

7-2-2008

## Aztec, Inca, and Maya [5th grade]

Trinity University

Canyon Ridge Elementary School (San Antonio, Tex.)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ\\_understandings](http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ_understandings)



Part of the [Elementary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Trinity University and Canyon Ridge Elementary School (San Antonio, Tex.), "Aztec, Inca, and Maya [5th grade]" (2008).

*Understanding by Design: Complete Collection*. 58.

[http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ\\_understandings/58](http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ_understandings/58)

This Instructional Material is brought to you for free and open access by the Understanding by Design at Digital Commons @ Trinity. For more information about this unie, please contact the author(s): . For information about the series, including permissions, please contact the administrator: [jcostanz@trinity.edu](mailto:jcostanz@trinity.edu).

# Unit: Aztec, Inca, and Maya

## Grade: 5th

### Stage 1: Desired Results

#### Understandings

*Students will understand that...*

*-geographical factors influence civilizations through environment, economy, growth, and communication.*

*-civilizations have a rise and fall*

*-understand civilization as a system*

#### Essential Questions

1. What can you learn from a culture?
2. What do great cultures have in common?
3. How does geography impact a civilization?
4. What happens when cultures meet?

#### Knowledge & Skill

*(NEISD scope & sequence; TEKS; Core; etc.)*

TEKS 5.9A, 5.9B, 5.8D

### Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

#### Museum Walk

When their culture posters are complete, the students hang their expert poster in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade hallway, which becomes the “**Hall of Expertise**”. This assessment piece allows for the 5<sup>th</sup> graders to conduct a museum walk up and down the hallway. As they walk, they have 3 sticky notes. They can choose three posters to give positive feedback on, writing the feedback on a sticky and then placing it on the poster so that it hangs off the bottom. Model appropriate feedback before the museum walk; e.g. “That is so interesting.”; “Excellent drawing!”; “I never knew that...”; “This makes me wonder...”. Once a poster has 5 stickies at the bottom, no more may be added to that poster. Make a rotation throughout the day, so that all of the kids are not in the hall at the same time. **Group all of the Aztecs together, the Maya together, and the Inca together, including the timelines created by each class.**

Other evidence:

*Video quizzes on each civilization, note taking in Pearson books, scavenger hunts with Discover Kids magazines,*

### Stage 3: Learning Activities

*(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)*

**Activities which are taped into the Social Studies Portfolio are marked with an (NB) at the end of the activity.**

**NB=notebook**

#### Introducing the Unit

Through the Learning Activities, students will be able to answer the following topic questions:

When were the Aztecs, Incas, and Maya civilizations developed?

How did they adapt agricultural methods to suit the environment?

What were their contributions in math, science, and literature?

What factors caused their decline?

The essential questions are introduced and discussed. They are then posted in the room to revisit throughout the unit. The topic questions are then introduced and discussed as well. These are copied into their social studies notebooks, each on a separate page for each culture. (12 pages altogether.) Throughout the unit, as kids discover information pertaining to a topic, they can add facts to their page. This can serve as a growing database of information for the student to increase their knowledge base of the specific cultures.

### Daily Lesson Implementation

1. **Three sessions; 45 minutes each.** Maya, Aztec, Inca videos; This activity is strictly to build background knowledge. Aztec Video Title: Indians of North America: Aztec; Maya Video Title: Ancient Civilizations for Children: Maya; Inca Video Title: Ancient Civilizations for Children: Inca. Each video is approximately 30 minutes and takes one class period. They are shown on three consecutive days to kickoff the unit. The students have a video note taking guide for each culture that they fill out along with the video. (Attachment A) The video guides are copied onto one side, since they are included in the portfolio. The video guides are self-checked immediately after the video; students correct any errors before taping it into their portfolio. **(NB)**
2. **Four sessions; 45 minutes each.** Pearson reading (in pairs) – guided note taking; Student pairs share a copy of the Pearson 5<sup>th</sup> grade Core Knowledge Book: History and Geography. First, the students read that day’s lesson with their partner. They then get the guided note taking worksheet and re-read independently, completing the guided note taking on 4 of the chapters. (Attachment B) Collect the guided note taking for both a social studies grade and a reading grade. Students are expected to spell all words correctly in the guide. Tape into **NB** after assessing student work.  
**Lesson 2 Maya Science and Daily Life**  
**Lesson 3 The Aztecs: Soldiers of Blood**  
**Lesson 5 The Incas: Lords of the Mountain**  
**Lesson 7 The End of Two Empires**
3. **Three sessions; 45 minutes each.** Discover Kids magazines. Each student has their own magazine. They don’t need to complete the scavenger hunt in any specific order, but they have three days to complete all three scavenger hunts. Pull a small group to complete the scavenger hunt with students who struggle. Collect the scavenger hunt for a social studies grade. For students who finish more quickly, they can choose one of the essential questions and write a paragraph response in their portfolio notebooks. Tape scavenger hunts into **NB** after assessing student work.
4. **Three work sessions; 45 minutes each. One day museum walk through the “Hall of Expertise”; 45 minute session.** Be an expert! Kids have explored the cultures in three different resources: the videos, the Pearson books, and the Discover Kids magazines. They choose a specific culture and one topic about that culture to become an expert on. Some ideas are: Mayan social hierarchy, Incan terrace farming, Aztec games, a day in the life of an Incan child, Aztec decline, chocolate and the Mayans, etc. Each child needs half a sheet of poster board to create their final product.

### Three Work Sessions

- a. All of the students who want to research the same culture work together to develop ideas they’d like to explore using the essential questions as a guide. They divvy up the most compelling ideas to partners in the group. Each partner works to explore their assigned idea about their culture.
- b. Model the layout of a poster: large letters for the title; short phrase of explanation; eye-catching picture; should be able to view from a distance; choose 4 or fewer marker colors to write the letters and create the picture. (More colors or too much detail creates a “busy-ness” that is distracting to the reader, and then the message of the poster is lost. (Bring in movie poster as realia.)

- c. Partners review/research the information about their idea. They plan the poster, which includes editing and layout, on a sheet of drawing paper before they get the final copy poster board.
  - d. They come back together as a group and share their posters.
  - e. The group creates a timeline for their culture, incorporating ideas from everyone's research onto the timeline.
  - f. The group then creates their culture's display, including the timeline, in the "**Hall of Expertise**". (See Stage 2)
5. Optional art activity Aztec calendar; students read an article about the Aztec calendar and examine the example included. Students then create a replica of an Aztec solar calendar, choosing their own symbols for the design.

#### Performance Tasks

- a. On a large sheet of butcher paper, create a Maya, Aztec, Inca matrix. The top of the matrix has titles which relate to the Essential Questions. The side of the matrix has each of the cultures listed: Maya, Aztec, Inca. The matrix is filled out every few days during the unit. By the end of the unit, the matrix is complete.
- b. Whole Group Conversation: The final wrap-up of the unit involves reviewing the facts placed onto the matrix, and then **drawing conclusions about all three cultures which can be inferred from the matrix**. These become the class' **Big Thoughts** and are posted somewhere in the room. There are typically 3 to 5 **Big Thoughts**. Every time another culture(s) is studied, the **Big Thoughts** are revisited. A **Big Thought** example from a previous 5<sup>th</sup> grade class is: *All cultures find a way to plant and grow food to feed their people. We then went on to study North American Indians, and at the end of that unit, this **Big Thought** was revised: All cultures find a way to feed their people, including farming crops or following herds to hunt.* This revised thought then replaced the initial statement. The goal is that by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, students will have revisited the **Big Thoughts** several times, and will take away essential understandings about all cultures.
- c. Social Studies Portfolio: the 5<sup>th</sup> graders create an individual ongoing portfolio of all the 5<sup>th</sup> grade units. The Maya, Aztec, Inca section of the portfolio is an ongoing assessment with a culminating checklist after the unit.

**Appendix A:**

**Video Guides**

## Ancient Civilizations for Children: Maya

The Maya lived in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

They left many clues to their civilizations through \_\_\_\_\_.

Archeologists found an \_\_\_\_\_ in a pyramid at the ruins of the ancient city of Palenque.

Mayans believed that their king descended from the \_\_\_\_\_ and that the king's blood had \_\_\_\_\_.

Mayan cities had large stone \_\_\_\_\_ that were used as \_\_\_\_\_.

The most important city-state in the Mayan Empire was \_\_\_\_\_.

Mayans were great \_\_\_\_\_ and created an accurate 365-day \_\_\_\_\_ that worked on a wheel.

The ancient picture writing of the Maya was called \_\_\_\_\_.

The Mayans believed that the way to maintain order in the universe was to offer the gods a \_\_\_\_\_.

Mayans, like the Incas, were great \_\_\_\_\_ of brightly colored cloth.

The most important food was \_\_\_\_\_, which they ground up to make \_\_\_\_\_.

The Mayans did not use money, but used \_\_\_\_\_ beans.

Beauty was very important to the Mayans. They thought \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were a sign of great beauty.

The Mayans played a game called Pok-Ta-Pok on a large green yard in their city. The ball could only be hit with the \_\_\_\_\_. This sport kept them in shape for battles and was considered \_\_\_\_\_.

Weavers  
Writing  
Crossed Eyes  
Tikal  
Glyphs  
America  
Tattoos  
Astronomers

Human Sacrifice  
Emperor's Tomb  
Temples  
Sacred  
Gods  
Tortillas  
Blood  
Special Powers

Picture  
Mexico  
Pyramids  
Calendar  
Corn Central  
Chocolate  
Hips

## Indians of North America: Aztec

Meso-America was considered the ancient lands in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ have found many clues to the Aztec civilizations in their digs.

Aztecs were expert \_\_\_\_\_ and masons.

They learned how to measure time and created complex \_\_\_\_\_.

The Aztecs created their own picture writing on \_\_\_\_\_ that told their history and stories. They were written on bark and carved in stone.

The Aztecs wandered for many years and were kicked out of many lands. Finally, they settled in a marshy area (a blend of water and land) and named their capital city \_\_\_\_\_.

The city of Tenochtitlan was made on a system of \_\_\_\_\_, which were rectangular plots of land built up with layers of soil in the water. They were called floating gardens.

The best way to travel around Tenochtitlan was by \_\_\_\_\_, a small, manmade river system.

The Aztecs were known as a culture of fierce \_\_\_\_\_, because they conquered so many areas of Mexico.

The Aztecs made many fine goods that were traded and sold at \_\_\_\_\_.

Human sacrifices were an important part of Aztec ceremonies. They considered it a way to \_\_\_\_\_ the gods and maintain the success of the universe.

\_\_\_\_\_ was the Aztec Emperor when the Spanish explorers first arrived.

\_\_\_\_\_ was the leader of the Spanish explorers during the fight for the Aztec empire.

The Spanish brought many \_\_\_\_\_ to Mexico and many Aztecs died.

Cortes  
Builders  
Central America  
Disease  
Honor

Tenochtitlan  
Warriors  
Chinampas  
Marketplaces  
Mexico

Canals  
Codices  
Archeologists  
Montezuma  
Calendars

## Ancient Civilizations for Children: Inca

The Incas lived on the continent of \_\_\_\_\_.

They became one of the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ in history.

The Incas cut stone by hand and built amazing structures without the use of \_\_\_\_\_.

In the ancient city of Machu Pichu the Incas built a Temple of the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Incas lived in the \_\_\_\_\_ mountains.

The Inca people communicated with each other by building a great system of \_\_\_\_\_ and used \_\_\_\_\_ to deliver messages.

The Inca Emperor was called \_\_\_\_\_ and was treated like a god.

Everyone in the Inca community weaved wool clothing made from \_\_\_\_\_.

The Incas farmed on flat strips of land on the mountainsides called \_\_\_\_\_.

The Incas largest celebration was called \_\_\_\_\_ on June 21st to thank the sun god for the crops and to ask for better crops for the following year.

The name of their sun god was \_\_\_\_\_.

The Incas had no form of written language and kept track of their information through the use of knotted strings called \_\_\_\_\_.

The Incas did not eat much meat, when they did they ate \_\_\_\_\_.

The Incas valued precious metals. They believed that \_\_\_\_\_ was the sweat of the sun and \_\_\_\_\_ was the tears of the moon.

The fall of the Incan Empire was caused by the Spanish explorer \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ that the Spanish brought with them.

Pizzaro

Disease

Gold

Silver

America

Inti

Festival of the Sun

Sapa Inca

Roads

Sun

Terraces

Guinea Pigs

Quipus

Andes

Tools

Llamas

South

Relay Runners

Builders

# **Appendix B:**

## **Guided Notetaking**

## The Maya: People of Mystery; Guided Note Taking

1. The Mayas discovered important \_\_\_\_\_ ideas and studied the movement of the \_\_\_\_\_, producing a \_\_\_\_\_ almost as accurate as the one we have today.
2. Long ago two American archaeologists found the ruins of the city of \_\_\_\_\_ which is now present day Honduras. The Maya controlled a large group of city-states on the \_\_\_\_\_.  
*WOW! I would love to visit the ruins and investigate.*
3. The largest buildings in Maya cities were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. From the size of the buildings, it is clear that \_\_\_\_\_ was a very important part of Maya life.
4. Archaeologists found \_\_\_\_\_ carved into Maya buildings and walls. Hieroglyphs are like a \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Codes are sometimes hard to break!*
5. The Maya revolved around \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and service to the \_\_\_\_\_. The Maya believed that the gods were \_\_\_\_\_ than humans.
6. Archaeologists believe that the goal of \_\_\_\_\_ was to drive a solid rubber ball through a stone ring. Pok-ta-pok is a game with \_\_\_\_\_ importance.
7. The Maya think of it as a \_\_\_\_\_ between good and evil.  
*“Let’s play ball!”*
8. The losers were considered \_\_\_\_\_ and experts believe that some of them were offered as \_\_\_\_\_ to the gods.
9. A typical sacrifice involved \_\_\_\_\_ the captive blue, strapping him to a rock \_\_\_\_\_, and cutting out his \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ heart with a stone knife.
10. Pok-ta-Pok and human sacrifices are only two of the many aspects of Maya life that we understand better as a result of breaking the \_\_\_\_\_ code.

## Maya Science and Daily Life; Guided Note Taking

1. Without scientific tools, the Maya \_\_\_\_\_ that there were \_\_\_\_\_ days in a year. Modern astronomers measure the year at 365.2422 days.

*Wow, what smart ancient scientists!*

2. Location of the temples and pyramids was important and \_\_\_\_\_ were built so that the sun would shine directly on the most important part of the temple on important days.
3. A powerful system of \_\_\_\_\_ was developed. We all know that zero can stand for nothing, but when it comes to a system of numbers, zeros mean a lot. Zeroes enable us to write #'s like 20 & 201.
4. Maya people made their living as \_\_\_\_\_. Guess what their main crop was: \_\_\_\_\_. Oh, and they also ate a flat bread you might eat today! Guess what it is? \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Maya did things to their babies that may seem a little strange. They would hang a \_\_\_\_\_ from their baby's nose to develop crossed eyes and attach a board to their head to flatten it!
6. Women and girls were responsible for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and they made \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Hey, boys what were you doing????*
7. At the age of \_\_\_\_\_, children marked their passage to adulthood. Boys would move into a house for unmarried men until a \_\_\_\_\_ was arranged.
8. Where did everyone go? Archaeologists believe that the Maya left their cities sometime in the \_\_\_\_\_; that's when the writing **mysteriously** stopped. The once great Mayan cities were abandoned and swallowed up by the jungle. The Maya scattered. But, the people themselves did not disappear completely. Today, \_\_\_\_\_ still speak languages derived from ancient Maya. Although many of these people are poor, they have a rich \_\_\_\_\_.

**Appendix C:**

**Assessments**

## Ancient Civilizations Test

Directions: Place the following facts underneath the appropriate civilization.

16<sup>th</sup> century, 1532

Cenote was important

Two calendars: solar and sacred

Understood the concept of zero

Used the quipu

Llama was important animal

Remainder of this civilization seen in Mexican flag

Aquiline noses considered beautiful

suspension bridges

Conquered by Hernan Cortez

messenger service

Tradition of bead in boys' hair and string with shell on girls' waists

Tradition of children choosing their own names at age 13 or 14

Chocolate and turkey were taken back to Europe from here

Classical period 250 to 900 AD

Found in Guatemala, Honduras, and Southern Mexico

Found in modern day Mexico City

Found in South America in Peru, Chile,

**Mayans**

**Aztecs**

**Incas**