental and religious purposes. Possibly as early as 300 B.C.E., they began to adapt the writing system of the Olmecs and to develop their own system of **hieroglyphic** writing. Mayan civilization reached its peak during the Classic period, from around 300 to 900 C.E. The achievements you will study in this chapter date from this time.

During the Classic period, the Mayas adapted and developed other ideas they had learned from the Olmecs. For example, they improved on Olmec building techniques. Even though the Mayas lacked metal tools and had not discovered the wheel, they built enormous stone cities with elaborate and highly decorated temple-pyramids and palaces. The Mayas also built observatories for studying the sky. They charted the movements of the moon, stars, and planets. They used their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics to create complex and highly accurate calendars.

Mayan society during the Classic period consisted of many independent states. Each state included farming communities and one or more cities. At its height, the Mayan Empire included more than forty cities, including Tikal, Copan (kaw-PAHN), Chichén Itzá, and Palenque (pah-LENG-kay).

Around 900 C.E., the Classic civilization collapsed. The Mayas abandoned their cities in the southern lowland area, and the once thriving communities fell into ruin in the jungle. No one knows for certain why this happened. At the end of this chapter, we will look at some theories that may explain the mystery.

To the north, on the Yucatán (you-kuh-TAN) Peninsula, Mayan cities continued to prosper during the Post-Classic period. This period lasted from about 900 C.E. to 1500 C.E. During this time, the Mayas continued their warfare and empire building, but they had fewer great artistic and cultural achievements.

Even at the height of their empire, the Mayas were not one unified nation. Instead, they lived in many city-states with their own governments. What united them as Mayas was their common culture: their social system, languages, calendar, religion, and way of life.



# Aztec Civilization



In this chapter, you will learn about the Aztecs, a Mesoamerican people who built a vast empire in what is today central Mexico. The Aztec Empire flourished from 1428 C.E. until 1519 C.E., when it was destroyed by invaders from Spain.

The Aztecs told a legend about the beginnings of their empire. Originally a wandering group of hunter-gatherers, the Aztecs believed that one day they would receive a sign from the gods. They would see an eagle perched on a great cactus with “his wings stretched out toward the rays of the sun.” In its beak, the eagle would hold a long snake. When they saw this eagle, the Aztecs would know they had found the place where they would settle and build a great city.

In the mid-1200s C.E., the Aztecs entered the Valley of Mexico, a fertile basin in present-day central Mexico. Several times, other groups in the valley pushed the Aztecs away from their lands in the valley.

In 1325, the Aztecs took refuge on an island in Lake Texcoco. There, Aztec priests saw the eagle on the cactus, just as the gods had promised. The Aztecs set about building a city on the site, which they called Tenochtitlán (tay-nawh-tee-TLAHN). Its name means “the place of the fruit of the prickly pear cactus.” In time, the island city became the center of the Aztec Empire.

In this chapter, you will learn where the Aztecs came from and how they built their magnificent capital city. You will also discover how the Aztecs rose to power.

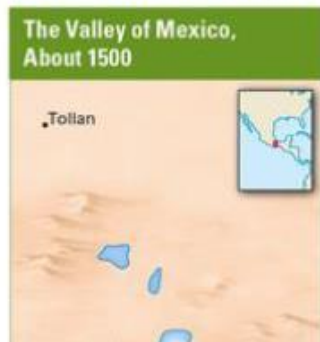
# The Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico



The Aztec Empire arose in the Valley of Mexico, a fertile area nearly eight thousand feet above sea level. By the time the Aztecs arrived, in the mid-1200s C.E., the valley had been a center of civilization for more than a thousand years. Two earlier groups, in particular, had built civilizations there that strongly influenced the Aztecs.

**Civilization in the Valley of Mexico** From about 100 to 650 C.E., the Valley of Mexico was dominated by the Teotihuacáns (TEH-aw-tee-wah-KAHNZ). These people

built an enormous capital city, Teotihuacán. One of the city's buildings, the Pyramid of the Sun, was more than two hundred feet high.



After Teotihuacán's collapse around the 700s, a group from the north, the Toltecs (TOHL-teks), migrated into the valley. Toltec civilization reached its height in the 10th and 11th centuries. The Toltecs built a number of cities. Their capital, Tollán (toh-LAHN), boasted large pyramids topped with temples.

During the 1100s, new groups invaded the valley. They took over Toltec cities and established new city-states. But the influence of the Teotihuacáns and the Toltecs continued to be felt in the new culture that was developing in the valley.



**The Arrival of the Aztecs** Sometime around 1250 C.E., a new group of people arrived in the Valley of Mexico. This nomadic band of hunter-gatherers called themselves the *Mexica* (meh-HEE-kah). We know them today as the Aztecs.

The name *Aztec* comes from Aztlán (az-TLAN), the Mexicans' legendary homeland. According to Aztec tradition, Aztlán was an island in a lake northwest of the Valley of Mexico. The Aztecs left the island

around 1100 C.E. They wandered through the deserts of northern Mexico for many years before coming to the Valley of Mexico.

When the Aztecs came to the heart of the valley, they found lakes dotted with marshy islands. Thriving city-states controlled the land around the lakes.

The Aztecs had a difficult time establishing themselves in the valley. The people living in the city-states thought the Aztecs were crude barbarians. But the Aztecs were fierce warriors, and the city-states were willing to employ them as **mercenaries**.

After they settled in the valley, the legacy of the Teotihuacáns and the Toltecs began to influence the Aztecs. They made pilgrimages to the ancient ruins of Teotihuacán. They adopted Quetzalcoatl (ket-sahl-koh-AHT-l), the Teotihuacáns' feathered serpent god, as one of their own gods.

The Aztecs thought even more highly of the Toltecs, as rulers of a golden age. Aztec rulers married into the surviving Toltec royal line. The Aztecs even began to claim the Toltecs as their own ancestors.

In 1319, stronger groups forced the Aztecs to move away from Chapultepec (chuh-PUHL-teh-pek), a rocky hill where they had made their home. The Aztecs fled to the south, where they became mercenaries for the city-state of Culhuacán. But trouble came again when the Aztecs sacrificed the daughter of the Culhua chief. This led to a war with the Culhuas, who drove the Aztecs onto an island in the shallow waters of Lake Texcoco.

It was here, the Aztecs said, that they spotted an eagle perched atop a cactus with a long snake in its beak. The Aztecs took this as a sign that they should stay in this place, and set to work building the city they called **Tenochtitlán**.

The island turned out to be a good site for the Aztecs' city. The lake provided fish and water birds for food, and the island was easy to defend. Over time, the Aztecs' new home would grow into one of the great cities of the world.

**From Mercenaries to Empire Builders** The Aztecs started building Tenochtitlán in 1325 C.E. For the next 100 years, they again served as mercenaries for a powerful group called the Tepanecs. Through this **alliance** the Aztecs gained land, trading connections, and wealth.

Eventually, however, the Aztecs rebelled against the heavy-handed rule of the Tepanecs. Under the Aztec leader Itzcoatl (itz-koh-AHT-l), Tenochtitlán joined with two other city-states in what was called the Triple Alliance. In 1428, the alliance fought and defeated the Tepanecs. Together, the allies began a series of conquests that laid the foundation for the Aztec Empire.

As Tenochtitlán became a great power, Itzcoatl set out to reshape Aztec history. He burned records that referred to his people's humble origins. Instead, he connected the Aztecs to the distinguished Toltecs.

## The Incan Civilization



In this chapter, you will learn about the Inca Empire, a complex society that developed in the Andes Mountains of South America. The Inca Empire arose in present-day Peru in the 1400s C.E. It lasted until 1532, when the Incas were conquered by Spanish explorers.

From north to south along the the South American continent, the Inca Empire stretched for over 2,500 miles. To communicate across this vast distance, the Incas used runners called *chasquis* (CHAHS-kees) to relay messages from one part of their territory to another.

Picture yourself as a young *chasqui*. From your messenger station along the Royal Road, you see another *chasqui* racing toward you. You know he carries an important message from the emperor. You dart out of the messenger station and run alongside the other runner while he hands you a set of strings called a *quipu* (KEE-poo). Knots tied at different places in the strings stand for numbers. They will help you remember the message. The other *chasqui* also gives you a verbal message. Once he is certain that you have both parts of the message, he stops running. His work is over. Now it is up to you to get the message to the next station as quickly as possible.

This remarkable relay system helped the Incas manage their far-flung empire. In this chapter, you will explore how the Incas built and maintained their empire. You will also learn about the Incas' class structure, family life, religion, and relations with other peoples.

## The Rise of the Inca Empire



At the height of their power in the early 1500s C.E., the **Incas** ruled over a vast, well-organized empire. From north to south, the Inca Empire stretched almost the length of the Andes mountain range, a distance of about 2,500 miles. It reached from the Pacific Coast in the west to the Amazon River Basin in the east. Today, this territory includes most of Peru and Ecuador, as well as parts of Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. Perhaps ten million people lived under Incan rule.

How did the Incas build and manage such a huge empire? In part, they adopted ideas and institutions that had been pioneered by earlier cultures. Two peoples who had an especially strong influence on the Incas were the Moches (MOH-chayz) and the Chimus (chee-MOOZ).

The Moches lived along the northern coast of Peru from about 100 B.C.E. to 700 C.E. They built cities, dug irrigation canals, and developed special classes of workers.

The Chimu kingdom in northern Peru flourished during the 1300s and 1400s. Like the Moches, the Chimus built well-planned cities and used elaborate irrigation methods. They preserved the artistic traditions of the Moches and passed them on to the Incas. They also built good roads and created a message system using runners. The Incas **adapted** and improved upon all these advances.





**Beginnings of the Empire** The center of the Inca Empire was the capital of Cuzco (KOOZ-koh), which was located high in the mountains of southern Peru. The Incas first settled in this area around 1200 C.E. Apart from this fact, their early history is cloaked in legend.

According to one Incan legend, the people were descended from Inti, the sun god. Inti commanded his son, Manco Capac, to rise from the waters of Lake Titicaca. Manco Capac then founded the Inca tribe.

In another legend, Inti appeared before a later Incan ruler. He said the Incas must become a great power and educate the people they met. But for more than two hundred years, the Incas increased their territory by only about a dozen miles around Cuzco.

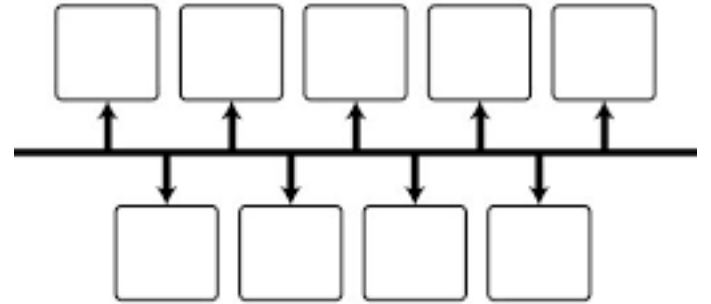
The Incas began expanding their empire in 1438, when they were attacked by the neighboring Chancas. The Incan emperor and many citizens fled Cuzco. But one of his sons, Yupanqui, stayed behind and led his army against the Chancas. Incan legend says that the stones on the battlefield turned into powerful warriors. Yupanqui's victory made his people the strongest group in the area.

After driving off the Chancas, Yupanqui took the name Pachacuti, which means "earthshaker." He also seized the throne. Pachacuti and his son, Topa Inca, then launched a series of conquests against other nearby tribes. With each victory, the Incan army became larger and more skilled. Soon the Incas controlled almost every major group in the central Andes region. In 1470, they conquered the Chimus. By the 1500s, their empire covered about three hundred and fifty thousand square miles.

# Closure – INB 170

(underneath the Bellwork we did first)

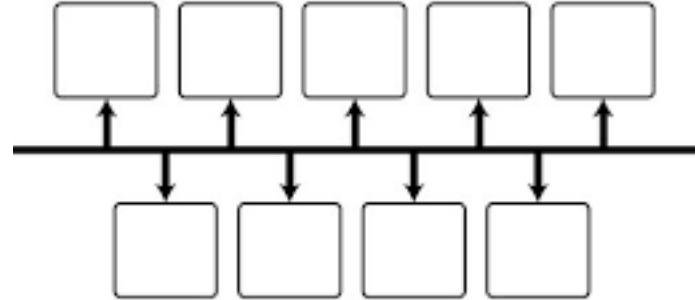
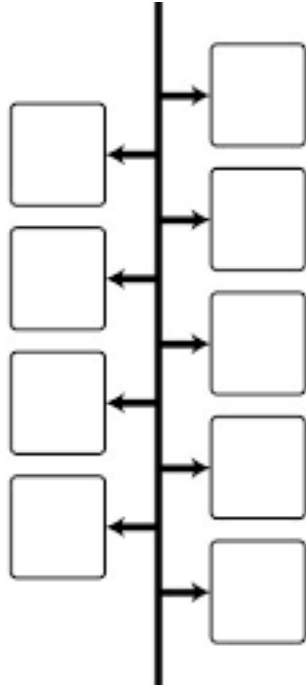
- Create a timeline of all three major South and Mesoamerican cultures –
  - focus on when each began and when each ended (remember that the Maya are also further divided into three big time periods)



Challenge – Include the Olmec Culture if you can for bonus points

# Timeline orientation –

*you may arrange your timeline any way you want*





# Bellwork – INB 172

## questions and CORRECT answers please

1. Mayan culture flourished in the region known as

- A. Mesopotamia.
- B. the Caribbean.
- C. Mesoamerica.
- D. the Midlands.

2. Tikal, Copan, Chichén Itzá, and Palenque are four major Mayan

- A. cities.
- B. dishes.
- C. gods.
- D. rulers.

3. The city that the Aztecs built on an island in Lake Texcoco was called

- A. Tenochtitlán
- B. Aztlán
- C. Teotihuacán
- D. Quetzalcoatl

4. In which part of Mexico did the Aztecs build their empire?

- A. in Baja California
- B. in the Chiapas highlands
- C. in the Valley of Mexico
- D. in the Yucatán Peninsula

5. Around 1200 C.E., the Incas first settled their capital city, which they called

- A. Yupanqui.
- B. Chancas.
- C. Pachacuti.
- D. Cuzco.

## Mastery Objective:

I can describe how each of the major native cultures was organized and governed and explain how their systems were alike or different.

### What are today's State Standards?

**7.65** Describe the highly structured **social and political system** of the Maya civilization, ruled by kings and consisting of agriculturally intensive centers around independent city-states.

**7.67** Explain the **roles of peoples** in the Aztec and Incan societies, including class structures, family life, warfare, religious beliefs and practices and slavery.

## Strategies/Tasks:

- Quick Quiz
- Graphic Organizer Creation
- Closure – Compare and Contrast

## END OF DAY PRODUCT:

By the end of today's class you should have a completed graphic organizer about the social structures of the three cultures and a completed set of social pyramids with your paragraph comparing and contrasting the three.

# Social Structure – The Maya

- Within each Mayan city-state, society was structured like a pyramid. The ruler of each city-state was at the top of this social pyramid. The rest of the members of Mayan society were organized into a series of ranks below the ruler.
- **The Ruler** The highest authority in the state was the halach uinic (hah-lach WEE-nik), a Mayan phrase that means “true man.” He ruled the state with the help of his advisers. He decided when and with whom to go to war.
- The Mayan ruler was considered a god-king. During religious ceremonies, he wore a headdress that was as tall as a person. When he died, a son or another close male relative succeeded him. Mayan rulers were almost always men, but scholars believe that some women had considerable influence, probably through family relationships.



# Social Structure – The Maya

- **Nobles and Priests** The next layer in the social pyramid was made up of nobles and priests. They, along with the ruler, were the only members of Mayan society who knew how to read and write.
- The nobles served as scribes and officials, and oversaw the administration of the states. They gathered taxes, supplies, and labor for projects, such as the construction of temples. Nobles led peasant armies in times of war. During battles, they wore elaborate costumes, including gold jewelry and animal robes made from the skins of jaguars.
- Priests were important because it was their job to maintain favor with the gods. Like nobles, priests inherited their position from their fathers. Priests led rituals, offered sacrifices, and foretold the future. They were consulted to determine the best days for going to battle. In addition to their religious duties, priests were often mathematicians, astronomers, and healers.

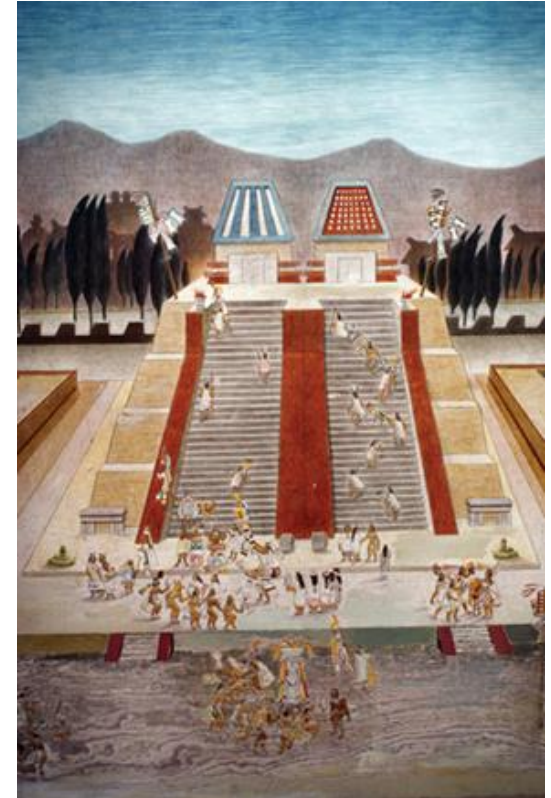


# Social Structure – The Maya

- **Merchants and Artisans** Although the Mayan economy was based mostly on farming, trade and crafts were also important. These functions were carried out by merchants and artisans.
- The Mayas were accomplished traders. They traveled by sea, river, and well-constructed roads to trade with other city-states. Merchants in the lowlands imported valuable products from the highlands. These products included stones such as obsidian and jade; copal, a tree sap that the Maya used as incense during religious ceremonies; and quetzals, birds whose shiny green feathers were used in headdresses. Mayan artisans made a wide variety of objects, many of them designed to pay tribute to the gods. They painted books on paper made from the bark of fig trees. Artists painted murals of Mayan life, important battles, and other major events. They created sculptures for temples and decorative designs on palace walls. The Mayas were also skilled weavers and potters.
- **Peasants** The peasants were the backbone of Mayan society. They worked hard on the land, growing maize, squash, beans, and other crops to feed the population. During the growing season, men spent most of the day in the fields, farming with wooden hoes. Women usually stayed closer to home, preparing food, weaving, and sewing. When they were not farming, peasants had to spend time building pyramids and temples. In exchange for their work, they sometimes attended royal weddings and religious events. Peasants also served as soldiers during wars.
- **Slaves** At the bottom of the social pyramid were the slaves. Slaves performed manual labor for their owners. Some were born into slavery, but free people sometimes became slaves. Some children became slaves when their parents sold them to feed the rest of the family. War prisoners of humble origin were enslaved. (Those of higher rank were sacrificed to the gods.) And some people were enslaved as a punishment for serious crimes.
- In general, the Mayas did not mistreat slaves. Sometimes, slaves actually had easier lives than peasants, depending on what jobs they did and their owners' social rank. But slaves were not free to come and go as they pleased. Often, they were sacrificed when their owners died.

# Government & Social Structure – The Aztec

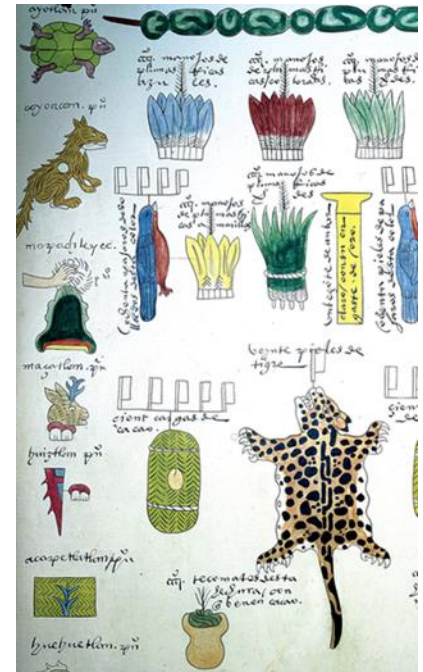
- An Empire Based on Tribute Unlike other empire builders, the Aztecs did not start colonies. Nor did they force conformity on their subjects. Instead, the Aztec Empire was a loose union of hundreds of city-states that had to pay tribute to the Aztecs.
- Collecting tribute was the empire's most vital business. The Aztecs relied on tribute to support Tenochtitlán's huge population. Tribute took the form of whatever valuable items a city could provide. Cities might pay in food, cacao, gems, cotton, cloth, animals, animal skins, shells, building materials, or even soldiers. Tax collectors stationed around the empire made sure that cities paid regularly.
- Each year, huge amounts of goods flowed into Tenochtitlán. An average year brought 7,000 tons of maize; 4,000 tons each of beans, seed, and grain; and at least 2 million cotton cloaks. Warriors, priests, officials, servants, and other workers and craftspeople all received payment in tribute goods.





# Government & Social Structure – The Aztec

- Warfare was the center of Aztec life. Successful battles allowed the Aztecs to increase their sources of tribute. They also gained additional territory, laborers, and sacrificial victims.
- Every male Aztec was trained to be a soldier. In battle, the Aztecs used bows and arrows, spears, clubs, and swords with sharp stone blades. Warrior knights carried shields decorated with figures of animals, such as the jaguar and eagle. The figures represented different strengths that the Aztecs believed they received from these animals.
- An Aztec declaration of war followed a ritual pattern. First, the Aztecs asked a city to join the empire as an ally. The city had 60 days to agree. If the city's ruler refused, the Aztecs declared war.
- Most wars ended after one battle, usually with an Aztec victory. Afterward, the Aztecs brought the soldiers they had captured to Tenochtitlán. Some became slaves, but most ended up as sacrifices.
- The Aztecs made only a few demands on the defeated city. The people had to pay tribute, honor the god Huitzilopochtli, and promise obedience to the Aztec ruler. In most other ways, conquered cities remained independent. They kept their religion, customs, and language. They usually even kept their leaders.
- These conditions made it easy for the Aztecs to rule. But most of the conquered people never thought of themselves as true Aztecs. They wanted their freedom and resented paying tribute. These feelings led to a lack of unity in the Aztec Empire. Eventually, the Spanish would take advantage of that weakness by making allies of the Aztecs' enemies when they invaded Mexico in 1519.





# Social Structure – The Aztec

- **Aztec society was divided into five main social classes.** At the top of the class structure were the ruler and his family. Next, came a noble class of government officials, priests, and high-ranking warriors. The third and largest class was made up of commoners, citizens who were not of noble rank. Below the commoners were the peasants, who were neither slaves nor citizens. At the bottom of the class structure were the slaves.
- Each class had its own privileges and responsibilities. However, an Aztec's status was not fixed. Commoners could move up in social class by performing brave deeds in war or by studying to be priests. A noble could fall in rank if he failed to live up to his responsibilities.
- **The Ruler** The Aztec ruler, or emperor, was considered **semidivine**. Called *tlatoani*, or "he who speaks," the emperor maintained the empire and decided when to wage war.
- The position of ruler was not **hereditary**, as it was in many other societies. When an emperor died, his son did not automatically become ruler. Instead, a group of advisers chose the new ruler from the emperor's family. Each new ruler was expected to acquire new wealth of his own. This was an important motive for constant warfare.



# Social Structure – The Aztec

- **Government Officials, Priests, and Military Leaders** The emperor was supported by a noble class of government officials, priests, and military leaders. Officials in Tenochtitlán counseled the emperor, worked as judges, and governed the city's four districts. Other nobles throughout the large empire ruled cities, collected tribute, or managed the construction of public buildings and roads.
- The emperor appointed government officials for life. Although noble status was not hereditary, most sons of nobles earned high offices themselves.
- Priests conducted all religious rites and served individual gods. Some priests ran the schools that trained boys for government jobs and the priesthood. Other priests studied the skies and made predictions about the future. Generally, only nobles became priests, but sometimes an Aztec from lower classes was elevated to this position. Girls could become priestesses.
- Commoners could also rise to become military leaders. All Aztec men were trained to be soldiers. A common soldier could become a leader by capturing enemies in battle. Military leaders commanded groups of soldiers and took part in war councils.



# Social Structure – The Aztec

- **Commoners** The broad class of commoners included several smaller classes. The highest-ranking commoners were professional traders called pochteca. The pochteca led caravans to distant lands to acquire exotic goods. Some also served as spies for the emperor, reporting what type of tribute a city could provide.
- The pochteca worshipped their own god and lived in a separate section of Tenochtitlán. They paid taxes with rare goods. They enjoyed many privileges. For example, they could own land and send their children to the nobles' schools. Unlike the nobles, membership in this class was hereditary.
- Below the pochteca came craftspeople and artisans, such as potters, jewelers, and painters. Some worked in their homes and traded their goods at the market. Others worked in the royal palace and made items especially for the emperor.
- Most commoners worked as farmers, fishers, laborers, and servants. Instead of owning land, they were loaned plots of land for homes and farms by their calpulli, or ward. All commoners paid tribute to the nobility in the form of crops, labor, or manufactured goods.
- **Peasants** About thirty percent of the Aztec people were peasants. Unlike slaves, people in this class were free, but were considered inferior to commoners. Peasants did not belong to a calpulli and were not loaned land to farm. Instead, they hired out their services to nobles.
- **Slaves** At the bottom of Aztec society were the slaves. Prisoners of war, lawbreakers, or debtors might be forced into slavery. Unlike slaves in many societies, Aztec slaves had a number of rights. They could own property, goods, and even other slaves. In addition, did not pass their status on to their children, who were born free. In fact, the mother of the emperor Itzcoatl was a slave. Many slaves could be emancipated after working off a debt, upon completing their term of punishment for a crime, or when their masters died.

# Social Structure – The Inca

- Incan society was based on a strictly organized class structure. There were three broad classes: the emperor and his immediate family, nobles, and commoners. Throughout Incan society, people who were “Incan by blood”—those whose families were originally from the capital city of Cuzco—had higher status than non-Incas. As the empire grew, its class structure became more complex.
- **The Emperor** At the top of Incan society was the emperor, called the Sapa Inca. The Incas believed that the Sapa Inca was descended from Inti, the sun god. For this reason, the Sapa Inca ruled with complete authority.
- Everything in the empire belonged to the Sapa Inca. He lived in great splendor. When the Spanish came to Cuzco in the 1500s, they were dazzled to see fine gardens, golden statues, and jars made of gold and silver studded with emeralds. Servants carried the Sapa Inca everywhere on a golden litter, an elaborate covered chair. His subjects dared not look him directly in the eye.
- The Sapa Inca could have many wives and hundreds of children. But he had one primary wife, who was called the Coya.



# Social Structure – The Inca

- **Nobles** Below the Sapa Inca were the nobles. The Incan nobility was made up of leaders who helped to rule and administer the vast empire.
- All nobles enjoyed certain privileges. They received gifts of land, servants, llamas, and fine clothing. They did not pay taxes, and the men had the right to marry more than one wife. However, nobles were not all of equal rank. There were three main classes of nobles: Capac Incas, who were considered relatives of the emperor; Hahua Incas, who did not share the royal blood; and *curacas*, who were leaders of people conquered by the Incas.

# Social Structure – The Inca

- The highest-ranking nobles were the Capac Incas. Like the emperor himself, they were believed to be descended from Manco Capac, the legendary founder of the Incan dynasty. Capac Incas controlled the empire's land as well as its valuable resources, such as llamas, coca leaves, and gold. They held the most important posts in the government, the army, and the priesthood. The apus, or governors, of the four quarters of the empire belonged to the group of Capac Incas.
- As the empire grew, the Incas needed more nobles to staff the government's complex bureaucracy. As a result, some people who were not true Incas also gained entry into the noble class. Called Hahua Incas, they were considered "Incas by privilege." Often non-royal leaders from around Cuzco became Hahua Incas. Sometimes people of common birth gained this status as well.
- Additional conquests created a need for the third class of nobles, the curacas. The curacas were local leaders of conquered peoples. Curacas carried out various jobs. Many collected taxes. Others worked as inspectors, making sure everyone followed Incan laws and customs, such as wearing proper clothing and keeping clean homes. Curacas were required to spend time in Cuzco learning these laws and customs. They were allowed to rule their people only if they followed Incan ways.



*Tupac Inca Yupanqui*



# Social Structure – The Inca

**Commoners** Most people in the Inca Empire were commoners who worked as farmers and herders. The Incas did not practice slavery in the usual sense of the word. However, they did require commoners to support the government, both through the products of their labor and by working on government-sponsored projects. Men did jobs like building roads, while women might weave cloth. Incan farmers grew a variety of crops, including squash, peppers, beans, peanuts, more than 20 types of corn, and more than 200 types of potato. The most important crop was the potato, which could survive heavy frosts at altitudes as high as 15,000 feet above sea level. Corn could be grown nearly as high up. The Incas enjoyed corn fresh, fried, and popped. Incan farmers were required to give most of their crops to the government. The government placed the crops it collected in storehouses throughout the empire. The food was then distributed to warriors, temple priests, and people in need. For example, the government gave food to people who could no longer work, particularly the aged, the sick, and the disabled.



# Closure – INB 172

1. Create a visual (a pyramid is a good suggestion) for **each** social structure – Maya, Aztec, and Inca.
2. Write a paragraph that compares and contrasts the social structures of the three cultures



# Bellwork – INB 174

## On the paper I gave you at the door

1. Which members of Mayan society knew how to read and write?

- A. the merchants and artisans
- B. the peasants
- C. the ruler, nobles, and priests
- D. the slaves

2. Who were considered the backbone of Mayan society because they grew most of the food?

- A. artisans
- B. nobles
- C. peasants
- D. priests

3. What were the responsibilities of Aztec emperors?

- A. to maintain the empire and wage war
- B. to judge and govern the city's districts
- C. to collect tribute and fund construction
- D. to appoint war leaders and form wards

4. Which of the following is true of Aztec slaves?

- A. Slaves could own property.
- B. Slaves could own other slaves.
- C. Slaves could be emancipated.
- D. all of the above

5. Where did the Sapa Inca get his authority?

- A. from the people who elected him
- B. from the great riches that bought him the throne
- C. from the army generals who supported him
- D. from his ancestor, Inti the sun god

## Mastery Objective:

I can explain what sort of **achievements** the Maya, Aztec, and Inca are best known for.

### What are today's State Standards?

**7.68** Use multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to describe the **artistic and oral traditions and architecture** in the four major South and Mesoamerican civilizations.

**7.69** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support the analysis of the impacts of the **Mesoamerican developments** in astronomy and mathematics, including the calendar, and the Mesoamerican knowledge of seasonal changes to the civilizations' agricultural systems.

## Strategies/Tasks:

- Quick Quiz
- Graphic Organizer Creation
- Closure – Top Three organizer and illustrations

### END OF DAY PRODUCT:

By the end of today's class you should have a completed graphic organizer about the achievements of each culture and a completed "Top Three" illustrated closure.

# Classwork – INB 175

## *Achievements of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Cultures*

- Create the organizer you see to the right. *Your headings are:*
  - The Maya
  - The Aztec
  - The Inca
- We will be looking for the things each culture accomplished that are worth remembering!



# Classwork - Guiding Questions

Use the Native Cultures Documents linked on the blog to answer the following questions for each Culture.

- What kind of things does your civilization **MAKE**? (think art and trade goods)
- What kind of things did they **INVENT**?
- Are they involved in **mathematics** or **astronomy**?
- What kind of **architecture** (building styles) did they have?
- Do they have any special ways they **grow crops**? (farming methods)



# Closure – INB 174

## “The Top Three”

- For each civilization choose what *you* believe are the top three accomplishments of each
- Create a three column chart and list your top three choices for each civilization and include an **image** of what you think each civilizations MOST important accomplishment was.
- **Challenge:** Which civilization of the three do YOU think was MOST accomplished? Explain your answer.



# Bellwork – INB 176

## On the paper I gave you at the door

1. How did Mayan farmers adapt to the environment of the mountainous highlands?

Top of Form

- A. They built terraces to make more land available for planting.
  - B. They constructed raised-earth platforms surrounded by canals to drain off rainwater.
  - C. They spread chemical fertilizers on their fields to maximize their crop yields.
  - D. They used slash-and-burn agriculture to clear new land for planting.
2. The Mayan Civilization adopted many things from the Olmecs who came before them including
- A. metal tools and the wheel
  - B. a hieroglyphic writing system
  - C. the system of collecting tribute from conquered peoples
  - D. following their religious beliefs

# Bellwork – INB 176

## On the paper I gave you at the door

3. What is one example of a technological marvel at Tenochtitlán?

- A. a horse-drawn tramcar system that carried passengers around the city efficiently
- B. twin aqueducts that carried fresh water for irrigation from the Chapultepec springs
- C. an elevator system to move priests to the top of the Great Temple
- D. under-floor steam heating in the royal palace, Great Temple, and royal aviary

*... At Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs perfected an unusual method of farming. They built huge rafts, covered them with earth, and floated them on the lake. On these chinampas, or “floating islands,” they grew enough maize and vegetables to feed their expanding population comfortably. Eventually, roots from the tree rafts attached themselves to the bottom of the shallow lake to become permanent foundations for buildings...*

4. Which conclusion is best supported by the information in this passage?

- A. the Aztec terraced the land
- B. large plantations provided food for the markets
- C. the Aztecs were limited to subsistence farming
- D. Adapting to their environment helped the Aztec develop their economy

# Bellwork – INB 176

## On the paper I gave you at the door

5. The Incas transmitted messages from one part of their empire to another by

- A. using riders on horseback.
- B. an elaborate relay system.
- C. sending smoke signals.
- D. using trained carrier pigeons.

6. How did the Incan government help those who were in need?

- A. It kept distributed food to those who did not have enough.
- B. It required commoners to work as caretakers of the elderly.
- C. It set up hospitals to provide medical care for the sick.
- D. It provided road-building jobs to the unemployed.

# Mastery Objective:

I can describe the basic religious beliefs of the the Maya, Aztec, and Inca and explain how all three are alike and different.

## What are today's State Standards?

**7.67** Explain the **roles of peoples** in the Aztec and Incan societies, including class structures, family life, warfare, religious beliefs and practices and slavery.

**7.70** Compare the varied **economies and trade networks** within and among major indigenous cultures prior to contact with Europeans and their **systems of government, religious beliefs, distinct territories and customs and traditions.**

## Strategies/Tasks:

- Quick Quiz
- Graphic Organizer Creation
- Closure – Compare and contrast graphic organizer

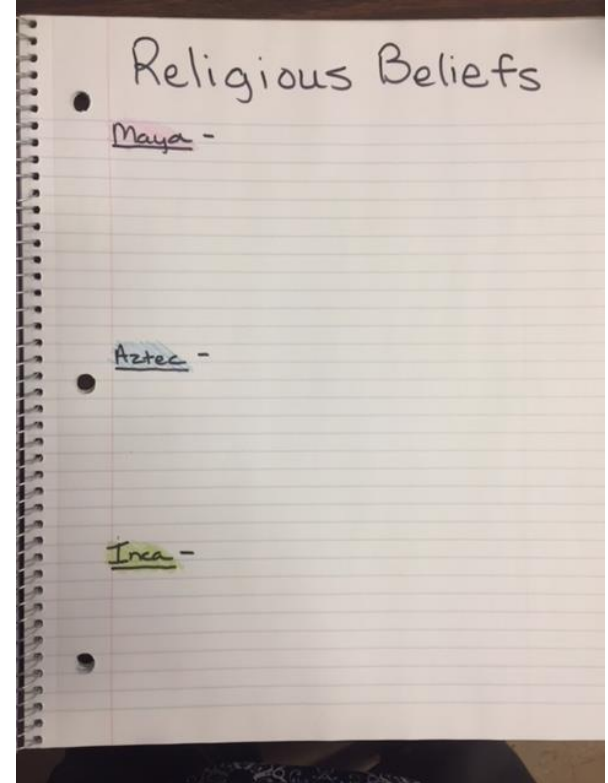
## END OF DAY PRODUCT:

By the end of today's class you should have a completed graphic organizer about the religious beliefs of each culture and a completed "Top Three" illustrated closure.

# Classwork – INB 177

## *Religions of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Cultures*

- Create the organizer you see to the right. *Your headings are:*
  - The Maya
  - The Aztec
  - The Inca
- We will be looking at what kinds of religious beliefs each culture had.





Religion was very important to the Mayas. They built their cities around religious and ceremonial centers. Their magnificent temple-pyramids rose high above the jungle canopy, like mountains reaching into the sky. Temple plazas provided gathering places for people to attend rituals and ceremonies.



Scholars have learned about the Mayan religion from studying present-day Mayan practices, ancient artifacts, and documents written during the Post-Classic period. Here are some things they discovered.

**Beliefs and Rituals** The Mayan religion was polytheistic, which means it included many gods. The Mayas believed in more than 160 gods. The primary Mayan gods were forces or objects in nature that affected people's daily lives, such as rain, corn, and death. Many gods had animal characteristics. The jaguar was especially important to the Mayas.

The Mayas believed that the gods had created the world and could influence or even destroy it. The same god that sent life-giving rain could also ruin the crops with hailstones. So, it was extremely important to honor the gods.

According to Mayan beliefs, only priests could explain **divine** signs and lead people through rituals aimed at pleasing the gods. Priests performed sacrifices and conducted ceremonies. They consulted sacred books, read omens, interpreted signs, and predicted the future. No decision was made without seeking the gods' advice. No action was taken without first honoring the gods.

The Mayas honored their gods with offerings such as plants, food, flowers, feathers, jade, and shells. The Mayas believed that blood gave the gods strength, so they also made blood offerings by sacrificing animals and, sometimes, humans. The people who were sacrificed were usually orphans, slaves, or nobles captured during war.



Human sacrifice also played a role in an ancient Mayan game called *pok-a-tok*. Every Mayan city had at least one ball court where the game took place. Scholars believe that there were two teams of nobles. Players tried to hit a solid rubber ball through a stone ring by using their leather-padded elbows, wrists, and hips. People from all levels of Mayan society attended the popular games. However, the outcome often had serious results. Surviving art from the ball courts shows members of the losing team being sacrificed and the captain of the defeated team being beheaded.

**The Sacred Calendar** The Mayas used their knowledge of mathematics and astronomy to develop a complex calendar system. They used two main calendars for religious and other purposes. The first was a daily calendar, based on the solar (sun) year. It divided the year into 18 months of 20 days each, plus 5 “unlucky” days. This totaled 365 days, as our calendar does.

The second calendar was the sacred, or ritual, calendar. It was called the *tzolkin* (TSAWL-keen), or Sacred Round. The Sacred Round was based on 13 months of 20 days each, making 260 days in all. It had two cycles that worked together to identify a particular day. One cycle was made up of the numbers 1 to 13. The other cycle was a set of 20 day names. Each of the day names represented a particular god. Every 260 days, a given combination of numbers and day names, such as *1 Ik*, would occur.

Only priests could “read” the hidden meaning of the Sacred Round. Priests used the sacred calendar to determine the best days to plant, hunt, cure, do battle, and perform religious ceremonies. To this day, there are calendar priests in southern Mexico who still use the 260-day calendar in this way.

Like Mayan art and architecture, the calendar system reflects a highly advanced civilization. This high level of civilization was possible due to the ability of the Mayas to create a stable food supply.

# A Z T E C

Religion was central to Aztec life and society. The Aztecs believed that humans needed the gods for survival. It was the gods who granted a good harvest or, if they were displeased, sent earthquakes and floods. So it was important to please the gods through elaborate rituals and ceremonies. Priests presented the gods with flowers, ears of maize, clothing, or images made of wood.

The Aztecs adopted some of their gods from other Mesoamerican groups. For example, Tlaloc, the rain god, was an ancient Mesoamerican god. Quetzalcoatl (“feathered serpent”) had been worshipped by the Teotihuacans. But the Aztecs’ own chief god was Huitzilopochtli, the god of the sun and of war. In fact, the Aztecs called themselves the “people of the sun.”

The Aztecs saw the sun as a warrior who fought each night against the forces of darkness. In Aztec belief, the survival of the universe depended upon the sun winning these battles. The way to keep the sun strong was to offer him nourishment in the form of blood.

For this reason, most Aztec rituals included some form of blood sacrifice. Every morning, Aztec priests sacrificed hundreds of birds to Huitzilopochtli. Priests also pierced their skin with cactus spikes to offer their own blood.

The highest form of sacrifice, however, was that of humans. The Aztecs particularly valued the sacrifice of warriors captured in battle, because they believed that the blood of strong warriors was especially nourishing to Huitzilopochtli. Scholars think the Aztecs also used human sacrifice to frighten other groups into accepting their rule.

In Tenochtitlán, up to several thousand people may have gone to sacrificial deaths each year. Four priests pinned the victim to the stone in front of Huitzilopochtli’s temple, while another cut out his heart. Some victims may have died willingly in the belief that they would accompany the sun god in his daily battle across the sky.

The Aztecs also made sacrifices to other gods. They threw the sacrificial victims of the fire god into a great blaze. To honor the corn goddess, they cut off women’s heads. Overall, the Aztecs practiced human sacrifice on a much larger scale than other Mesoamerican groups.



# INCA

**Religion** Religion was an important part of Incan life. Like other early groups in the Americas, the Incas believed that the gods influenced their daily lives. As a result, they showed their devotion to the gods through a number of practices.

**Religious Beliefs** The Incas believed in many gods who controlled various aspects of nature. For example, Illapu was the weather god and rain giver. Pacha Mama was the Earth Mother and Mama Cocha was the goddess of the sea. The Incas believed that all these gods had received their power from a supreme god called Viracocha, the creator of the world.

But to the Incas, the most important god was Inti, the sun god. Inti was important for two reasons. First, Incas believed that the emperor's family was descended from Inti. Second, Inti was also the god of agriculture, which was the basis of Incan life.

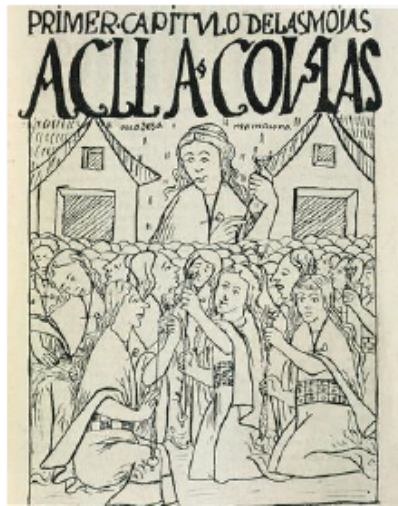
The Incas also believed that spirits dwelled in certain sacred objects and places, called *huacas*. Huacas (WHAH-kuz) included temples, charms, and places in nature such as springs and rocks. Because the Incas believed in an afterlife, the tombs and bodies of the dead were also considered huacas. People often prayed and made offerings to all these huacas.

**Religious Practices** The Incan religion was highly formal and required a large number of priests to conduct rituals and ceremonies. Priests worked at temples and shrines devoted to the gods.

The most important temples were those dedicated to Inti. The high priest, a close relative of the Sapa Inca, presided over the Sun Temple in Cuzco. Priests who worked in the sun temples in the countryside came from the families of curacas.

Like the Mayas and the Aztecs, the Incas offered sacrifices to the gods. Some sacrifices took place regularly. For example, each day priests threw corn on a fire to encourage the sun to appear. "Eat this, Lord Sun," the priests said, "so that you will know we are your children." In many rituals, the Incas sacrificed live animals, usually llamas or guinea pigs. The Incas also practiced human sacrifice, but only on the most sacred occasions or in times of a natural disaster.

In addition to performing rituals and sacrifices, priests practiced divination, or the art of predicting the future. Divination helped the Incas decide upon a course of action. For example, a priest might ask an oracle when the army should attack another tribe.



**Chosen Women** A unique aspect of Incan religion was the role played by women. Each year, government officials visited all the towns in the empire to search for the most beautiful, graceful, and talented girls between the ages of eight and ten. Selected girls were honored as Chosen Women and taken to live in convents. There they studied Incan religion, learned how to prepare special food and drink for religious ceremonies, and wove garments for the Sapa Inca and the Coya.

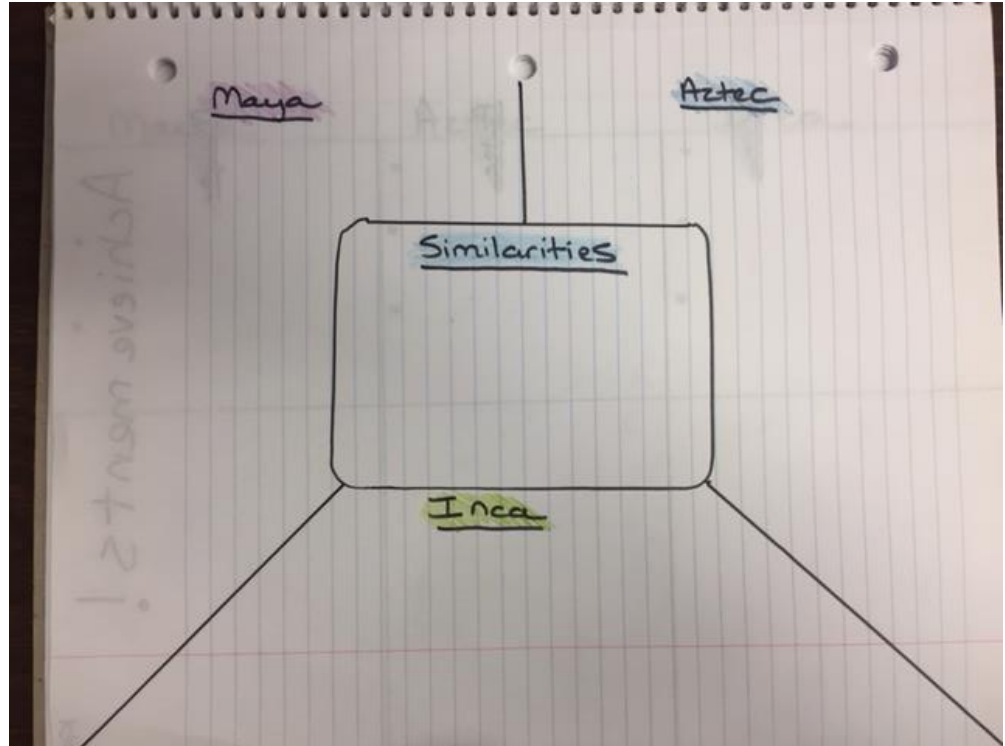
Around age fifteen, many Chosen Women left their convents. Some went to work in temples or shrines. Others became convent teachers, called *mamaconas*. Still others went to Cuzco and became wives of nobles or secondary wives of the Sapa Inca himself.

A few Chosen Women were sacrificed at important religious ceremonies. The rest spent almost their entire lives either serving Inti or fulfilling their roles as wives of nobles or the emperor. Only in old age were they sometimes allowed to return to the homes and families they had left so many years earlier.

# Closure – INB 176

remember you can use the WHOLE page

- **Your task:** Compare and contrast how the religious beliefs and practices of the three major Meso and South American cultures are alike and different from one another.





Maya

Aztec

Similarities

Inca

! 2 + nsm svidsA ?