



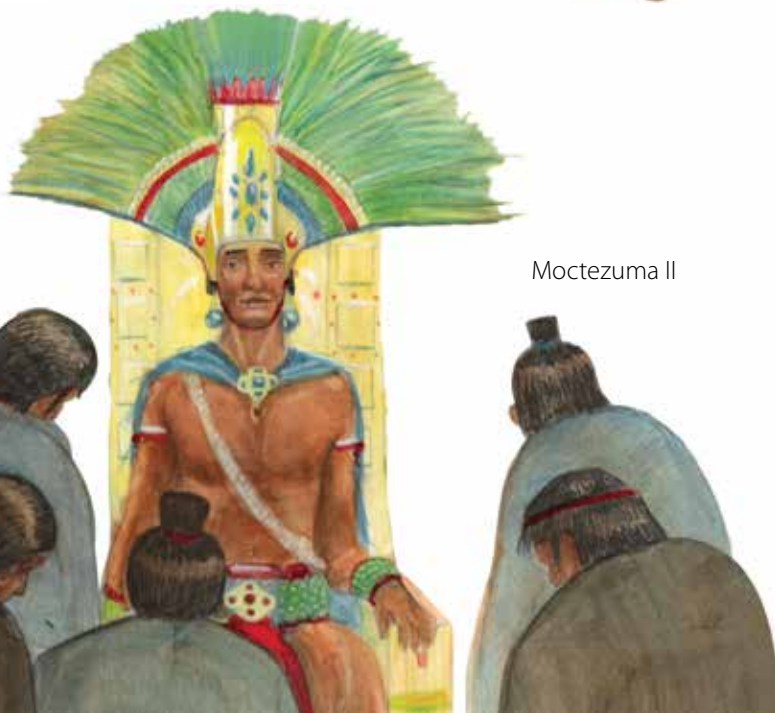
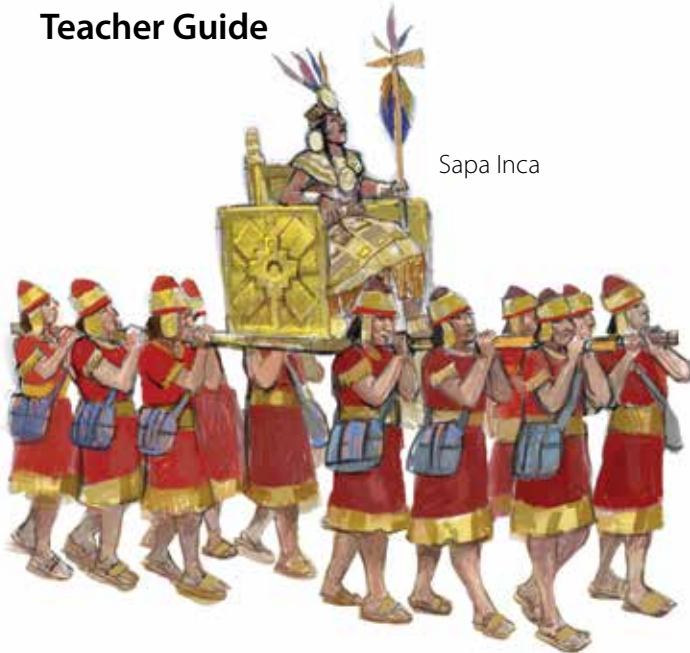
Core Knowledge®

HISTORY • GEOGRAPHY • CIVICS • ARTS

# Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations

Grade 5 | Unit 2

Teacher Guide





# Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations

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Teacher Guide



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# Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations

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# Introduction

## ABOUT THIS UNIT

### The Big Idea

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The Maya, Aztec, and Inca had developed large, complex civilizations prior to the arrival of the Spanish.

The civilizations of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca that once flourished in Central and South America shared common elements. People practiced farming, developed social structures, raised armies, and worshipped many gods. The three civilizations were as diverse as the terrains in which they lived. The Maya, known for developing a system of mathematics, thrived in the rainforests of the Yucatán Peninsula, Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala from about 200 to 900 CE. From 1325 to 1521, the Aztec built a large and dense city at Tenochtitlán, located on a swampy lake in the middle of a semi-arid basin in central Mexico. The Inca were skilled engineers who built a vast system of roads and bridges to unite their empire located high in the Andes Mountains, reaching their peak in the 1400s and early 1500s.

It remains in question why and how the rainforest cities of the Classic Maya fell. We know that Spanish explorers precipitated the destruction of both the Aztec and Inca empires.

# What Students Should Already Know

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Students in Core Knowledge schools should be familiar with:

## Kindergarten

- The voyage of Columbus in 1492
  - Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain
  - The Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria
  - Columbus’s mistaken identification of “Indies” and “Indians”
  - The idea of what was, for Europeans, a “New World”

## Grade 1

- Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations
  - The development by the Maya of large population centers in the rainforests of Mexico and Central America
  - The establishment of a vast empire in central Mexico by the Aztec, its capital of Tenochtitlán, and its emperor Moctezuma (Montezuma)
  - The Inca’s establishment of a far-ranging empire in the Andes Mountains of Peru and Chile, including Machu Picchu
- Columbus
- The conquistadors
  - The search for gold and silver
- Hernán Cortés and the Aztec
- Francisco Pizarro and the Inca
- Diseases devastate Native American population

## Grade 2

- The geography of South America
  - Brazil: largest country in South America, Amazon River, rainforests
  - Peru and Chile: Andes Mountains
  - Locate: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador
  - Bolivia: named after Simón Bolívar, “The Liberator”
  - Argentina: the Pampa (also known as the Pampas)
  - Main languages: Spanish and (in Brazil) Portuguese



## Time Period Background

The items below refer to content in Grade 5. Use a classroom timeline with students to help them sequence and relate events from different periods and groups.

c. 1500 BCE	Earliest Mesoamerican villages
c. 200–900 CE	Peak of Maya civilization
c. 1300s	Beginning of Aztec Empire
c. 1300s	Beginning of Inca Empire
1400s	First cargo of enslaved people from Africa brought by Portuguese to their colonies
1492	Columbus's first voyage to the Americas
1496	Santo Domingo on Hispaniola founded as first permanent Spanish settlement in Americas
1500s	Spanish brought the first cargo of enslaved Africans to Hispaniola
1513	Balboa "discovers" the Pacific Ocean
1517	Luther initiates Protestant Reformation
1517	Ponce de León lands in Florida
1519–21	Magellan circumnavigates the globe
1521	Conquest of the Aztec by Cortés
1534	Conquest of the Inca by Pizarro
1534	Cartier of France explores the St. Lawrence River
1535	Most of central Mexico in Spanish hands
1539–42	De Soto explores North America
1540	Most of Peru under Spanish control
1545–65	Major silver discoveries in Mexico and Peru
c. 1570	End of era of conquistadors

## What Students Need to Learn

- Identify and locate Central America and South America on maps and globes
  - Largest countries in South America: Brazil and Argentina
- Amazon River
- Andes Mountains
- The Maya
  - Ancient Maya lived in what is now southern Mexico and parts of Central America; their descendants still live there today
  - Accomplishments as architects and artisans: pyramids and temples
  - Development of a system of hieroglyphic writing
  - Knowledge of astronomy and mathematics; use of a 365-day calendar; early use of the concept of zero
- The Aztec
  - At its height in the 1400s and early 1500s, the Aztec empire covered much of what is now central Mexico
  - The island city of Tenochtitlán: aqueducts, massive temples, etc.
  - Moctezuma (also spelled Montezuma)
  - Ruler-priests; practice of human sacrifice
- The Inca
  - Ruled an empire stretching along the Pacific Coast of South America
  - Built great cities (Machu Picchu, Cuzco) high in the Andes, connected by a system of roads
- Conquistadors: Cortés and Pizarro
  - Advantages of Spanish weaponry (guns and cannons)
  - Devastation of native peoples by European diseases

## AT A GLANCE

The most important ideas in Unit 2 are:

- Students should be able to locate Mexico, Central America, South America, and the major countries, rivers, and mountain chain in South America on maps and globes.
- Mesoamerica is a cultural area that covers central and southern Mexico as well as northern Central America.
- The Maya people constructed large monumental buildings, created a hieroglyphic writing system, employed a 365-day calendar, and developed the concept of zero.
- The Aztec dominated central and southern Mexico through force and a tribute system.
- The Inca developed a widespread empire in the Andes Mountains linked by a network of roads.
- Both the Aztec and the Inca empires were conquered by Spanish conquistadors; the Aztec Empire was conquered by Cortés, and the Inca Empire was defeated by Pizarro.
- The Spanish had an advantage over native peoples because the former had guns, cannons, and horses.
- European diseases killed thousands of native peoples, who had no natural immunity against them.

## WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

### Geography Related to Central and South America

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Central America is part of North America and contains the countries of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. It is bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the east and by the Pacific Ocean to the west. To the south is the continent of South America. Central America is an isthmus, or land bridge, that connects the two larger bodies of land.

South America is the fourth largest continent. To the east is the Atlantic Ocean, and to the west, the Pacific Ocean. The Caribbean Sea borders South America to the north. The Andes Mountains range from north to south on the far western side of South America. The northern portion of the continent, including much of Brazil, is covered by tropical rainforest.

#### Brazil

Brazil covers almost half of the South American continent and is the fifth largest country in the world. Brazil is so large that it borders all but two (Chile

and Ecuador) of the other twelve countries in South America. The word *Brazil* comes from the name of a tree found in the Amazon rainforest. Brazil lies mostly within the tropical zone, so its climate is mainly warm and wet.

Most of the people live in urban areas, and about thirty percent of the population lives on the coastal plain, a narrow strip along the Atlantic Ocean. About seven hundred thousand native people live within the rainforest, but many others live in cities and urban areas. The overall population is a mix of descendants of Portuguese, native peoples, and Africans. Brazil was conquered by Portugal, unlike most of South America, which was conquered by the Spanish. Its official language is Portuguese.

## Argentina

Argentina is the second largest country in South America. A long, narrow country, Argentina extends east and south of the Andes and south of Paraguay and Uruguay. The Andes form the boundary between Argentina and Chile. The Gran Chaco, a region of low forests and grasslands, dominates Argentina's northern region. The south is a collection of barren plateaus, known as Patagonia. The major economic area of Argentina is the Pampa (also known as the Pampas) in the center of the country. This region of tall grasslands and temperate climate is famous for its cattle ranches. About seventy percent of the population lives in this area.

Most Argentines are descendants of Spanish colonists, and Spanish is the official language.

## Amazon River

The Amazon River forms at the junction of the Ucayali (/ooh\*cah\*yah\*lee/) and Marañón (/marn\*yeown/) Rivers in northern Peru and empties into the Atlantic Ocean through a delta in northern Brazil. The Amazon is the second longest river in the world after the Nile but has the largest volume of water of any river in the world. Hundreds of tributaries feed into it. The Amazon River basin drains more than forty percent of South America. With no waterfalls, the river is navigable for almost its entire length.

The Amazon flows through the world's largest rainforest. This rainforest is home to more than 2.5 million species of insects, tens of thousands of plants, and over one thousand species of birds. In fact, almost half of all of the world's known species can be found in the Amazon. Mammals in the Amazon rainforests include the tapir (a hoofed mammal), the nutria (an otter-like creature), the great anteater, and various kinds of monkeys. Insects include large, colorful butterflies. Birds include hummingbirds, toucans, and parrots. A famous reptile dweller is the anaconda, a huge snake that squeezes its victims to death; alligators are also common. Fish include flesh-eating piranhas and the electric eel, capable of discharging a shock up to 650 volts. In recent years, environmentalists have grown concerned about threats to the ecosystem posed by logging and deforestation in this rainforest.

The Amazon was named by a Spanish explorer, Francisco de Orellana, who explored the river in 1541 and named it after women warriors he encountered who reminded him of descriptions of the Amazons in ancient Greek mythology.

## Andes Mountains

The Andes Mountains are over five thousand miles (8,047 km) in length, the longest mountain system in the Western Hemisphere. The mountains begin as four ranges in the Caribbean area on the northeastern coast of South America. In Peru and Bolivia, the mountains form two parallel ranges that create a wide plateau known as the Altiplano. The Andes then form a single range that separates Chile from Argentina.

With an average height of 12,500 feet (3,810 m), the Andes are the second highest mountain range in the world. (The Himalayas are the highest.) The tallest peak in the Western Hemisphere is the Andes's Mount Aconcagua, which rises 22,835 feet (6,960 m) above sea level. Many of the mountains are volcanoes, either active or dormant.

Approximately fifty to sixty percent of Peru's people live in the Altiplano. About a third of the country's population lives in the narrow lowlands between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean. Because the Andes run north to south along the entire length of Chile, most Chileans live in the Central Valley region between the Andes and low coastal mountains. The Central Valley, a fertile area, is home to large cities, manufacturing centers, and agriculture.

The Andes Mountains were the home of the Inca people, whom students in Core Knowledge schools studied in Grade 1 and will study again as part of this unit. Core Knowledge students should also have learned about Mount Aconcagua and the Andes during the Grade 4 geography subsection "Mountains and Mountain Ranges."

## Historical Background

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Students who studied the Core Knowledge curriculum in Grade 1 learned about how civilizations in the Americas grew. The Maya civilization was located in the Yucatán Peninsula and covered parts of Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala. Maya cities were built with large centers that included large temples and often ball courts. Houses did not exist in the city centers, indicating that they were meant for religious purposes. It's important to note that first-grade students were not exposed to the concept of human sacrifice as a part of both Maya and Aztec religions that will be discussed in this unit. Most Maya earned a living as farmers. Priests acted as the ruling class. The Maya civilization disappeared around the year 900 CE; some of their cities were in ruins by the time Spanish arrived in the 1600s.

The Aztec, also referred to as the Mexica, began as a group of nomadic peoples who settled on Lake Texcoco in central Mexico around the year 1325. Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital, was the home to as many as three hundred thousand people at the time of Spanish arrival. Students learned that the Aztec

built a vast empire through conquest. They did not directly rule but relied on a tribute system to expand their wealth. Aztec rulers were seen as divine, part man and part god. Moctezuma II was ruler of the Aztec when Cortés first explored Mexico.

The Inca, like the Aztec, built an empire through conquest. From about 1438 to 1525, the Inca ruled an empire that stretched from Ecuador through parts of Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina. Students learned that the Inca built an advanced system of roads to maintain their empire. Roads, bridges, and other infrastructure made it easier to travel and communicate to administer a vast empire. Runners called *chasquis* carried messages throughout the Inca world.

To learn more background information about specific topics taught in *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*, go to [www.coreknowledge.org/about-maya-aztec-inca](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-maya-aztec-inca).

## UNIT RESOURCES

### Student Component

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The *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* Student Reader—seven chapters

### Teacher Components

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The *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* Teacher Guide—seven chapters. This includes lessons aligned to each chapter of the *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* Student Reader with a daily Check For Understanding and Additional Activities, such as virtual field trips and cross-curricular art activities, designed to reinforce the chapter content. A Unit Assessment, Performance Task Assessment, Activity Pages, and Nonfiction Excerpts of primary source documents are included at the end of this Teacher Guide in Teacher Resources, beginning on page 77.

- » The Unit Assessment tests knowledge of the entire unit, using standard testing formats.
- » The Performance Task Assessment requires students to apply and share the knowledge learned during the unit through either an oral or written presentation.
- » The Activity Pages are designed to reinforce and extend content taught in specific chapters throughout the unit. These optional activities are intended to provide choices for teachers.

*Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* Timeline Image Cards include nine individual images depicting significant events and individuals from the time when the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations flourished. In addition to an image, each

card contains a caption, a chapter number, and the Big Question, which outlines the focus of the chapter. You will construct a classroom Timeline with students over the course of the entire unit. The Teacher Guide will prompt you, lesson by lesson, as to which image card(s) to add to the Timeline. The Timeline will be a powerful learning tool enabling you and your students to track important themes and events as they occurred within this time period.

## Timeline

Some advance preparation will be necessary prior to starting Unit 2. You will need to identify available wall space in your classroom of approximately 10 feet on which you can post the Timeline Image Cards over the course of the unit. The Timeline may be oriented either vertically or horizontally, even wrapping around corners and multiple walls, whatever works best in your classroom setting. Be creative—some teachers hang a clothesline so that the image cards can be attached with clothespins!

Create five time indicators or reference points for the Timeline. Write each of the following dates on sentence strips or large index cards:

- **1500 BCE**
- **200 CE**
- **1300s**
- **1400s**
- **1500s**

Affix these time indicators to your wall space, allowing sufficient space between them to accommodate the actual number of image cards you will be adding to each time period, as per the following diagram.

	1500 BCE		200 CE		1300s		1400s		1500s
	•		•		••		•		••••
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>3, 5</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>7</b>

You will want to post all the time indicators on the wall at the outset before you place any image cards on the timeline.

**1500 BCE**



**Chapter 1**

**200 CE**



**Chapter 2**

**1300s**



**Chapter 3**

**1300s**



**Chapter 5**

**1400s**



**Chapter 7**

**1500s**



**Chapter 7**

**1500s**



**Chapter 7**

**1500s**



**Chapter 7**

**1500s**



**Chapter 7**

### **The Timeline in Relation to the Content in the Student Reader Chapters**

You will see that the events highlighted in the Unit 2 Timeline are in chronological (date) order. The unit as a whole deals with large, thematic concepts that are reflected in the Timeline.

### **Understanding References to Time in the *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations Unit***

As you read the text, you will become aware that in some instances general time periods are referenced and that in other instances specific dates are cited. For example, Chapter 1 states that the Maya civilization thrived over a period of many centuries—200 CE to 900 CE. In addition, certain events are only



generally fixed in time—for example, that the Inca Empire gained strength in the 1400s. In contrast, there are many references to specific dates in history. Here are just a few:

**The Aztec founded their capital city by 1325.**

**Hernán Cortés launched his final attack on Tenochtitlán in 1521.**

**Pizarro began his quest to find the Inca Empire in 1527.**

Because of this, it is important to explain to students that some chapters deal with themes that were important throughout the entire era of civilization building in the Americas. It is also important to note that our knowledge of these times is inhibited by our limited understanding of or access to the record keeping of these great civilizations. It is sometimes difficult to know precisely when certain events took place. In some cases, however, the chapters deal with important people and particular events that occur in specific moments in time. In these instances, we do have specific knowledge and records. Therefore, these chapters tend to contain specific dates for key events in history. In addition, when citing specific dates, the abbreviation CE is used. It's important that students understand that the abbreviation CE is used to denote "Common Era." (BCE—before the Common Era—is also used here and in other units in this program.) Students may have encountered CE before, or they may be more familiar with the traditional abbreviations AD and BC. Both CE and AD refer to the time period from the time of Jesus Christ. BCE and BC refer to the time period before Christ.

## Time to Talk About Time

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Before you use the Timeline, discuss with students the concept of time and how it is recorded. Here are several discussion points that you might use to promote discussion. This discussion will allow students to explore the concept of time.

1. What is time?
2. How do we measure time?
3. How do we record time?
4. How does nature show the passing of time? (Encourage students to think about days, months, and seasons.)
5. What is a specific date?
6. What is a time period?
7. What is the difference between a specific date and a time period?
8. What does CE mean?
9. What is a timeline?

## Pacing Guide

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The *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* unit is one of thirteen history and geography units in the *Grade 5 Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™*. A total of ten days have been allocated to the *Maya, Aztec, Inca* unit. We recommend that you do not exceed this number of instructional days to ensure that you have sufficient instructional time to complete all Grade 5 units.

At the end of this Introduction, you will find a Sample Pacing Guide that provides guidance as to how you might select and use the various resources in this unit during the allotted time. However, there are many options and ways that you may choose to individualize this unit for your students, based on their interests and needs. So we have also provided you with a blank Pacing Guide that you may use to reflect the activity choices and pacing for your class. If you plan to create a customized pacing guide for your class, we strongly recommend that you preview this entire unit and create your pacing guide before teaching the first chapter.

## Reading Aloud

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In each chapter, the teacher or a student volunteer will read various sections of the text aloud. When you or a student reads aloud, always prompt students to follow along. By following along in this way, students become more focused on the text and may acquire a greater understanding of the content.

## Turn and Talk

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In the Guided Reading Supports section of each chapter, provide students with opportunities to discuss the questions in pairs or in groups. Discussion opportunities will allow students to more fully engage with the content and will bring “to life” the themes or topics being discussed.

## Big Questions

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At the beginning of each Teacher Guide chapter, you will find a Big Question, also found at the beginning of each Student Reader chapter. The Big Questions are provided to help establish the bigger concepts and to provide a general overview of the chapter. The Big Questions, by chapter, are:

Chapter	Big Question
---------	--------------

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | What do the ruins of the Maya tell you about the importance of religion to their civilization? |
| 2 | Why is the 365-day solar calendar developed by the Maya particularly impressive?               |

3	Why did the Aztec make human sacrifices?
4	What does the description of Tenochtitlán reveal about the Aztec civilization?
5	Why were llamas so important to the Inca?
6	How did the Inca use their engineering skills to manage and grow their empire?
7	What were the factors that contributed to the end of the Aztec and Inca empires?

## Core Vocabulary

Domain-specific vocabulary, phrases, and idioms highlighted in each chapter of the Student Reader are listed at the beginning of each Teacher Guide chapter, in the order in which they appear in the Student Reader. Student Reader page numbers are also provided. The vocabulary, by chapter, are:

Chapter	Vocabulary
1	Mesoamerica, Maya, civilization, architecture, archaeologist, city-state, temple, hieroglyph, sacrifice
2	astronomy, leap year, equinox, "initiation ceremony," priest
3	Aztec, nomadic, empire, emperor
4	causeway, canal, scribe, codex, pictogram, litter, reign
5	Inca, conquistador, "geographical diversity," plateau, clan, alpaca, llama, census
6	official, engineer, mortar, suspension bridge, terrace
7	expedition, "religious ceremony," smallpox, immunity, epidemic

## Activity Pages

The following activity pages can be found in Teacher Resources, pages 88 to 100. They are to be used with the chapter specified either for additional class work or for homework. Be sure to make sufficient copies for your students prior to conducting activities.

- Chapter 1—World Map (AP 1.1)
- Chapter 1—World Geography (AP 1.2)
- Chapter 1—Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3)
- Chapter 1—Geography of the Americas (AP 1.4)
- Chapter 1—Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5)
- Chapter 1—Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6)

- Chapters 2, 4, 6—Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1)
- Chapter 4—Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4 (AP 4.1)
- Chapter 4—Create a Codex (AP 4.2)
- Chapter 7—Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7 (AP 7.1)

## Nonfiction Excerpts

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Two nonfiction excerpts can be found in Teacher Resources, pages 101 to 105. They may be used with the chapter specified either for additional class work or at the end of the unit as review and/or a culminating activity. Be sure to make sufficient copies for your students prior to conducting the activities.

### Nonfiction Excerpts

Chapter 7—Primary Source Document: *Cortés’s Second Letter to Charles V* (NFE 1)

Chapter 7—*History of the Conquest of Peru* (excerpts from the book by William Hickling Prescott) (NFE 2)

## Additional Activities

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An Additional Activities section, related to material in the Student Reader, may be found at the end of each chapter. You may choose from among the varied activities when conducting lessons. Many of the activities include website links, and you should check the links prior to using them in class.

## Books

Haberstroh, Marilyn & Panik, Sharon. *A Quetzalcoatl Tale of Chocolate*. CO: University Press of Colorado, 2014.

DK Publishing. *Aztec, Inca, & Maya*. New York: DK Children, 2011.

Newman, Sandra. *The Inca Empire (True Books: Ancient Civilizations)*. New York: Scholastic, 2010.

Mathews, Sally Schofer. *The Sad Night: The Story of an Aztec Victory and a Spanish Loss*. Boston: HMH Books for Young Readers, 2001

Maloy, Jackie. *The Ancient Maya (True Books)*. Danbury, CT: Children’s Press, 2010

# MAYA, AZTEC, AND INCA CIVILIZATIONS SAMPLE PACING GUIDE

For schools using the Core Knowledge Sequence and/or CKLA

TG – Teacher Guide; SR – Student Reader; AP – Activity Page;

NFE – Nonfiction Excerpt

## Week 1

### Day 1

### Day 2

### Day 3

### Day 4

### Day 5

#### *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*

<p>“World Map,” “Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America,” and “Map and Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations” (TG, Chapter 1, Additional Activities, AP 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, and 1.6)                      Homework: “World Geography,” AP 1.2 and “Geography of North America, Central America, and South America,” AP 1.4</p>	<p>“The Maya: Rainforest Civilization” (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 1)</p>	<p>“Maya Science and Daily Life” Core Lesson (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 2)</p>	<p>“Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations” (TG, Chapter 2, Additional Activities, AP 2.1)</p>	<p>“The Aztec: Empire Builders” Core Lesson (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 3)</p>
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#### CKLA

“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”
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## Week 2

### Day 6

### Day 7

### Day 8

### Day 9

### Day 10

#### *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*

<p>“Tenochtitlán: City of Wonder” Core Lesson (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 4)                      Homework: “Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations” (TG, Chapter 4, Additional Activities, AP 2.1)</p>	<p>“The Inca: Lords of the Mountains” Core Lesson (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 5)                      Homework: “Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4,” AP 4.1)</p>	<p>“Inca Engineering” Core Lesson (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 6)                      Homework: “Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations” (TG, Chapter 6, Additional Activities, AP 2.1)</p>	<p>“The End of Two Empires” Core Lesson (TG &amp; SR, Chapter 7)                      Homework: “Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7,” AP 7.1)</p>	<p>Unit Assessment (TG)</p>
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#### CKLA

“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”	“Personal Narratives”
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# MAYA, AZTEC, AND INCA CIVILIZATIONS PACING GUIDE

\_\_\_\_\_’s Class

(A total of ten days have been allocated to the *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* unit in order to complete all Grade 5 history and geography units in the *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™*.)

## Week 1

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

*Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*

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CKLA

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## Week 2

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

Day 9

Day 10

*Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*

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CKLA

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# The Maya: Rainforest Civilization

**The Big Question:** What do the ruins of the Maya tell you about the importance of religion to their civilization?

### Primary Focus Objectives

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- ✓ Identify the Maya as one of the earliest civilizations in the Americas, located in parts of Mexico and Central America. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Describe how archaeologists have been able to learn more about the Maya civilization by studying ancient ruins. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Explain how religion was linked to Maya society. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *Mesoamerica, Maya, civilization, architecture, archaeologist, city-state, temple, hieroglyph, and sacrifice.* **(RI.3.4)**

### What Teachers Need to Know

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For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-maya](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-maya)

**Note:** Prior to conducting the Core Lesson, in which students read Chapter 1 of the *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations* Student Reader, we strongly recommend that you first conduct the activities titled World Map (AP 1.1); World Geography (AP 1.2); Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3); Geography of the Americas (AP 1.4); Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5); and Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6) found in the Teacher Resources section beginning on page 88 and described at the end of this chapter under Additional Activities. By first providing students with an understanding of the geographical features of the Western Hemisphere and the relative and absolute locations of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations, you will help students more fully understand the world in which these great civilizations developed.



## Materials Needed

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### Activity Pages



AP 1.1  
AP 1.2  
AP 1.3  
AP 1.4  
AP 1.5  
AP 1.6

- World Map (AP 1.1); World Geography (AP 1.2); Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3); Geography of the Americas (AP 1.4); Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5); and Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6) (Teacher Resources, pages 88 to 93) (**Note:** Maps 1.3 and 1.5 will be used again in Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7.)
- enlarged versions of the maps on AP 1.1, AP 1.3, and AP 1.5
- red and green pencils

## Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

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**Mesoamerica, n.** a historical region that includes what are today the central and southern parts of Mexico and the northern parts of Central America (2)

*Example:* The Maya were an early civilization of Mesoamerica.

*Variation(s):* Mesoamerican

**Maya, n.** a group of peoples who have inhabited a region that includes parts of present-day Mexico and Central America from thousands of years ago to the present. Before the arrival of Europeans, Maya cities thrived in rainforest locations between about 200 to 900 CE. (4)

*Example:* The Maya were skilled builders who constructed great stone structures.

*Variation(s):* Mayan, Mayas

**civilization, n.** a society, or group of people, with similar religious beliefs, customs, language, and form of government (4)

*Example:* The Maya civilization thrived for hundreds of years.

*Variation(s):* civilizations

**architecture, n.** the style and construction of a building (4)

*Example:* By studying the architecture, we have learned a great deal about the Maya.

*Variation(s):* architect

**archaeologist, n.** an expert in the study of ancient people and the objects from their time period that remain, generally including stones, bones, and pottery (5)

*Example:* In studying the ruins, the archaeologist made many key findings about the Maya.

*Variation(s):* archaeologists, archaeology

**city-state, n.** a city that is an independent political state with its own ruling government (5)

*Example:* Thousands of people lived in the city-state of Copán.

*Variation(s):* city-states

**temple, n.** a building with a religious use or meaning (5)

*Example:* The priest performed important rituals at the temple.

*Variation(s):* temples

**hieroglyph, n.** a picture or symbol representing an idea, an object, a syllable, or a sound (6)

*Example:* The scientist figured out what the hieroglyph meant.

*Variation(s):* hieroglyphs, hieroglyphic

**sacrifice, v.** to give or to kill something for a religious purpose (9)

*Example:* The loser of the ball game was doomed to be a human sacrifice.

*Variation(s):* sacrifices, sacrificed, sacrificial

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce the *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations Student Reader* 5 MIN

Distribute copies of the *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations Student Reader*. Give students a few minutes to examine the reader and flip through its pages, reading the Table of Contents and headings and looking at the illustrations. Invite students to call out words or phrases that identify what they see and what they should expect to be learning about in the unit. Record student observations on the board or chart paper. Students are likely to mention things such as buildings, carvings and writing, games, warfare, and cities—all of which are indicators of the development of civilization.

Introduce the vocabulary word *civilization* to students: “a society, or group of people, with similar religious beliefs, customs, language, and form of government.” Students who studied the Grade 1 Core Knowledge curriculum have seen this definition before. Review the meaning of the word with students. Explain that civilizations often include larger populations of people living in cities, as well as individuals who farm. Characteristics include some form of government directed by leaders and a common language with some form of writing, as well as religious beliefs that impact daily life. Ask students who have studied the Core Knowledge curriculum in earlier grades to think about civilizations they have studied. Students in Grade 1 studied the Inca, Aztec, and Maya. Students in Grade 2 studied ancient Greece. Students in Grade 3 studied ancient Rome.

It’s important for students to recognize that while the Maya civilization reached its peak from 200 to 900 CE and that this is the time period they will be learning about in more detail, the Maya culture began to emerge long before that time. There is evidence that Mesoamerican civilization began to emerge as early as 1500 BCE.

Tell students that they will be reading about events and developments that took place in the Americas before the Age of Exploration, a period that began

in the late 1400s with Christopher Columbus’s encounter with the New World. We know about this time mainly through the study of objects and buildings the people left behind. Students will also be writing about the first contacts between Europeans and these great civilizations. These events are known mainly based on the writings of the Europeans.

## Introduce “The Maya: Rainforest Civilization”

5 MIN

### Activity Pages



AP 1.3

AP 1.5

Students who used this history program in earlier grades have already studied the rise and fall of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. They have also studied the geography of South America. Remind them how the arrival of Europeans was a key turning point in the history of the great civilizations of the Americas. This began with the journey of Christopher Columbus in 1492. After Columbus’s encounter with what the people of Europe called a “new world,” European powers raced to send explorers and conquerors to exploit the land, extract wealth, and expand their empires.

Refer students to the map on page 3. If students have already completed the Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) and the Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3), you may want to ask students to take out these activity pages for reference. You may also want to display enlarged versions of these activity pages for all students to look at while they refer to the map on page 3.

Orient students by explaining that the Maya civilization was largely located in the present-day country of Mexico and also in parts of Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize. Have students locate these places on the Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and circle them in green pencil. Explain that this is a tropical region, largely covered in rainforest. Ask: How do you think this environment may have influenced the rise and fall of these civilizations?

Ask students to first identify characteristics of a rainforest and tropical environment. Students may respond that rainforests have tall trees and dense greenery. Tropical environments are generally humid and can experience heavy rainfall. Students may also note that rainforests are the home to many different types of animals.

Select five different items (for example a glasses case, car keys, or a piece of fruit) and place them at the front of the room. Ask students to take a moment to look at the items. What can they tell about the person who owns these things? Have students share their responses out loud. Explain to students that much of what we know about past civilizations comes from the things they’ve left behind. We have learned many clues about what was important to the Maya from their buildings. Call attention to the Big Question. Encourage students to look for ways Maya ruins inform people today about the role of religion in Maya civilization.

**Note:** it is important to understand the distinction between the words *Maya* and *Mayan*. Explain to students that the word *Maya* is used as both a noun

and an adjective that describes the people and the various aspects of their civilization and culture. An example of the correct use of the word as a noun is, “The ancient Maya lived in parts of present-day Mexico until about the year 900 CE.” An example of the word as an adjective is, “Archaeologists study Maya writing to better understand the civilization’s history and culture.” The word *Mayan* describes the language spoken by the Maya people. An example of this word used correctly is, “People living in parts of Mexico continue to speak Mayan today.”

## Guided Reading Supports for “The Maya: Rainforest Civilization” 25 MIN


When you or a student reads aloud, **always** prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

### “The Vanishing Civilization,” Pages 2–4

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**Invite a volunteer to read the title of this section and the opening paragraph.**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Note the term *Mesoamerica* when it is encountered in the text. Explain to the class that this term refers to a historical region, the place where certain civilizations emerged, and it is not used to describe or locate any modern-day place.

 **SUPPORT**—Help students recognize that this illustration is a map showing the land that is today Mexico, Central America, and the northern part of South America.

**Ask students to read quietly to themselves the remainder of this section up to the next section entitled “Ruins in the Rainforest.”**

**After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—The text refers to a key question about the Maya civilization. What is the mystery?

- » The mystery is the disappearance of the Maya cities that were part of the thriving Maya culture from 200 to 900 CE.

**SUPPORT**—The title of this section is “The Vanishing Civilization.” What is a synonym for *vanishing*?

- » *Disappearing* is a synonym for vanishing.

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think the disappearance of the Maya cities is considered a mystery?

- » The cities were thriving and strong, but then they ceased to exist. Nobody is sure why this happened.

**Chapter 1**  
**The Maya: Rainforest Civilization**

**The Vanishing Civilization** Do you like mysteries? Try this one: More than a thousand years ago, a great civilization of American Indian peoples built cities across **Mesoamerica**—an area today that is made up of parts of Mexico and Central America. They built stone temples and pyramids that rose far above the forest treetops.

**The Big Question** What do the ruins of the Maya tell you about the importance of religion to their civilization?

**Vocabulary** The Maya, one group of native peoples, discovered important mathematical ideas. They also studied the movements of the stars. Using this knowledge, the Maya made a calendar almost as accurate as the one we use today. Then, after hundreds of years of growth, many key elements of Maya civilization disappeared. The people abandoned their urban society and many of

**Page 2**



**Page 3**

its traditions were mysteriously transformed, although Mayan-speaking people continue in this part of Mesoamerica to the present.

This may sound like the plot of a science-fiction movie, but it isn't. In fact, it is a short history of the Maya (māh'yah'), one of the first great civilizations of the Americas that flourished between 200 and 900 CE.

**Ruins in the Rain Forest**

In 1839, two American explorers heard stories of mysterious ruins in the rain forests of Central America. Curious, they set out to see for themselves. The two men first explored the remains of the city of Copán in the present-day country of Honduras. From the architecture, it was clear the ruins had been left by an ancient and advanced civilization. The two Americans continued their journey, exploring many other ruins. Then, they returned to the United States and wrote a book.

**Vocabulary**

**Maya**, n. a group of people who have inhabited a region that includes parts of present-day Mexico and Central America from thousands of years ago to the present. Before the arrival of Europeans, Maya cities and civilizations thrived in scattered locations between about 200 and 900 CE.


**civilization**, n. a society or group of people, with a common belief, customs, language, and form of government.

**Vocabulary**

**architecture**, n. the style and construction of buildings.

**city-state**, n. a city that is an independent political state with its own government.

**temple**, n. a building with a religious use or meaning.



Archaeologists still study the remarkable Maya.

**Page 4**

**LITERAL**—What happened to the people and culture that built the great Maya cities?

- » Archaeologists and historians are unsure as to what happened to the Maya people. Their historical records stop around the year 900 CE, and their temples and buildings fell into ruin.

**INFERENTIAL**—The text says that the brief history of the disappearance of the Maya's cities reads like a movie plot. What do you think this means?

- » The disappearance of the cities was abrupt and in some sense surprising, but it opens up key research questions for archaeologists.

**SUPPORT**—Movie plots are often fiction and have unexpected events and endings. How might the disappearance of the Maya cities be similar?

- » Answers may vary, but students' responses should show they understand that the disappearance of Maya cities may have a cause or causes that no one has yet thought of.

## “Ruins in the Rainforest” and “Mysterious Writing,” Pages 4–7

about their findings. Their tales and drawings inspired worldwide interest in the history of the Maya.

Since the mid-1800s, archaeologists and other experts have continued to study these remarkable people. Recent breakthroughs in research have revealed just how much the Maya accomplished. Let's take a closer look at what we know about them and what still remains a mystery.


At its peak, the Maya civilization included a large group of *city-states* that were allied with, fought, and conquered each other. These cities were located on the Yucatan Peninsula in what is today southeastern Mexico and the countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize. Archaeologists believe that Maya civilization reached its greatest extent between about 200 and 900 CE. The largest buildings in Maya cities were pyramids that also served religious purposes.

**Vocabulary**

**archaeologist**, n. an expert in the study of ancient people, and their objects from their time period that remain, especially including stones and bones, and pottery.

**city-state**, n. a city that is an independent political state with its own government.

**temple**, n. a building with a religious use or meaning.



See pyramids seen from great distances that reached toward the sky.

**Page 5**

Scaffold understanding as follows

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the first two paragraphs under the heading “Ruins in the Rainforest,” on pages 4 and 5. Discuss the meanings of the words *architecture* and *archaeologist* when they are encountered.

Ask students to refer to AP 1.5 and point to the city of Copán. Ask if Copán is located in North America (Mexico), Central America, or South America.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the second full paragraph on page 5. Note the term *city-state*. Point out that this term is a compound word made up of two words—*city* and *state*. Ask students to examine the definition of the word included in their reader to explain the relationship between the two words that make it up.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Have the students read the last paragraph beginning on the bottom of page 5 and continuing on page 6 to themselves. Point out the term *temple*. Use the illustration on the page to help define the term *temple*. Point out to students that the temple featured in the image is a pyramid. It has sloped sides, and the building on top is the temple.


These structures served religious purposes. From their size, it is clear that religion was a key part of Maya life. Maya pyramids rose high above the surrounding landscape. Maya pyramids were some of the tallest structures in the Americas until 1902. That year, the twenty-two-story Flatiron Building was constructed in New York City.

**Mysterious Writing**

Archaeologists found hieroglyphs (hih'ro'g'fih's) carved into Maya buildings and monuments. The Temple of the Hieroglyphic Stairway stands in Copán. A climb up this staircase is a journey back in time. Each of the sixty-three steps has a story to tell. Carved symbols called glyphs name all of the rulers of Copán. The glyphs also explain their military victories. The American explorers who visited this site in 1839 marvelled over these carvings. They could not, however, figure out what the symbols meant. For a long time, neither could any other experts. Hieroglyphs are like a code. You must crack the code to read the messages.

**Vocabulary**

**hieroglyph**, n. a picture of symbol representing an idea, an object, a syllable, or a sound.



The Maya hieroglyphs were carved into each step of this staircase.

**Page 6**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Call attention to the term *hieroglyphs* in the next section, “Mysterious Writing,” and clearly pronounce the word for students. Explain that Maya writing was often carved into stone structures, like the stairway shown in the picture. **Have the students read the entire section of “Mysterious Writing” on pages 6–7 to themselves.**

more than eight hundred symbols. It wasn't until the 1960s that archaeologists began to crack the code with early computers. Since then, we have learned a great deal about the ancient Maya.

#### Breath on a Mirror

We have learned that daily life for the Maya revolved around family, farming, and service to the gods. No person or group took any important action without consulting the gods. Priests decided which days were best for planting a field, starting a war, or building a hut. The Maya believed the gods were much wiser than humans. According to Maya legend, the first people could see everything. The creator gods decided that this gave people too much power, so the gods decided to limit human sight and power. The Maya sacred book, the *Po'ol Vuh*, explains that the gods purposely clouded human understanding. As a result, a human's view of the world is unclear. The *Po'ol Vuh* explains that human understanding is "like breath on a mirror."

#### Serious Play

Breaking the hieroglyph code also helped archaeologists understand how the Maya spent some of their time. A specific kind of ball court can be found in many Maya cities. Archaeologists were puzzled about these courts, which varied in size. Some were the size of volleyball courts. Others were larger than football fields. Archaeologists now think the Maya played a game called *pok-tok*. They believe the goal of *pok-tok* was to hit a ball through a hole in a stone wall on the opponent's side.

Page 7

## After students read the section, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What did the two American explorers find in the rainforest in 1839?

- » The explorers heard about ruins located in Copán. They found the Maya city and explored the area. They wrote a book that sparked worldwide interest in the civilization.

**LITERAL**—How was the Maya civilization organized?

- » The Maya civilization was broken into city-states. The Maya people spoke a common language, but they were not a unified country. Instead, city-states allied with each other but also went to war and conquered each other.

**LITERAL**—Why were pyramids important in Maya culture?

- » Pyramids were constructed as platforms for large temples that were used for religious purposes.

**LITERAL**—In what way are Maya hieroglyphs like a code?

- » In hieroglyphic writing, each symbol represents, or is code for, something else. You can only understand the writing if you know the code.

**LITERAL**—Were the original American archaeologists able to translate and understand the meaning of the hieroglyphs? Why or why not?

- » The original archaeologists could not understand the meaning of the hieroglyphs. It was like cracking a very complex code. Once later archaeologists determined the meaning of the "code," however, they were able to learn much about the Maya civilization.

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think cracking the Maya code has enabled experts to learn a lot about the Maya?

- » When people gained the ability to read Maya hieroglyphs, they could read what had been recorded during the time period when Maya civilization actually existed. These written records provided much information about Maya culture and history.

**CHALLENGE**—The Maya used hieroglyphs as a way to record events, history, and religious beliefs. What other civilization do you know of that used hieroglyphs as its form of writing?

- » The ancient Egyptians also used hieroglyphs to write.



## “Breath on a Mirror” and “Serious Play,” Pages 7–9

Have students read the section “Breath on a Mirror” independently.

After students read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Why, according to Maya legend, did the gods limit human understanding?

- » The gods limited human understanding in order to make humans less powerful.

**INFERENTIAL**—How does the phrase “like breath on a mirror” explain the Maya belief about human understanding?

- » When a person breathes on a mirror, it makes it hard to see details in the image it’s reflecting. In the same way, people’s ability to see the world clearly and in detail is obscured by the gods.

Scaffold understanding as follows:

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Call attention to the word *sacrifice* on page 9, found in the section “Serious Play,” and discuss its meaning. Help students understand that the Maya believed that human sacrifice was the greatest gift that could be made to the gods they worshipped.

Have students refer to Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5), and locate Chichén Itzá on the map. **Have students volunteer to read the section “Serious Play” out loud.**

**SUPPORT**—After students read the second full paragraph on page 8, call attention to the idiom “the stakes are high.” Explain to students that when the stakes are high, a person has a lot to lose.

**SUPPORT**—Call attention to the word *spectators* in the third full paragraph on page 8. Explain that spectators are people who go to an event to watch. The Maya watched *pok-ta-pok* much like people today go to watch games such as football, baseball, or basketball.

**SUPPORT**—In the fifth full paragraph of page 8, explain the context of the statement, “There is no whistle for a foul.” Many students may play a sport or have seen one in person or on television. The Maya did not have referees to make sure the athletes were playing fairly in *pok-ta-pok*. This shows that they were probably very ruthless while playing.

After students read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What is *pok-ta-pok*?

- » *Pok-ta-pok* is a ball game that the Maya played on the ball courts that are found at the sites of many Maya cities.

more than eight hundred symbols. It wasn't until the 1960s that archaeologists began to crack the code with early computers. Since then, we have learned a great deal about the ancient Maya.

### Breath on a Mirror

We have learned that daily life for the Maya revolved around family, farming, and service to the gods. No person or group took any important action without consulting the gods. Priests decided which days were best for planting a field, starting a war, or building a hut. The Maya believed the gods were much wiser than humans. According to Maya legend, the first people could see everything. The creator gods decided that this gave people too much power. So the gods decided to limit human sight and power. The Maya sacred book, the Popol Vuh, explains that the gods purposely clouded human understanding. As a result, a human's view of the world is unclear. The Popol Vuh explains that human understanding is “like breath on a mirror.”

### Serious Play

Breaking the hieroglyph code also helped archaeologists understand how the Maya spent some of their time. A specific kind of ball court can be found in many Maya cities. Archaeologists were puzzled about these courts, which varied in size. Some were the size of volleyball courts. Others were larger than football fields.

Archaeologists now think the Maya played a game called *pok-ta-pok* on a specific place on the opponents' side

Page 7

of the court. The balls were heavy. Also, players were not allowed to use their hands or feet. Experts think players may have had to use hips, elbows, knees, or other body parts to score a goal.

The court at the Maya site of Chichén Itzá (chee'chee'teet'sah') is still visible today. This court had stone rings, and a team could win the game by driving the hard rubber ball through the ring on the other team's side of the court. If you use your imagination, you can picture what a *pok-ta-pok* game might have looked like.

Imagine big, strong *pok-ta-pok* players stepping out onto the court. They wear leather helmets and pads to protect themselves. You can also see that they are worried. They know that the stakes are high. *Pok-ta-pok* is a game with religious meaning. The Maya think of it as a battle between good and evil. The only way to find out who's good and who's evil is to see who wins the game. Hundreds of spectators have gathered. They see the game as meaningful for their world and as a way of honoring the gods.

When the game begins, the sound of the bouncing ball is added to the cheers. *Pok-ta-pok* goes like hard rubber ball as it hits the ground and bounces off the walls of the court.

One player begins driving the ball up the court with his elbows, knees, and chest. Then, whack! Another player slams into him and knocks him to the ground. There is no whistle for a foul. In fact, there are very few rules in *pok-ta-pok*. The game continues until someone finally scores. The side that scores wins the game.

The winners of *pok-ta-pok* games were considered to be the “good” awarded with clothing and jewelry.

Page 8



Nearly every Maya city had at least one ball court.

But what do you think happened to the losers? Experts believe that at least in certain situations, some of them were offered as sacrifices to the gods.

Human sacrifice was a part of the Maya religion. Maya priests sought to please the gods by offering sacrifices atop the pyramids. No wonder the *pok-ta-pok* players looked worried as they walked onto the court!

*Pok-ta-pok* and human sacrifice are two parts of Maya life that we have learned about from Maya hieroglyphs. In the next chapter, we will learn about the scientific achievements and daily life

**Vocabulary**  
sacrifice, v. to give or to do something for a religious purpose

Page 9



**SUPPORT**—Was *pok-ta-pok* just a game or sporting event to entertain the Maya who watched the game?

- » No, the game had religious meaning.

**LITERAL**—In what way did *pok-ta-pok* have religious significance to the Maya?

- » The game was seen as a contest between good and evil. The winners were considered the “good,” and the losers were considered “evil.”

**LITERAL**—What was the purpose of the Maya practice of sacrificing human beings?

- » The Maya sacrificed humans in the hopes of pleasing the gods.

**EVALUATIVE**—Why do you think the Maya allowed the outcome of a game to determine who lived or died?

- » Perhaps they believed the outcome of the game was actually in the hands of the gods.

## Timeline

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- Show students the Chapter 1 Timeline Image Card. Read and discuss the caption, making particular note of any dates.
- Review and discuss the Big Question: “What do the ruins of the Maya tell you about the importance of religion to their civilization?”
- Post the first image card as the very first image on the far left side of the Timeline, under the date referencing 1500 BCE.




### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

#### Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “What do the ruins of the Maya tell you about the importance of religion to their civilization?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: Maya ruins contain writings and other remnants of their central religious practices, including pyramids and temples built for religious ceremonies, and ball courts on which the Maya played the sacred ball game that helped determine who would be sacrificed to the gods.
- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary words (*Mesoamerica, Maya, civilization, architecture, archaeologist, city-state, temple, hieroglyph, or sacrifice*), and write a sentence using the word.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

## Additional Activities

 **Background for Teachers:** Before beginning any of the geography activities, review What Teachers Need to Know on pages 4–6 of the Introduction. The geography activities are best introduced prior to teaching the Chapter 1 Core Lesson, so they can serve as an introduction for students to the geography of the places in which the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations developed and thrived.



### World Geography (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

10–20 MIN

#### Activity Pages



AP 1.1

AP 1.2

**Materials Needed:** Display copy of (1) World Map (AP 1.1). Sufficient printed copies of the World Map (AP 1.1) and World Geography (AP 1.2) found in the Teacher Resources section (pages 88 and 89).

**Note to Teachers:** Time allotted for this activity varies based on what work you choose to assign in class or as homework. Plan for ten minutes of classroom time to work through the World Map (AP 1.1) and an additional ten minutes if you choose to assign World Geography (AP 1.2) during class.

Display the enlarged World Map (AP 1.1) for all students to see. Point first to the compass rose, and review each of the cardinal directions—north, south, east, and west—relative to the map. Then point to the United States and the approximate location of the state in which your students live to identify their current location.

Next, point to each of the continents in the following order, asking students to verbally identify each continent: North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Review the names of various world oceans, as well as the use of the map scale.

Ask students to complete the questions on the World Geography page (AP 1.2). This can also be assigned as homework, if preferred.



### Geography of the Americas (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

10–20 MIN

#### Activity Pages



AP 1.3

AP 1.4

**Materials Needed:** Display copy of (1) Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3). Sufficient printed copies of the Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and Geography of the Americas (AP 1.4), found in Teacher Resources (pages 90 and 91). Green, brown, and blue colored pencils or crayons should also be made available to students.

**Note to Teachers:** Time allotted for this activity varies based on what work you choose to assign in class or as homework. Plan for ten minutes of classroom time to work through the Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and an additional ten minutes if you choose to assign Geography of the Americas (AP 1.4) during class.

Tell students that during Unit 2 they will be learning about the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. They will focus primarily upon countries and areas included in the southern part of North America, often referred to as Central America, and in South America.

Now display the enlarged Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3), and distribute copies to all students. Explain that students are now looking at a map that shows the borders of the modern-day countries of North America, Central America, and South America in greater detail. Begin by identifying the country of Mexico, noting that it is in North America, just south of the United States. Have students circle the same area on their own maps. Then ask students to name and point to the following labeled areas: the Yucatán Peninsula, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize. Have students color this area on the map green.

Next point out the continent of South America. Have students name and point to the Andes Mountains, Peru and the city of Cuzco, and the largest countries in South America (Brazil and Argentina). Have students color the Andes Mountains brown and have them draw a star next to Cuzco to show that it is an important city.

Ask students to identify the color typically used to depict large bodies of water on maps (*blue*). Take time to point out the following bodies of water on the displayed map as students use a blue pencil or crayon to shade these areas on their own maps: Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, Amazon River, and Pacific Ocean.

Now ask students to complete the questions on AP 1.4. These questions can also be completed for homework.

Tell students to put this modern map of North America, Central America, and South America aside but to keep it available for reference, if needed, during the remaining activities.



## Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (RI.5.7, RI.5.9) 20–30 MIN

### Activity Pages



AP 1.5  
AP 1.6

**Materials Needed:** Display copies of (1) Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) and (2) Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3). Sufficient printed copies of the Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) and Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6) found in Teacher Resources (pages 92 and 93). Green, orange, and yellow colored pencils or crayons should also be made available to students.

**Note to Teachers:** Time allotted for this activity varies based on what work you choose to assign in class or as homework. Plan for twenty minutes of classroom time to work through the Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) and an additional ten minutes if you choose to assign Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6) during class.

Display the map of the Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5), and distribute copies to all students. Explain to students that this is a map that shows the same land areas of North America, Central America, and South America as the previous map but that it depicts these areas at an earlier time in history. Tell students that they will be studying the historical period represented by the map, so it will be useful to understand both the geography of this area and where the different civilizations they will study were located. Explain that the period of history began before the Europeans arrived in the Americas and before the kinds of political boundaries we recognize today were established.

Point out shaded areas of the map and the key that indicates that these shaded areas represented the territories that were part of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. Students who used the Core Knowledge curriculum in Grade 1 have already studied these civilizations. Tell students that they may refer to their maps of North America, Central America, and South America as you discuss the following:

- On the displayed Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5), point to the shaded area representing the Maya civilization. Ask students to identify the name of this civilization and lightly shade the area of the Maya civilization green.

Then ask students to refer to the Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America to describe the modern-day locations that the Maya civilization of 200 to 900 occupied. (*The Maya civilization was centered on the Yucatán Peninsula of modern-day Mexico and also occupied parts of Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize.*)

- Point to the shaded area representing the Aztec civilization. Ask students to identify the civilization and to describe the modern-day locations that the Aztec occupied. (*The Aztec occupied much of what is modern Mexico.*) Have students lightly shade the area of the Aztec civilization orange.
- Point to the shaded area representing the Inca civilization. Ask students to identify the civilization. Then ask students to refer to the Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) to describe the modern-day locations that the Inca occupied. (*The Inca occupied much of what is present-day Peru, as well as parts of Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina.*) Have students lightly shade the area occupied by the Inca yellow. Have students fill in the map key with each respective color that represents the civilizations on the map.
- Ask students to identify the key geographic features that dominated the historical empire of the Inca (*the Andes Mountains, as well as the coast of South America*).

Have students complete the Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6). Depending on your students' map skills, you may choose to do this as a whole-class activity so that you can scaffold and provide assistance. You may also choose to have students work with partners or small groups or assign AP 1.6 for homework. If students complete AP 1.6 with partners or small groups,

or for homework, be sure to review the answers to the questions with the entire class. Be certain that students save these activity pages for future reference throughout their study of the unit on the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations.



## Visit Copán

35 MIN

Take this opportunity to reinforce the domain-specific vocabulary words *city-state* and *archaeologist* by introducing students to the ruins of one of the most spectacular Maya cities, Copán.



**Background for Teachers:** Prior to discussing Copán with students, read the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article about Copán. This primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where specific links to background information about Copán, a video for a virtual tour, and a gallery of images may be found.

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

### Discuss City-States

Tell students that you are going to explore the idea of a city-state in more detail. Observe that this term is made up of two words. A city is a large settlement of people. A state is an organized community that is united under a single government. A city-state, therefore, is a city that functioned as an independent state, like a small country. The Maya civilization was actually a collection of independent city-states that sometimes fought each other. They were linked, however, by a common culture. For example, they spoke related languages.

**Ask:** What is the role of cities in the United States today? (Students might observe that cities are part of a larger state. They have their own governments, but they are not independent.) Discuss how modern cities in our country do not fight among each other or have governments that can act independently of their state or national governments.

### Discuss Archaeology

Explain to students that what we know about the city-states of the Maya comes from the study of the ruins that they left behind. That is because all of the city-states of the Maya collapsed and were abandoned hundreds of years ago. Ask students to recall what kind of experts study the ruins left behind by ancient peoples (*archaeologists*). Discuss the challenges involved with exploring ancient ruins and drawing conclusions about what happened there. What kinds of skills and tools do archaeologists need to learn about ancient peoples from the objects and remains they left behind? (*Computers help break the “code” of ancient languages; knowledge about such topics as religion and architecture can help archaeologists understand the meaning and purpose of buildings and objects they find.*)

## Tell Students About Copán

The primary unit link to the Core Knowledge web page will take you to a UNESCO website about Copán. After visiting this site, tell students that some of the most famous Maya ruins are found in the city of Copán, located in present-day Honduras. This city was abandoned in the 900s. Europeans found the ruins in 1570, and much of the archaeological study of the site began in the 1800s.

The city of Copán may have been home to as many as thirty thousand people. The ruins include the characteristic temples, plazas, and ball courts of the Maya civilization. The people of Copán were also fine artists; sculptures and carvings among the ruins indicate a high level of skill and artistry.

Discuss with students how Maya building methods and materials helped their ruins survive for hundreds of years after they were abandoned. Explain that the use of stone has helped preserve much of the Maya culture.

## Virtual Visit to Copán

**Note to Teachers:** The video found through the primary unit link references “beheading.” If you choose to show this video, discuss with students that the Maya used human sacrifice as a part of their religion. Be sure to treat the topic with sensitivity. This video is approximately three minutes long.

After watching the video exploring the ruins of Copán, discuss the following features:

- How Maya temples were built on top of each other
- The role of human sacrifice in Maya culture
- The event that may have triggered the decline of Copán

Finally, display images from the UNESCO gallery, also accessible through the primary unit link. Ask students to react to the skill and artistry they see in the carving and structures left behind by the Maya.

# Maya Science and Daily Life

**The Big Question:** Why is the 365-day solar calendar employed by the Maya particularly impressive?

## Primary Focus Objectives

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- ✓ Identify the main achievements of the Maya civilization. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Explain how religious beliefs led to the Maya's scientific achievements. **(RI.5.3)**
- ✓ Identify some specific discoveries of the Maya. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *astronomy*, *leap year*, *equinox*, and *priest*; and of the phrase "initiation ceremony." **(RI.5.4)**

## What Teachers Need to Know

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For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-maya](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-maya)

## Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

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**astronomy, n.** the study of the stars, planets, and other features of outer space **(11)**

*Example:* The Maya developed advanced knowledge of astronomy.

*Variation(s):* astronomer

**leap year, n.** a year that has 366 days, or one more than all other years, and occurs every four years **(11)**

*Example:* Our calendar has a leap year every four years that has an extra day.

*Variation(s):* leap years

**equinox, n.** a day in which daytime and nighttime are about the same length, which happens twice every year **(13)**

*Example:* Every spring and fall, an equinox occurs.

*Variation(s):* equinoxes



**“initiation ceremony,” (phrase)** a special event to mark a person’s entry into a certain group or status (16)

*Example:* When they reached a certain age, boys underwent an initiation ceremony to mark their entry into adulthood.

*Variation(s):* initiation ceremonies

**priest, n.** a person who has the training or authority to carry out certain religious ceremonies or rituals (16)

*Example:* Maya priests carried out the initiation ceremonies for boys.

*Variation(s):* priests

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce “Maya Science and Daily Life”

5 MIN

Display a modern calendar. Ask students to identify features of our calendar, such as the twelve-month year, the seven-day week, and names of months and days. Ask why a calendar is an important tool, and have students discuss how a calendar helps them. Explain that the Maya civilization was probably the first in the Americas to create not just one but two calendars that measured time.

Call students’ attention to the Big Question, suggesting that as they read, they keep in mind that the Maya civilization developed hundreds of years before the “invention” of many of the modern tools we use today. Encourage students as they read to think about the Maya calendars compared to the modern calendar we use today.


### Guided Reading Supports for “Maya Science and Daily Life”

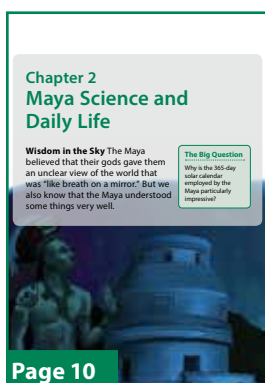
30 MIN

When you or a student reads aloud, **always** prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

#### “Wisdom in the Sky,” Pages 10–11

Scaffold understanding as follows:

 **CORE VOCABULARY**—Invite a student to volunteer to read the two paragraphs of “Wisdom in the Sky.” Note the term *astronomy*. Make sure students recognize that astronomy is considered an advanced science that today depends on the use of telescopes, computers, and other complex equipment.



Their knowledge of astronomy, for example, was impressive. The Maya, of course, did not have telescopes, computers, or satellites. They didn't even have the wheel. All they had were their own eyes. Yet they were able to make very precise observations of the stars.

**Maya Calendars**

We all know that there are 365 days in a year, plus an extra day every fourth year, or **leap year**. These numbers are the result of years of study of the sun and the seasons. The Maya, working without scientific tools, calculated

**Vocabulary**

**astronomy**, *n.* the study of the stars, planets, and other features of outer space

**leap year**, *n.* a year that has 366 days or one more than all other years, and occurs every four years

**Page 11**



**After the student reads the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What did the Maya use to make their observations about the stars?

- » The Maya used their eyes—and only their eyes—to make precise observations.

**INFERENTIAL**—What does the text imply, when it says that the Maya didn't have telescopes, computers, or satellites?

- » The Maya lacked the kinds of tools that we consider to be necessary to the study of astronomy. This makes their accomplishments especially impressive.

**CHALLENGE**—Other ancient civilizations, not just the Maya, looked to the heavens. Most of the planets in our solar system were named by an ancient civilization that students using Core Knowledge curriculum have already studied in an earlier grade. Who were the ancient people who provided the planet names we use today?


- » The ancient Romans named most of the planets in our solar system, including Venus, Mars, and Jupiter.

**“Maya Calendars,” “Astronomy at Work,” and “Inventing Zero,” Pages 11–14**

that there were 365,2420 days in a year. Modern astronomers used modern technology to measure the year at 365.2422 days!

The Maya created a solar calendar, or calendar based on the movement of the sun. This calendar is similar to our calendar, but there are some differences. We divide our year into twelve months. The Maya divided their year into eighteen months with names like Pop and Zip. A special five-day “month” completed the 365-day year.

Besides their 365-day solar calendar, Maya astronomers created another calendar called the Sacred Round. This calendar was 260 days long and was used to keep track of religious holidays and other important events. Because the Maya had two calendars, each day had two names. One name came from the Sacred Round and the other from the solar calendar. This also meant that all Maya people had two birthdays.



**Page 12**

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the first paragraph under the heading “Maya Calendars” on page 11. Discuss the meaning of the term *leap year*. Make sure students recognize that the day added to the leap year is meant to account for the fact that each year has 365 and (roughly) a quarter days.

**Call on three additional student volunteers to read the paragraphs on page 12.**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Note the term *equinox* in the next section “Astronomy at Work” on page 13. Explain that this term comes from two Latin words meaning “equal” and “night.” Putting the two Latin words together, an equinox is when the day and night are equal in length. Make sure students understand that the lengths of day and night are only equal on two days a year. The equinoxes usually occur around March 20 and September 22 each year.

**SUPPORT**—Call attention to the description of the shadows cast onto the pyramid at Chichén Itzá by the sun during the fall and spring equinoxes.

**Have the students read the entire section of “Astronomy at Work” on page 13 to themselves, as well as “Inventing Zero,” which continues on page 14.**

**Astronomy at Work**

We can see the results of Maya astronomy in the placement of their temples and pyramids. These structures were built so the sun would shine directly on key areas on certain days. In Chichén Itzá, for example, the sun of the spring and fall equinoxes casts the shadow of a serpent statue onto the pyramid steps. As the sun rises, the shadow slithers down the stairs.

**Vocabulary**

**equinox**, *n.* a day in which daytime and nighttime are about the same length, which happens twice every year

**Inventing Zero**

The Maya were also skilled at mathematics. They developed a system of number symbols. A dot stood for one. A bar stood for five. A shell stood for zero. We all know that zero can stand for “nothing.”



**Page 13**

But when it comes to a system of numbers, zero means a lot! Think, for example, of the difference between the numbers twenty and two hundred. The Maya symbol for zero worked the same way our does. In fact, the Maya were among the first people in the world to develop the concept of zero.

**How They Lived**

Most Maya people made their living as farmers. Their main crop was corn. One of their main foods was something you may have eaten—a flat bread called a tortilla (toe\*tee\*uh). Farmers also grew beans, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and pumpkins.

Maya farmers lived in one-room huts made out of mud and grass. Families lived in walled areas that had several huts. Men and boys did the farming. Women and girls took care of the house, cooked, and made clothing and pottery.

Every culture has practices that seem odd to other people. The Maya did two things that may seem a little strange to you. They considered crossed eyes to be beautiful. So mothers would hang something in front of a baby's nose to help the baby develop crossed eyes. The Maya also viewed a flat head as a symbol of beauty. They would strap a long board to the backs of newborn babies. As the babies' heads rested against the board, the board gradually flattened the back of the babies' soft skulls.

**Coming of Age**

Children were cared for by parents and other family members. They took on new responsibilities, such as

**Page 14**

**After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—In what ways is the Maya solar calendar similar to the one we use today?

- » It has a 365-day year that is divided into “months” or shorter segments of time.

**LITERAL**—In what ways is the Maya solar calendar different from the one we use today?

- » It has eighteen months made up of twenty days, plus one extra five-day period.

**EVALUATIVE**—The Maya calculated a year to be 365.2420 days long. This calculation has since been confirmed by modern scientists using complex modern tools. What does this suggest about the Maya civilization?

- » The Maya measurement is astoundingly accurate compared to the one modern scientists have arrived at using modern tools and equipment. While we do not know exactly how the Maya arrived at this calculation, it suggests that they were very advanced in the scientific methods they used.

**LITERAL**—What clues indicate that the builders of the pyramid at Chichén Itzá placed their structure precisely according to observations of the skies?

- » On the two equinoxes each year, the sun strikes a sculpture in such a way as to cast the shadow of a serpent on the stairs, creating the illusion of a snake’s movement as the sun’s position changes.

**INFERENTIAL**—What does the text’s statement about the Maya system of numbers and use of zero suggest about the Maya?

- » The Maya “invented” the highly useful concept of zero, suggesting that they had an advanced understanding of mathematics.

**“How They Lived” and “Coming of Age,” Pages 14–17**



Maya farmers saved food for the people of their large cities. In the hilly areas, farmers created waterways to redirect and save water.

**Page 15**

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**Have students volunteer to read the section “How They Lived” out loud. Call attention to the image of the Maya boy.**

**Ask the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What was the most common job held by the Maya people of the past?

- » Most of them worked as farmers.

helping with farming and household chores. A boy had a white bead braided to his hair. A girl had a string tied to her waist with a red shell attached.

These symbols remained in place until the children reached the age of fourteen.

At this point, an initiation ceremony was performed to mark their passage to adulthood. A priest would pick a day when the stars were favorable. Then the priest would cut the bead from the boy's hair. A girl's mother would cut the string from her daughter's waist. Then the parents would have a celebration with family members and neighbors.

After these ceremonies, boys moved into a house for unmarried men. There they would remain until they got married. Marriages were arranged. In the hard life of Maya farmers, marriages were not romantic affairs. They were more like business deals between families.

As with the initiation ceremonies, priests picked marriage dates. They checked with the stars and the gods to find a day that would bring good fortune. However, no Maya couple expected married life to bring only good fortune. The Maya believed that every aspect of life was controlled by the gods. Because some gods were good and some were bad, they expected life to include both joy and sorrow.

**Vocabulary**  
"Initiation ceremony" (INITIATION) a special event to mark a person's entry into a certain group or status  
priest, a person who has the training or authority to carry out religious ceremonies or rituals

Page 16

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Have a student volunteer read from the bottom of page 14, continuing through the first full paragraph on page 16 in the section “Coming of Age.” Make sure students properly pronounce the Core Vocabulary phrase “initiation ceremony.” Make clear that these two words are related. Invite students to use the two words together in a sentence (for example, “The priest carried out the initiation ceremony”). Explain the meaning of the phrase and explain the meaning of the Core Vocabulary word *priest* in the text.

**Have students read the rest of the section to themselves. After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—At what age did Maya young people enter adulthood?

- » Maya boys and girls became adults at the age of fourteen.

**INFERENTIAL**—Knowing that Maya priests picked the dates for initiation ceremonies and marriages, what does this tell you about Maya culture?

- » This fact illustrates the central role that religion played in Maya life and how the Maya people consulted the gods for all major actions and decisions.

**LITERAL**—Believing that some gods were good and some were bad, how did the Maya believe that the gods impacted their daily lives?

- » The existence of good and evil gods explained why life had both joys and sorrows.



Page 17

## “Where Did Everybody Go?” Pages 18–19

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**Invite two student volunteers to read the first two paragraphs of the section “Where Did Everybody Go?” out loud. Have students finish reading the remainder of the section independently.**

**After students read the text, ask the following questions:**


**LITERAL**—What evidence suggests to archaeologists that the Maya abandoned their cities sometime around 900?

- » They stopped carving names and dates on their pyramids and temples as they had done before. The structures began to fall into disrepair.

**Where Did Everybody Go?**

The ancient Maya were amazing people who built a great civilization. That fact alone is a reason to find them interesting. But one of the most fascinating questions about ancient Maya civilization (200–900 CE) is what happened to cause it to end.

Archaeologists believe that the Maya left their cities sometime between 800 and 900. It's possible this event happened over just a few decades. Until the 1990s, the Maya kept careful historical records. They used their hieroglyphs to carve names and dates on pyramids and temples. Then in the 1990s, the writing mysteriously stopped. The temples and pyramids began to fall into disrepair. So what happened? Archaeologists have theories, but they can't find clear proof for any one of them.



**Page 18** Get the facts for sure why they were abandoned.

One theory holds that farmers rose up against the priests and nobles. But this raises another question: what happened to the farmers? There is no evidence of a new group of people replacing the old ones in power.

Some have guessed that disease wiped out the Maya population. But no mass burial grounds have been found. Archaeologists have found signs that some people in this area did die from diseases. Almost all of these deaths, however, seemed to have occurred after 1500, when the Spanish brought new diseases to the Americas. The Maya had been gone for years before that.

Did disaster strike the Maya? Did drought or heavy rainfall bring famine? Was there an earthquake? Did shifting trade routes affect the lowland Maya rulers and their settlements? Could invaders have toppled the civilization?

No one knows for sure. We only know that the once-great Maya cities were abandoned and swallowed up by the rain forest. The Maya scattered. But the people themselves did not disappear. Today, millions still speak languages related to ancient Mayan. These ancestors of the pyramid builders have lived in villages, towns, and cities in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras for centuries. They have a rich heritage, one that we are learning more about with each passing year.

**Page 19** 19

**LITERAL**—What evidence argues against the theory that farmers rose up against their noble rulers?

- » There is no indication that the old rulers were replaced with new ones.

**INFERENTIAL**—What is suggested by the fact that there are millions of people living today who speak languages related to ones spoken by the Maya?

- » This fact suggests that the Maya people scattered from their cities but that they did not disappear.

**CHALLENGE**—What are some of the factors that may cause people to move away from a city to the surrounding countryside instead?

- » Life in a city could become difficult if there were a shortage of food for the many inhabitants. It could become difficult if there were diseases that quickly spread from person to person. It could become difficult if some enemy were attacking rich targets.

**CHALLENGE**—What can we infer from the fact that we know a lot about Maya culture but not about what happened to Maya cities?

- » The Maya did not write down information about the event or events that led to the changes affecting their civilization around 900.

## Timeline

- Show students the Chapter 2 Timeline Image Card. Read and discuss the caption, making particular note of any dates.
- Review and discuss the Big Question: “Why is the 365-day solar calendar employed by the Maya particularly impressive?”
- Post the image card as the second image on the far left side of the Timeline, under the date referencing 200 CE. Refer to the illustration in the Unit 2 Introduction for further guidance on the placement of each image card to the Timeline.



### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

#### Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “Why is the 365-day solar calendar employed by the Maya particularly impressive?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: The Maya carried out detailed and precise observations of the movements of the sun, planets, and stars without the use of advanced tools and technology. Using only

their eyes, they were able to calculate with great accuracy the length of a year and create a calendar that closely matches our own.

- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary words or phrases (*astronomy, leap year, equinox, "initiation ceremony," or priest*), and write a sentence using the word or phrase.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

## Additional Activities

### Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (RI.5.1, RI.5.2, RI.5.3)

15 MIN

Activity Page



AP 2.1

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1) found on page 94 in the Teacher Resources section.

Distribute copies of Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1). Have students complete the Maya sections of the graphic organizer. Encourage students to refer to Chapters 1 and 2 of the Student Reader to help them complete the chart. Remind students that they will be using this activity page through the duration of Unit 2, so they should store it in a place where it will not get lost.

### Maya Calendar, Math, and Astronomy (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

35 MIN

**Materials Needed:** Internet access

**Note to Teachers:** If you do not have Internet access in your classroom, printable activities and primary sources can be found on the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian "Resources" site to use in lieu of online activities. This primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific link to the museum "Resources" site may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

#### About Maya Math

Help students learn more about the mathematical and astronomical skills of the Maya. Accompany students to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian site, where they can learn about the basics of Maya mathematics and practice or play a game using the Maya math system. This primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific link for the Maya math game may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

## Discuss Maya Math

Talk with students about ways in which the Maya math system is similar to and different from the system we use. For example, ask:

- What is the biggest difference between Maya math and the system we learn today? (Students may observe that the Maya system uses only three symbols to represent all numbers.)
- How is the Maya system similar to ours? (Students should observe that the system uses symbols for each of three categories—1s, 20s, and 400s—just as we use numbers for 1s, 10s, and 100s.)

## About the Maya Calendar

Accompany students to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian site, where they can watch the brief video “Sun, Corn, and the Calendar” about the Maya calendar. The video is approximately 2.5 minutes long. Use this primary link to go to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific link to the “Sun, Corn, and the Calendar” video may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

## About Maya Astronomy

Accompany students to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian site, where they can watch the video “The Maya and the Sun” about the many ways in which the Maya built their astronomical observations into their pyramids, temples, and other structures. The video is approximately three minutes long. This primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific link to “The Maya and the Sun” video may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

Ask students to identify the main reasons that the Maya kept track of the movement of the sun. (Students should observe that the location of the sun was important to Maya farmers, telling them when to plant and when to get ready for harvest. The location of the sun also represented the activities of gods.)



# The Aztec: Empire Builders

**The Big Question:** Why did the Aztec make human sacrifices?

## Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Explain how the Aztec built and controlled a powerful empire. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Describe Aztec religious beliefs and how they were linked to the traditions of the society. **(RI.5.3)**
- ✓ Understand why the Aztec fought many wars. **(RI.5.3)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *Aztec*, *nomadic*, *empire*, and *emperor*. **(RI.5.4)**

## What Teachers Need to Know

For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-aztec](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-aztec)

## Materials Needed

Activity Pages



AP 1.3

AP 1.5

- Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5)
- Enlarged versions of the maps on AP 1.3 and AP 1.5 for reference

## Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

**Aztec, n.** civilization that thrived in present-day central Mexico from 1325 to 1521 CE **(20)**

*Example:* The Aztec were ruthless warriors who dominated the region.

**nomadic, adj.** moving around often in search of food; not settled in one place **(20)**

*Example:* Before building their capital city, the nomadic Aztec wandered for years.

*Variation(s):* nomads

**empire, n.** a group of countries or territories under the control of one government or one ruler (23)

*Example:* By conquering their neighbors, the Aztec built a vast empire.

*Variation(s):* empires

**emperor, n.** the ruler of an empire (23)

*Example:* The Aztec emperor was thought to be a living god.

*Variation(s):* emperors

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce “The Aztec: Empire Builders”

5 MIN

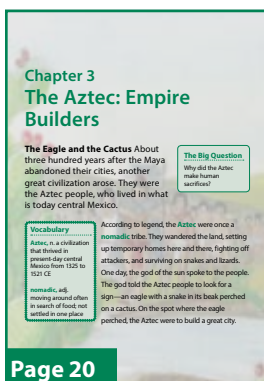
Ask students to recall what they’ve learned about the Maya civilization. How was the civilization organized? Who was in charge? What did daily life look like for the Maya? What role did religion play? Have students share their responses aloud. Explain to students that they are going to learn about another civilization that also lived in Mexico but after the Maya civilization had come to an end. Explain that the Maya and the Aztec, the civilization they will learn about, had many similarities but also many differences. One similarity is that they practiced human sacrifice as a part of their religion. Call attention to the Big Question and encourage students to look for reasons why the Aztec practiced human sacrifice as they read the chapter.

### Guided Reading Supports for “The Aztec: Empire Builders”

30 MIN

When you or a student reads aloud, **always** prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

#### “The Eagle and the Cactus,” Pages 20–22



**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**SUPPORT**—Note that much of what students will be learning about the Aztec reflects Aztec legend and religious belief. Such information and beliefs are not necessarily based in fact or actual evidence. Yet these legends and beliefs can be very important to understanding the beliefs and values of a culture.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Invite a volunteer to read the first two paragraphs on page 20. Note the terms *Aztec* and *nomadic* when they are encountered, and help students recognize that the Aztec were a group of people and that the word *nomadic* describes how they lived their lives.

**SUPPORT**—Direct students’ attention to the illustration on pages 20–21.



**Give students an opportunity to finish reading the section silently.**

Have students pull out Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5). Have them compare the location of the Aztec civilization to what is shown on the Modern Map. **Then ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Where on the modern map would Tenochtitlán be located?

- » Students should identify central Mexico, specifically Mexico City, as the location of Tenochtitlán.

**LITERAL**—According to the text, when did the Aztec civilization begin its rise in what is today central Mexico?

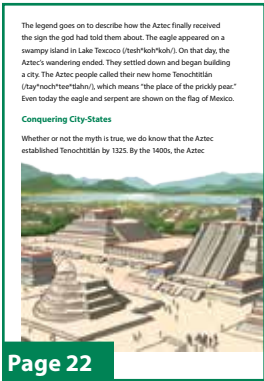
- » The Aztec civilization began its rise about three hundred years after the Maya civilization declined.

**INFERENTIAL**—What does the legend suggest about the life of the Aztec before the founding of Tenochtitlán?

- » The legend suggests that the Aztec lived difficult lives as nomads.

**LITERAL**—According to the legend, how did the Aztec choose the site on which they built their city?

- » The Aztec received a sign from a god directing them where to build their city.



**“Conquering City-States” and “The Legend of the Five Suns,” Pages 22–25**

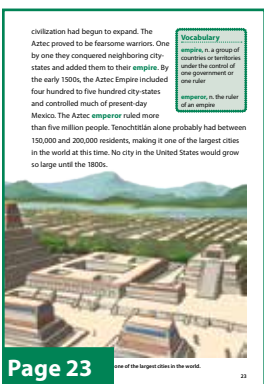
**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**Read the title “Conquering City-States” on page 22, and remind students that they encountered the term *city-states* when reading about the Maya.**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the first paragraph under the heading “Conquering City-States,” which begins on page 22, continuing on to page 23 and the top of page 24.

Discuss the meaning of the words *empire* and *emperor* when they are encountered, and note the similarities between these two words. Explain that one term refers to a group of states or regions and that the other refers to the person who leads that organization.

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that they may have learned about other great empires in history—for example, the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was initially based in Rome, but over time it included a vast area of conquered lands and peoples. Ask students to recall what they have learned about the challenges of building and holding together such far-flung empires.



The Aztec were well-known warriors. By conquering other people, they were able to gain wealth. Aztec warriors then forced conquered peoples to send their gold, silver, jade, and turquoise to Tenochtitlán. Those who had no valuables could send food, cloth, or other goods. People who lived by the ocean might also have to send seashells, fish, or turtles. Farmers might send corn, beans, peppers, squash, or fruit. Groups with access to specific environments might have to give animal skins and feathers. Craft-working communities might send pottery or blankets to Tenochtitlán.

#### The Legend of the Five Suns

Victorious Aztec warriors sent more than food and precious metals and stones back to Tenochtitlán. They also sent back soldiers captured in battle. The captured soldiers sometimes were used in an important religious ritual of the Aztec people: human sacrifice. To understand the importance of human sacrifice, we need to take a closer look at Aztec religion.

According to Aztec beliefs, life was uncertain. The one thing people could count on was that the world would one day come to a terrible, violent end. In fact, the Aztec believed that the world and the sun had been created and destroyed four times in the past. Under the first sun, a race of giants roamed the world. This world ended when a jaguar devoured the giants. The world under the second sun was swept away by a great wind. People under the

Page 24

third sun died in the fire and ash of volcanoes. Those living under the fourth sun drowned in floods.

The Aztec of Tenochtitlán believed they were living under the fifth sun. But they believed that this sun would also someday die: "There will be earthquakes and hunger, and then our end shall come," the priests said. The Aztec people believed these predictions. They planned their lives in response to them.

So the Aztec awaited their fate. But they did not simply accept it. They believed that each night, the sun god battled the forces of darkness. Each morning, the god had to find the strength to make the sun rise again. The Aztec believed they could help their god by offering human sacrifices in their temples.

The Aztec preferred to sacrifice someone other than their own friends and family. Most of their victims were foreign soldiers captured in war. Aztec priests believed that the heart was the most important thing to sacrifice. They preferred to offer up the strong heart of a soldier.

#### Religious Sacrifice

The Aztec held their sacrifices on top of pyramids not unlike those built by the Maya. A big drum sounded as attendants led the victims to the top. The priest killed the victim by removing his heart. The heart was then burned on an altar. The victim's body was then allowed to tumble down the pyramid's steps. The process was repeated for each victim.

Page 25

**Invite the class to follow along as you read the final section, “The Legend of Five Suns,” aloud.** Before beginning, explain to students that they are about to read about the Aztec belief in human sacrifice. Ask students to think about how human sacrifice is viewed today. In modern society, the idea of human sacrifice is considered horrible. During the time of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, human sacrifice was a part of everyday life. Other cultures around the world also practiced human sacrifice.

**After reading the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How large was the population of Tenochtitlán at its height?

- » Between 150,000 and 200,000 people lived there.

**INFERENTIAL**—The text notes that no city in the United States was as large as Tenochtitlán, so what does this suggest?

- » The Aztec and their city were highly advanced for their time. It would take centuries for people in the United States to build a city of that size and scale.

**EVALUATIVE**—What are some of the details that support the statement that the Aztec were fearsome warriors?

- » The Aztec eventually conquered hundreds of city-states and ruled over five million people.

**LITERAL**—How did the conquest of neighboring groups help the Aztec build wealth?

- » Conquered people were required to send valuable goods to the capital. These varied depending on what valuable items the people produced.

**LITERAL**—In addition to food and goods, what did conquered people supply to the Aztec?

- » Soldiers captured in battle were used in the Aztec ritual of human sacrifice.

**LITERAL**—What did the Aztec believe about the end of the world?

- » They believed that the world would end in terrible violence.

**EVALUATIVE**—How did the Aztec beliefs about the end of the world lead them to make human sacrifices?

- » The Aztec believed that they could put off the coming end of the world by making sacrifices to the sun god. They believed that human sacrifices gave the sun god strength to continue the world.

## “Religious Sacrifice” and “Success at War,” Pages 25–27

The Aztec believed human sacrifices were necessary to keep the sun rising and moving across the sky. They could even point to events that seemed to prove that the sacrifices worked. Once, when a long drought threatened the Aztec corn harvest, priests offered a number of human sacrifices. A day or so later, rain came. To the Aztec, this was no coincidence. It was proof that the gifts of blood had saved the crop. Experiences like this convinced the Aztec of the power of human sacrifice. As a result, Aztec offerings to the gods were regular and generous.

### Success at War

Priests and soldiers were key elements of Aztec life. Priests used human sacrifice to please the gods. Aztec soldiers held the empire together and provided the victims for the sacrifices.

As in many societies until recent times, Aztec people were born into a certain social class. Most people had relatively little chance to advance out of it. The army provided one opportunity for brave men to better themselves. Success in battle was rewarded with advancement and honor. The Aztec people believed there was no greater honor than to die in battle.

No doubt about it—the Aztec were fierce warriors. But their capabilities in warfare and skill at fighting helped create a rich empire and a remarkable civilization. Read on to learn more about the civilization that the Aztec built and their fabulous capital city of Tenochtitlan.

Page 26



The Aztec were fierce warriors ready to go to battle against their neighbors as a warrior's noble. This is an Aztec warrior dressed for battle.

Page 27

**Before students read the text, scaffold understanding as follows:**

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that a cause and an effect are two related events. Every event has at least one cause, or reason why it happened. Every event also has certain consequences, called effects. However, sometimes events seem related to each other when they're really not. Tell students to look for examples of how the Aztec used cause-and-effect relationships—or what they thought were cause-and-effect relationships—to support their practice of human sacrifice.

**Direct students to read the sections silently to themselves. Then, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How did the Aztec sacrifice humans?

- » Priests killed victims by removing their hearts.

**INFERENTIAL**—What does the word *seemed* suggest in the excerpt from the text, “They [the Aztec] could even point to events that *seemed* to prove that the sacrifices worked”?

- » The word suggests that what were actually natural events or even coincidences could mistakenly be viewed as the results of the sacrifices.

**LITERAL**—How did the Aztec regard their warriors?

- » They honored them. Being a soldier was one of the few ways an Aztec male could change his position in life.

**EVALUATIVE**—How did basic Aztec beliefs about their society and their religion help make war such a central part of Aztec life?

- » Aztec religion required a steady supply of victims for sacrifice, and war provided one of the few ways for a person to advance socially. These two factors helped encourage warfare.

## Timeline

- Show students the Chapter 3 Timeline Image Card. Read and discuss the caption, making particular note of any dates.
- Review and discuss the Big Question: “Why did the Aztec make human sacrifices?”
- Post the image card on the left side of the Timeline, under the date referencing the 1300s; refer to the illustration in the Unit 2 Introduction for further guidance on the placement of each image card to the Timeline.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

### Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “Why did the Aztec make human sacrifices?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: The Aztec were strongly affected by their religious beliefs about influence of the gods in their world. They believed human sacrifices could possibly delay the violent end of the world by giving the sun god the strength to continue.
- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary terms (*Aztec, nomadic, empire, or emperor*), and write a sentence using the word.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

## Additional Activities



### Aztec Arts (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

25 MIN

**Materials Needed:** Internet access

The following activity introduces students to another side of Aztec life—the rich tradition of art.



**Background for Teachers:** Long before the Aztec civilization reached its peak, native people of Mesoamerica were building a rich tradition of stone sculpture. For example, the Olmec people, who thrived some 2,500 years before the Aztec, are famous for their massive stone head sculptures. The Aztec—the last great pre-Columbian civilization of Mesoamerica—were also highly skilled carvers of stone.

### Aztec Sculpture Slide Show

Invite students to view the slide show of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Aztec stone sculptures. With students, click through the different images in the museum’s collection and read the description of each item aloud. This primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific link to images of the museums’s Aztec stone sculptures may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

### Discuss Aztec Art

Ask students to describe the purpose of most of the Aztec sculpture they have viewed. (Most of the artwork has a clear religious purpose, representing a specific god or object with religious significance.) Remind students that these

stone sculptures were created with very simple tools. They are also three-dimensional and involved great effort and skill to make.

Ask students why they think the Aztec devoted so much time and effort to the creation of these pieces of art. (*Answers may vary. The stone representation of gods and goddesses must have been very important to their life.*)



### Creating Aztec Art (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

25 MIN

**Materials Needed:** pencils, paper, modeling clay

The Aztec were skilled artisans. Their creations were an important part of their culture. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art site, print out images of Aztec sculptures to post around your room. Give students the opportunity to examine and sketch each image. Using modeling clay, have students create their own Aztec sculptures. This primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific link for the Aztec sculpture images can be found.

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)



## CHAPTER 4

# Tenochtitlán: City of Wonder

**The Big Question:** What does the description of Tenochtitlán reveal about Aztec civilization?

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Describe Tenochtitlán and the surrounding landscape. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Identify Moctezuma II and describe features of his reign. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *causeway*, *canal*, *scribe*, *codex*, *pictogram*, *litter*, and *reign*. (RI.5.4)

### What Teachers Need to Know

For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-tenochtitlan](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-tenochtitlan)

### Materials Needed

Activity Page



AP 1.5

- Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5)
- Enlarged version of AP 1.5

### Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

**causeway, n.** a raised road built over water to connect islands to a mainland (28)

*Example:* The soldiers marched out of the city on the causeway.

*Variation(s):* causeways

**canal, n.** a channel dug by people, used by boats or for irrigation (28)

*Example:* People used the canals like roads through the city, traveling by canoe.

*Variation(s):* canals

**scribe, n.** a person whose job is copying written information (31)

*Example:* The scribes prepared copies of the codex.

*Variation(s):* scribes

**codex, n.** an ancient book with handwritten pages or parts (32)

*Example:* The archaeologist eagerly studied the codex.

*Variation(s):* codices

**pictogram, n.** a picture or drawing that stands for a word or phrase (32)

*Example:* The pictogram of the snake showed that the tomb belonged to the king.

*Variation(s):* pictograms

**litter, n.** a chair attached to two beams and carried on the shoulders of several people (34)

*Example:* The emperor entered the building carried on a litter.

*Variation(s):* litters

**reign, n.** a period of time in which a king or queen rules (34)

*Example:* The empire reached its peak during the reign of the king.

*Variation(s):* reigns

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce “Tenochtitlán: City of Wonder”

5 MIN

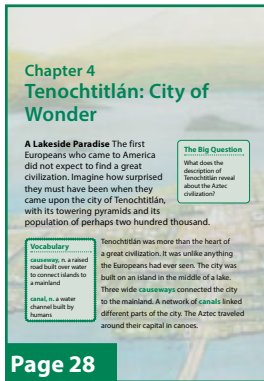
Prompt students to remember what they learned about the Aztec in Chapter 3. Record student responses on the board or chart paper. Remind students that they learned that the Aztec were a fierce warrior people. They used human sacrifice as a part of their religion. Explain to students that in this chapter, they are going to learn about the Aztec temple at Tenochtitlán. Call attention to the Big Question, and encourage students to look for ways the description of Tenochtitlán reveals important information about the Aztec civilization.

### Guided Reading Supports for “Tenochtitlán: City of Wonder”

30 MIN

When you or a student reads aloud, **always** prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

## “A Lakeside Paradise,” Pages 28–29



### Scaffold understanding as follows:

**SUPPORT**—Ask students to refer to AP 1.5, and remind them that the location of Tenochtitlán is in the south-central part of what is present-day Mexico. There is a body of water—Lake Texcoco—on which the city was built.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Invite a volunteer to read the two paragraphs on page 28. Note the terms *causeways* and *canals*. Explain that both of these terms relate to the city’s island location and the way residents traveled in and around the city. Causeways allowed travel on foot, while canals allowed travel by water.

Discuss the illustration on pages 28 and 29.

### Then ask the following questions:

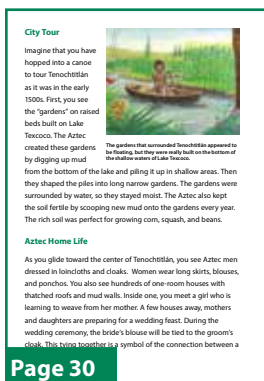
**LITERAL**—What made the city of Tenochtitlán so unusual to the first Europeans that visited the city?

- » The city was large, and it was built in the middle of a lake. People traveled around the city in canoes.

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think that the first Europeans did not expect to see a city like Tenochtitlán?

- » They may not have believed that people capable of creating such a great city were living in the Americas.

## “City Tour,” “Aztec Home Life,” “Suburbs and Schools,” “The Market,” and “The Ceremonial Center” Pages 30–34



### Scaffold understanding as follows:

**Direct students to read the sections “City Tour” and “Aztec Home Life” to themselves. After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think the Aztec went to the trouble of building the gardens described in the text?

- » There may not have been a lot of farmland available for the large population, so the gardens were helpful in growing needed food. They were highly productive.



The lives of Aztec women usually revolved around caring for the family.

**Suburbs and Schools**

You also visit an Aztec school. There, boys receive moral instruction—rules about the right and wrong way to behave. They also learn military drills. The boys practice with miniature weapons. They throw spears and carry special wooden clubs studded with sharp pieces of a natural glass-like rock.


A visit to a school for the sons of Aztec nobles turns out to be a hair-raising experience. You quickly realize that the teachers in this school are Aztec priests. You've had some tough teachers over the years. But you've never had one who painted his face black, did not wash his hair for religious reasons, and performed human sacrifice!

The priests train their students to become priests and scribes. Students study Aztec religion and astronomy and learn how to write in cuneiform script. They also

**Vocabulary**  
scribe, a person whose job is copying written information

**Page 31**

learn how to record information in a special kind of book called a codex. This is a long strip of tree bark that folds up like an accordion. The pages of the codex are covered with pictures and pictograms. The priest explains that the codices (kōh'duh'seez) are used to keep lists of rulers, to record payments made by conquered people, and to keep track of religious holidays.



Aztec books were made from an early type of paper and featured pictures.

**The Market**

The next stop on your tour is the central market. Here, people trade cacao (chocolate beans) and cotton blankets for other items. The sound of thousands of Aztec people trading creates a ruckus that can be heard a mile away.

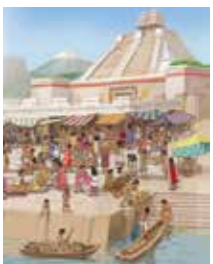
**Vocabulary**  
codex, an ancient book with handwritten pages or parts

**pictogram, n.** a picture or drawing that stands for a word or idea.

In one corner of the market, a man is trading rabbits, doves, and small dogs that are used for food. Across the way a woman displays pottery. You notice all sorts of other goods, including sandals, feathers, seashells, turkeys, wood, corn, bananas, pineapples, honeycombs, and fabrics.

One section of the market is set aside for trading enslaved people. Here you see human beings with wooden collars around their necks, inspecting them.

**Page 32**



Tenochtitlan had a thriving market where people traded goods from around the empire.

**The Ceremonial Center**

In the heart of the city is the ceremonial center. Here you find the most important building in the city, the Great Temple. This massive pyramid is as wide at its base. That's roughly the

**Page 33**

length of a football field! It rises almost ninety feet in the air. The top steps are stained with the blood of human sacrifices. Surrounding the Great Temple are several smaller temples. Each of these is dedicated to a different god.

Not far from these religious buildings stands the palace of the Aztec emperor. You will have to admire the palace from the outside; commoners are not allowed to enter. The palace has hundreds of rooms and more than a thousand servants.

**Moctezuma II**

Moctezuma II (mawtē'te'soo'mah') (sometimes written as Montezuma) was the Aztec emperor in the early 1500s. In the court of Moctezuma II, no one was allowed to look the emperor in the eye. When he entered the room, even the nobles threw themselves face down on the ground. When he left the palace, he was carried in a fancy litter. When Moctezuma wanted to walk, nobles laid mats on the ground so he would not dirty his golden sandals.

**Vocabulary**  
litter, n. a chair attached to two beams and carried on the shoulders of several people

**reign, n.** a period of time in which a king or queen rules.

Moctezuma was a powerful leader. But during his reign, some disturbing things were happening. There was a drought. A comet appeared in the sky. Lightning struck one of the temples in Tenochtitlan. Fantastic rumors began to spread. Some people said that a godly woman was walking the streets of the capital at night.

"must flee far away from this city!"

**Page 34**

**CHALLENGE**—Can you think of a part of the United States where people have used an invention or technology to overcome an unfriendly environment like the Aztec did?

- » Student responses will vary. One example may be the Southwest region, where the climate is very dry and arid. People living in places such as Arizona or New Mexico use irrigation and other farming methods to make sure there is enough water to grow crops and take care of livestock.

**Have students look at the images on pages 31 and 32 and read the captions. Ask the following question:**

**INFERENTIAL**—What do the images and captions on pages 31 and 32 suggest about the roles of men and women in Aztec society?

- » Aztec women and men had specific roles. Women's roles were centered on the home while boys were taught military skills.

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Call attention to the words *scribes*, *codex*, and *pictograms* located on pages 31 and 32. Discuss the meaning of each Core Vocabulary word with students. Ask a student volunteer to explain how these terms are related to one another. (*All three have to do with the production of written works in the Aztec culture.*)

**Read the section "Suburbs and Schools" aloud.** As you read, pause to discuss the meaning of the term *hair-raising* found in the second paragraph of the section on page 31. Explain to students that the term means something that is frightening or shocking. When you have finished reading the section out loud, call attention to the title of the section, "Suburbs and Schools." Explain to students that a suburb is a place located outside of a major city. Many Aztec lived in the large city of Tenochtitlán, but many other people lived in the areas located around the city.

**After reading the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How were schools for noble children different from schools for ordinary Aztec children?

- » The sons of nobles were trained to be priests or scribes.

**LITERAL**—What special skills were involved in learning to be a priest?

- » Students studied Aztec religion, astronomy, and reading and writing.

**EVALUATIVE**—Why do you think the Aztec used a social class system where people were trained for different roles?

- » Possible answer: in a large city, it is necessary for people to take on different roles, including leadership roles.

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**Have students read the sections “The Market” and “The Ceremonial Center” independently.**

**After students read the text, ask the following questions.**

**INFERENTIAL**—You have read about the role of enslaved people in Aztec human sacrifices. What other role of enslaved people is suggested in the section “The Market”?

- » The text suggests that noble families kept enslaved people as servants.

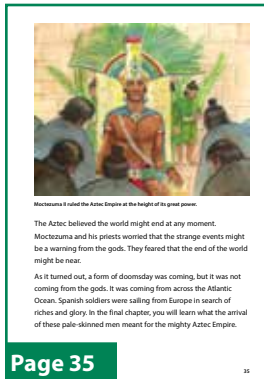
**LITERAL**—To what purpose is the center of the city dedicated?

- » The center of the city is the religious ceremonial center, with many temples, including the great temple.

**INFERENTIAL**—What is suggested by the fact that the Aztec emperor’s palace is located in the city’s ceremonial center?

- » The Aztec emperor is not only the leader of the state but also a religious figure and leader.

**“Moctezuma II,” Pages 34–35**



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the text on page 34 under the heading “Moctezuma II.” Discuss the meaning of the words *litter* and *reign*. Confirm with students their understanding of these terms and also the proper pronunciation of the term *reign*.

**After the student reads the text, ask the following questions:**

**EVALUATIVE**—What details in the first paragraph of the section “Moctezuma II” support the idea that he was a great and powerful leader?

- » Nobody could look Moctezuma in the eye or stand in his presence. Servants carried him about and made sure his feet never touched the bare ground.

**INFERENTIAL**—By referring to some “disturbing things” that were happening during Moctezuma’s reign, what is the text suggesting?

- » The suggestion is that perhaps Moctezuma is not as powerful or in control of things as he seems.

**EVALUATIVE**—Thinking about the Aztec and their beliefs, why might the disturbing signs that occurred during Moctezuma’s reign have troubled the people of Tenochtitlán?

- » The Aztec believed that their world would end violently and that they were in an ongoing struggle to persuade the gods to delay this violent end. The signs might have made people worry that they were not succeeding in this effort.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

### Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “What does the description of Tenochtitlán reveal about the Aztec civilization?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: Tenochtitlán was an enormous city that had many features that enabled it to serve and support its large population. It demonstrates the great success and ingenuity of the Aztec and their great skill at building, organizing, and solving practical problems.
- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary terms (*causeway, canal, scribe, codex, pictogram, litter, or reign*), and write a sentence using the word.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

## Additional Activities

### Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (RI.5.1, RI.5.2, RI.5.3)

15 MIN

Activity Page



AP 2.1

**Materials Needed:** Extra copies of the Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1) found on page 94 in the Teacher Resources section.

Have students take out Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1). Some students may have lost their copies; provide them with an extra activity page as necessary. Have students complete the Aztec sections of the graphic organizer. Encourage students to refer to Chapters 3 and 4 of the Student Reader to help them complete the chart. Remind students that they will be using this activity page through the duration of Unit 2, so they should store it in a place where it will not get lost.

## Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4 (RI.5.4)

15 MIN

Activity Page



AP 4.1

**Materials Needed:** (1) Sufficient copies of Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4 (AP 4.1), found in Teacher Resources, page 96; (2) pens and pencils; and (3) colored pencils or crayons.

Distribute the Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4 activity page (AP 4.1). Allow students to work through the activity page independently or in pairs or groups, circling the correct terms to complete the sentences. You may also assign this page as homework. Have students select one statement from the activity page to illustrate.

## Create a Codex (AP 4.2) (RI.5.4)

15 MIN

Activity Page



AP 4.2

**Materials Needed:** (1) Sufficient copies of Create a Codex (AP 4.2), found in Teacher Resources, page 97; (2) pens and pencils; (3) crayons or colored pencils; and (4) construction paper.

Distribute the Create a Codex (AP 4.2) activity page as well as construction paper and crayons or colored pencils to students. Read directions with students aloud, and briefly discuss the hieroglyphs on the activity page. Have students brainstorm their trip to school each morning and jot down notes on a separate piece of paper. Instruct students to fold their construction paper like an accordion so that it has six different panels. This will be the students' "codex." Students should then select, draw, and color symbols that relate to their morning journey to school. Have students swap their codices with at least one partner to decipher the meaning of the codices.



## CHAPTER 5

# The Inca: Lords of the Mountains

**The Big Question:** Why were llamas so important to the Inca?

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Identify the Inca and describe where they lived. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Describe the Sapa Inca and how he maintained absolute rule. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Explain how the Inca organized their empire and met the needs of the people. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Compare and contrast the Inca and Aztec civilizations. (RI.5.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *Inca*, *conquistador*, *plateau*, *clan*, *alpaca*, *llama*, and *census*; and of the phrase “geographical diversity.” (RI.5.4)

### What Teachers Need to Know

For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-inca](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-inca)

### Materials Needed

Activity Pages



AP 1.3  
AP 1.5

- Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) for reference
- Enlarged versions of AP 1.3 and AP 1.5 for reference

### Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

**Inca, n.** a civilization that thrived from 1438 to 1532 on the western coast of South America, covering most of modern-day Peru and part of Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina (36)

*Example:* The Inca built a great civilization that relied on a high degree of engineering skill.

*Variation(s):* Incan

**conquistador, n.** the Spanish word for conqueror (38)

*Example:* The conquistadors came to the Americas looking for wealth.

*Variation(s):* conquistadors

**“geographical diversity,” (phrase)** the presence of many different kinds of landforms, waterways, or other geographic features in a region (39)

*Example:* The huge Inca Empire spanned a wide area and contained a great deal of geographical diversity.

**plateau, n.** a large area of high, flat ground (39)

*Example:* The city rested on a plateau between the mountain ranges.

*Variation(s):* plateaus

**clan, n.** a group of families (39)

*Example:* The clan to which his family belonged was one of several in the village.

*Variation(s):* clans

**alpaca, n.** a South American mammal valued for its long woolly coat (40)

*Example:* They wove warm clothes from the wool of the alpaca.

*Variation(s):* alpacas

**llama, n.** a South American mammal valued for its endurance and for its woolly coat and meat (40)

*Example:* The Inca depended on the llama to carry large loads over great distances.

*Variation(s):* llamas

**census, n.** a count of the number of people living in a certain area (42)

*Example:* The Inca official came to the village to carry out a census.

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce “The Inca: Lords of the Mountains”

5 MIN

Ask students what they remember about the Maya and Aztec civilizations. (*They believed in many gods, they were farmers and warriors, they practiced human sacrifice, and they solved difficult problems by, for instance, creating a calendar and building islands for farmland.*) Tell students that in this chapter they will learn about a third early American civilization: the Inca. Call attention to the Big Question, and encourage students to look for reasons why the llama was so important to the Inca as they read the chapter.

When you or a student reads aloud, **always** prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

“Here Comes the Sun,” Pages 36–38

Scaffold understanding as follows:

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Call attention to the Vocabulary box for the term *Inca* on page 36. Review the definition of this term by reading it aloud. Remind students that this is the third of the three great civilizations of the Americas that existed before the Age of Exploration that began in the 1400s.

**SUPPORT**—Encourage students to refer to AP 1.3 and AP 1.5 to review the location and key features of the Inca Empire.

Read the entire section aloud with the class, and discuss the illustration and caption on page 37. Then ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—The text describes a scene from a dream. What is happening in that dream?

- » An emperor—the Sapa Inca—is being carried on a litter through the streets of an Inca village.

**LITERAL**—Why did the Inca bow before the Sapa Inca?

- » The Inca regarded the Sapa Inca as the son of a god, Inti.

**EVALUATIVE**—What are some similarities between the role of the Sapa Inca in Inca society and the role of Moctezuma in the life of the Aztec?

- » Both were regarded with a combination of fear and awe. Both were carried on litters among the people, and in both cases ordinary people were considered unworthy to look directly at them.

**CHALLENGE**—What other cultures held their leaders in such high regard?

- » Student responses will vary. The Aztec viewed their ruler as part man and part god.

**Chapter 5**  
**The Inca: Lords of the Mountains**

**Here Comes the Sun** It is the year 1500. You are standing along a road in South America in a crowd of people. You seem to be at some kind of parade. You look down the road and see a gleaming, golden litter carried on the shoulders of several men. Inside the litter is a man wearing furs and golden jewelry.

**The Big Question**  
Why were furs so important to the Inca?

As the litter gets closer, the people around you go down on their knees and touch their foreheads to the ground. You are the only one still standing. Suddenly you notice several people yelling at you. An angry soldier is running at you with a raised club. You begin to run. With a start, you wake up and realize you were having a dream.

**Vocabulary**  
It's a good thing you woke up. The people in your dream were bowing because the Sapa Inca, the king of the Inca people, was passing.

**Vocabulary**  
Inca, n, a civilization that thrived from 1400 to 1530 on the western coast of South America, including most of modern-day Peru and parts of Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile.

**Page 36**



**Page 37**

Inca Empire, which stretched over two thousand miles

The Inca believed that the Sapa Inca was the son of Inti, the sun god. No one was allowed to look at this powerful king—and you were staring right at him! If you had not woken up, your dream would have had a terrifying ending: you would almost certainly have been killed by the soldiers for being so disrespectful to the son of the sun.

**The Empire of the Sun**

Who were the Inca? They were people who built a great civilization on the western coast of South America. The first Inca people lived in the area around Cuzco in modern-day Peru. In the early 1400s, these people began conquering neighboring lands and extending their empire. By the time the Spanish conquistador (kahn'shee'wah'konz) arrived in the 1530s, the Inca Empire was the largest in the Americas—larger even than the Aztec Empire had been.

**Vocabulary**  
conquistador, n, the Spanish word for conqueror

The Sapa Inca ruled over more than twelve million people. His territory stretched for more than two thousand miles along the Pacific Coast. The empire covered an area so large that most of modern-day Peru and parts of Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, and its borders.


**Page 38**

## “The Empire of the Sun,” Pages 38–39

This is a region of great geographical diversity. Arid plains stretch along the western coastline. This region is so dry that not even a cactus can grow. Farther east, the twin ranges of the snow-capped Andes Mountains rise toward the skies. Between the ranges lie a high plateau. Land here is sizzling hot by day and freezing by night. East of the Andes are thick forests where heavy rains feed the mighty Amazon River. All these lands were ruled by the Sapa Inca.

**Vocabulary**  
“geographical diversity” (general, the presence of many different kinds of landforms, waterways, or other geographic features in a region)  
plateau: a raised area that is generally flat on top  
clan: a group of families

**Inca Life**  
The Inca people were organized into clans, or groups. Every Inca family was part of a clan, and each clan farmed a piece of land. Families lived in windbreaks, one-room stone huts with thatched roofs. Home, sweet home, probably didn’t smell so sweet, since families sometimes burned dried animal waste as fuel. Parents and children slept together on animal skins spread on the bare floor. A few wall pegs were the only furnishings.



Page 39

Page of different geographic regions and features.

### Scaffold understanding as follows:

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the first paragraph of the section “The Empire of the Sun.” Discuss the meaning of the word *conquistador*. Explain that this term is a word in the Spanish language; in English it means “conqueror.” Ask students to identify any similarities between the Spanish and English words. (For example, both begin with the letters *c–o–n–q–u*.)

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Ask another volunteer to read the remaining two paragraphs that begin at the bottom of page 38 and continue to the top of page 39. Note the terms “geographical diversity” and *plateau*. Explain that “geographical diversity” is a term made up of the word *geographical*, which means “having to do with geography,” and *diversity*, which means “having many different types.” For the word *plateau*, help students properly pronounce the term. Explain it is a French word meaning “flat.”

**SUPPORT**—Call attention to the first paragraph on page 39 and reread the sentences, calling particular attention to, “Farther east, the twin ranges of the snow-capped Andes Mountains rise toward the skies.” Remind students that the Inca ruled an empire that was very geographically diverse.

### When the students have finished reading, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Can you describe the general geographical location of the Inca Empire?

- » It was on the western coast of South America.

**LITERAL**—In what modern-day country did the Inca civilization originate?

- » The Inca civilization originated in modern-day Peru.

**EVALUATIVE**—What details in the text support the statement that the Inca Empire was a land of great geographical diversity?

- » It was a large empire, stretching over two thousand miles and covering parts of many modern-day countries. It had a long coastline, arid plains, huge mountain ranges, a high plateau, and thick forests.

## “Inca Life” and “For the Good of the Empire,” Pages 39–43

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Invite a volunteer to read the first paragraph under “Inca Life” on page 39. Point out the term *clan* and explain its definition. Ask another volunteer to use the word in a sentence, and correct any misunderstandings of the term’s proper use.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Have student volunteers take turns reading the remainder of the section “Inca Life.” Discuss the meaning of the words *alpaca* and *llama*. Explain that these two words describe two similar animals, both of which are related to the camel. They are both native to South America and nowhere else.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Have students read the section “For the Good of the Empire” independently. Before students begin reading, note the term *census*, and review the definition that appears beside it. Explain to students that the United States carries out a census of its population every ten years.

**After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What was the most common way of earning a living for an Inca family as described in the text?

- » Most Inca were farmers who worked the land of the clan. They lived in windowless stone huts.

**LITERAL**—Why was the potato the main crop of the Inca?

- » It grew well in the high-altitude environment in which many Inca lived and farmed.

**EVALUATIVE**—What features of the llama made it so valuable to the Inca?


- » Possible responses: It had great strength and endurance. It was able to find food anywhere and required little water, making it a useful animal for moving goods. The llama’s wool was used to make cloth, its waste was used for fuel, and its meat was a source of food.

**EVALUATIVE**—Why do you think a good pack animal was so important to the Inca people?

- » Possible answer: they lived in a huge empire, so transporting goods over long distances was a common challenge.

**LITERAL**—How did the Inca support the Sapa Inca and the rest of the empire?

- » In addition to working for themselves, the Inca had to spend part of their time working for the Sapa Inca and the empire.



Inca farmers used ingenious methods to farm in the challenging environment of the Andes Mountains.

Boys followed their fathers' trades. Girls copied their mothers'. Most Inca were farmers. They grew corn, squash, tomatoes, peanuts, cotton, and more than a hundred varieties of potatoes. The potato was the main crop for the Inca. It grew well even at high altitudes on the slopes of the Andes Mountains.

Inca farmers also raised livestock. They included guinea pigs, alpacas, and llamas. The guinea pigs were raised for food. The alpacas were a source of wool. The Inca used llamas for all sorts of things, but especially as pack animals.

The llama is truly an amazing animal. It is a smaller cousin of the camel. A llama stands about four feet high at the shoulder and weighs about 250 pounds. Like its camel cousin, the llama has great strength and endurance. Llamas can carry loads up to 125 pounds for fifteen to twenty miles a day. They will eat just about anything and can go long periods without drinking. Llamas are often mistreated or overworked, they

**Vocabulary**  
alpaca is a South American mammal valued for its long, silky coat.  
llama is a South American mammal valued for its endurance and for its woolly coat and meat.

**Page 40**

will let you know it. A llama may simply sit down and refuse to move. An unhappy llama may hiss and spit to make its point. Llama spit is not just wet and nasty. It can include hard pellets of food, which can cause pain if they hit you.

The Inca used llamas to transport goods. They also used the llama's wool for cloth. Its hide for rugs and coats. Its waste for fuel and fertilizer, and its meat for food. When a llama died, the Inca cut the meat into strips and dried it in the sun. They called these strips *chahu* (chah-“kee”). This is the source of our own word for dried meat jerky.

Inca women were skilled weavers. They made clothing from the cotton they grew and from the wool of their llamas and alpacas.

**For the Good of the Empire**

Inca families worked for themselves. In addition, they were required to spend part of their time working for the Sapa Inca and the empire. Farmers raised crops for themselves and also for the empire. Inca men also had to donate time to help with government projects, building litary.

The Inca used llamas and wool from llamas and alpacas to make their clothing.

**Page 41**

The Inca people understood that their labor was necessary to maintain the empire and to help protect them and their families. As a result, they worked willingly. The Sapa Inca and the priests used only a small part of the goods produced. The rest were stored in warehouses and given to those who were too old or too sick to work. When crops failed and times were hard, food and goods were given to the working people, too. This system ensured that no one went hungry.

The rule of the Sapa Inca was absolute. Many government officials traveled throughout the empire to make sure his laws were obeyed. One of those officials was known as He-Who-Sees-Everything. He-Who-Sees-Everything was responsible for visiting Inca villages and making them pay their taxes. Oddly enough, he also served as a matchmaker.

He-Who-Sees-Everything would arrive in an Inca village every few years. When he arrived, he ordered the villagers to gather so that he could take a census. The more people in the village

**Vocabulary**  
census is a count of the number of people living in a particular area.

**Page 42**

Once the counting was over, He-Who-Sees-Everything asked unmarried women over a certain age to step forward. The official interviewed each young woman. If one was found especially worthy, she was sent to Cuzco to become one of the Sapa Inca's many wives.

Once these chosen few had been selected, He-Who-Sees-Everything called all the unmarried young men before him. He proceeded to pair off the young men and women. He could make dozens of marriages on the spot. No questions were asked. After all, He-Who-Sees-Everything was a servant of the Sapa Inca. The marriages he was arranging were for the good of the empire.

The Inca Empire lasted only from the beginning of its expansion in 1438 to the Spanish conquest in 1532. But in a century of towering achievement, the Inca did not just conquer people. To keep their empire unified, they changed every place they conquered. Read on to find out how the Inca conquests changed the face of South America.

**Page 43**

**INFERENTIAL**—How did the Sapa Inca make sure that his will was carried out in his empire?

- » Government officials, like the He-Who-Sees-Everything, traveled the empire, making sure people obeyed laws and paid their taxes.

**INFERENTIAL**—What can you infer about marriages in the Inca society based on the fact that the He-Who-Sees-Everything arranged many of them?

- » Marriage was not a romantic matter. Instead, it was a matter of peace and good order in the empire.

**SUPPORT**—How were marriages arranged among the Inca?

- » The He-Who-Sees-Everything arranged them on periodic visits to the villages.

## Timeline

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- Show students the Chapter 5 Timeline Image Card. Read and discuss the caption, making particular note of any dates.
- Review and discuss the Big Question: “Why were llamas so important to the Inca?”
- Post the image card in the middle of the Timeline, under the date referencing 1300s; refer to the illustration in the Unit 2 Introduction for further guidance on the placement of each image card to the Timeline.



### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

#### Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “Why were llamas so important to the Inca?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: Llamas provided several key resources to the Inca, including food, clothing, and transportation. They represented the efficient and effective approach the Inca took to building a thriving civilization in a harsh environment.
- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary words or the phrase (*conquistador*, “geographical diversity,” *Inca*, *plateau*, *clan*, *alpaca*, *llama*, and *census*), and write a sentence using the word or phrase.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

## Additional Activities



### Achievements of the Inca Empire (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

45 MIN

**Materials Needed:** Internet access

The following activity introduces students to a study of Inca artifacts, enabling a more detailed look into Inca culture.



### Background for Teachers

The Inca were a people of great skill and ingenuity. They were skilled artisans with a rich tradition of sculpture, pottery, and weaving, and they were especially noted for their gold and silver creations. Like Maya and Aztec art, Inca art and artifacts had sacred meaning and served religious purposes. Unfortunately, a great quantity of Inca art was destroyed by the Spanish. Gold and silver works were melted down and taken back to Spain.

The Inca were also highly skilled engineers, whose stone structures are remarkable for their grace and beauty. It is also important to note that so many of them have survived intact in a region known for earthquakes.

The Inca also applied astronomical and scientific knowledge at a high level. There is evidence, for instance, that they practiced a form of brain surgery.

For more background information, use this primary unit link to the Core Knowledge web page, which will take you to Discover Peru, a specific link about Inca art forms:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

Guide students on an exploration of different forms of Inca art and artifacts by also using the primary unit link, which will take you to specific links about: the top ten Inca ruins (National Geographic); silver and gold of the Inca (Latin American Studies); pottery (Double Bowl, Metropolitan Museum of Art); and Inca textiles (Latin American Studies).

### Discuss Inca Accomplishments

Discuss with students their reaction to what they have just learned about the artistic and scientific achievements of the Inca.

**Ask:** Which accomplishments are most impressive to you? Why?

Encourage students to explain the reasons for their opinions. For example, students who select the Inca building methods might defend that view by saying that the great structures were built without the aid of modern equipment and have stood for centuries in a harsh environment.



# Inca Engineering

**The Big Question:** How did the Inca use their engineering skills to manage and grow their empire?

## Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Explain how Inca engineers overcame challenges presented by the geography of the land. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Describe how the Inca kept their empire together without a written language. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Understand how the Sapa Inca united his empire. **(RI.5.2)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *official*, *engineer*, *mortar*, *suspension bridge*, and *terrace*. **(RI.5.4)**

## What Teachers Need to Know

For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-machu-picchu](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-machu-picchu)

## Materials Needed

Activity Pages



AP 1.3  
AP 1.5

- Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3) and Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) for reference
- Enlarged versions of AP 1.3 and AP 1.5 for reference

## Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

**official, n.** a person who carries out a government duty **(45)**

*Example:* The official came to the village to explain the new government rule.

*Variation(s):* officials

**engineer, n.** a person who uses science and math to build useful objects or buildings **(46)**

*Example:* The engineer made plans for a new bridge.

*Variation(s):* engineers, engineering

**mortar, n.** a material used in building that is soft at first but that then gets hard and rocklike (47)

*Example:* The builder used mortar to hold the bricks together.

**suspension bridge, n.** a type of bridge in which the road or pathway hangs from ropes or cables that are attached to anchors or towers (47)

*Example:* The tall towers of the suspension bridge rise high above the valley floor.

*Variation(s):* suspension bridges

**terrace, n.** a flat piece of land carved out of the side of a mountain or hill (49)

*Example:* The farmer's crops were planted in a terrace on the hillside.

*Variation(s):* terraces, terraced

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce “Inca Engineering”

5 MIN

Ask students to think about the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán and how it was built (an island in the middle of a lake, causeways connecting it to the mainland, canals connecting parts of the city, and so on). Remind students that the Aztec did not have modern building tools or materials. Despite this fact, they were able to erect a large and advanced city for the time. Tell students that in this lesson they will learn about Inca engineering that is just as amazing—maybe even more so.

### Guided Reading Supports for “Inca Engineering”

30 MIN

When you or a student reads aloud, **always** prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

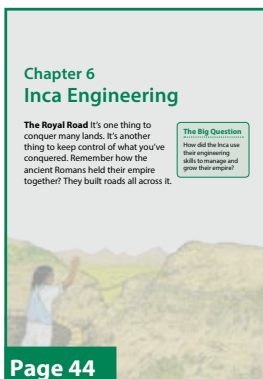
#### “The Royal Road,” Pages 44–47

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**Invite a volunteer to read pages 44–45 of “The Royal Road” out loud.**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Call attention to the term *officials* when it is encountered in the second paragraph. Note that the word in this sense is used as a noun. The word *official* can also be used as an adjective. For example, an official document is one that carries authority.


**SUPPORT**—Discuss the illustration on pages 44–45.



The roads made it possible for government officials to travel around the empire. Roads also encouraged trade. Most importantly, the roads allowed the army to travel quickly. This way, they could put down a rebellion or enforce the emperor's rule.

The Inca knew nothing of ancient Rome. But they too were great road builders. Their Royal Road stretched over two thousand miles. It ran from the northern end of the empire to the southern tip. It was the longest road in the world until the 1800s.

**Vocabulary**  
official, n. a person who carries out government duty




By a dirt road, a small-built road.

**Page 45**

The Royal Road was twenty-four feet wide in most places. Although it crossed mountains, valleys, deserts, and swamps, long stretches were straight as an arrow. Markers measured distances along the road. Trees shaded the road. A canal provided water for travelers. There were even roadside storehouses where travelers could get food at the end of the day.

Parts of the Royal Road were made of packed dirt. Other parts were paved. Inca engineers fitted paving stones together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Modern builders use

**Vocabulary**  
engineer, n. someone who uses science and math to design useful objects or buildings



Modern builders build roads and other structures.

**Page 46**

mortar, a cement-like material, to keep stones together. The Inca did not use any mortar. Instead, they cut stones so exactly that they fit together snugly.

The Royal Road shows the great skill of Inca builders. These builders had no earth-moving machinery. They did not have horses or oxen to pull wagons. They did not even have the wheel. Everything was done by hand. Yet the Inca were able to build roads so sturdy, not even heavy rains or flash floods could destroy them.

The Royal Road was the main Inca road, but there were others. At every valley, east-west roads crossed the Royal Road. The Royal Road was like the spine. The crossroads were like nerves branching out from it. This network of roads linked all parts of the empire together.

**Bridges Built for the Centuries**

To build roads through mountains and across streams, the Inca had to build lots of bridges. Like the roads, these bridges are marvels of engineering. A bridge built over the Apurimac (ahp'uh'yee'mahk') River in Peru is a fine example. It was built over a steep river gorge. In 1350, it was a suspension bridge, held together by heavy strands of rope. The ropes were replaced every two years. This amazing bridge was in service from 1350 until 1890. For more than five centuries, it was maintained and used by the Inca.

**Vocabulary**  
mortar, a material used in building that is soft at first but that then gets hard and rocklike

suspension bridge, a type of bridge in which the road or pathway hangs from ropes or cables that are attached to anchors or towers

**Page 47**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose another volunteer to read the remainder of this section that begins on page 46 to the end of this section on page 47. Note the term *engineers*. Ask students if they see another familiar word embedded in this term (engine). Point out that a person who would design an engine is an engineer.

**CORE VOCABULARY**— Call attention to the word *mortar*. If possible, illustrate this term by pointing to a wall or building surface that uses mortar between bricks.

**Then ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What key feature did the Inca Empire share with the Roman Empire?

- » Both great empires had a network of roads that linked all parts of the empire.

**INFERENTIAL**—How did the system of roads benefit the Inca Empire?


- » The text implies that, like the Roman road system, the Inca system helped to promote trade and enabled government officials to quickly travel throughout the empire. The roads also allowed quick movement of troops.

**LITERAL**—Why is the Inca road system considered to be such a fine example of engineering?

- » It was built without modern equipment or machinery. The paving stones were precisely cut so that they fit together well.

**CHALLENGE**—Do you think the text's comparison of the Inca Royal Road to a spine with nerves (other roads) branching out from it is a good comparison? Why or why not?

- » Possible answer: The comparison of the road system to a backbone and nerves is a good one because, like a spine, the roads connected the "head" of the empire to its distant parts. Like nerves, the roads allowed messages to travel throughout the "body" and to coordinate movements and actions.



The Inca were master bridge builders.

It was then used by the Spanish and finally by the people of Peru. It is one of the greatest achievements of the Inca engineers. It gained wider fame when it was featured in the classic novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, by American writer Thornton Wilder.

**Mountain Staircases**

The Inca also used their engineering know-how to help them farm in the Andes. Farming on a mountainside is challenging. The incline makes every task—plowing, planting, and harvesting—very difficult. In heavy downpours, water runs downhill and washes out crops.

**Page 48**


The Inca had to find a way to grow crops on the slopes of the Andes. Their solution was to cut terraces into the sides of the mountains. The terraces created level fields that could be planted and harvested just like valley fields. The Inca also built irrigation systems. This allowed them to bring water to the terraced fields.

**Vocabulary**  
Terrace, a flat piece of land carved out of the side of a mountain or hill.

**Keeping It All Together**

The Inca had an advanced road system, but they had no written language. How could they possibly run an empire of twelve million people that spanned the length of a continent without writing?

The Inca came up with some clever strategies. For instance, they invented a means for counting and record-keeping using a quipu (kay-kee-pee). A quipu was a piece of string that had shorter strings of various colors dangling



The quipu allowed the Inca to carefully track and keep records of amounts of money, food, and other goods moving through their vast empire.

**Page 49**

**Scaffold understanding as follows:**

**SUPPORT**—Have students refer back to AP 1.3 and AP 1.5 to review the location and key features of the Inca Empire, including the location of the Andes Mountains.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Choose a volunteer to read the section “Bridges Built for the Centuries,” which begins on page 47 and continues to the top of page 48. Note the term *suspension bridge*. Call attention to the word *suspension*, and explain that to suspend something is to hang it. In a suspension bridge, therefore, the bridge deck is actually suspended—hanging—from its supports.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Ask another volunteer to read the “Mountain Staircases” section, which begins at the bottom of page 48. Call attention to the word *terraces*. Note that this section is entitled “Mountain Staircases.” Explain that terraces on a hillside are similar to a staircase, with the terraced fields resembling the treads and the rest of the hillside resembling the risers.

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that the Inca Empire was very diverse. Some parts of the empire were very mountainous while others were in low valleys. The higher you went into the mountains, the more likely there would be cold temperatures.

**After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How did the geography of the Inca Empire challenge Inca builders?

- » They had to build roads through mountains and across streams, which required lots of bridges.

**INFERENTIAL**—What can you infer from the fact that one of the Inca bridges remained in use for hundreds of years after it was built?

- » This fact implies that the bridge was built to such a high standard that it remained functional for hundreds of years. It speaks to the skill and quality of Inca engineering.

**LITERAL**—How did the Inca overcome the challenge of farming on mountainsides?

- » They built terraces into the mountainsides. They also built irrigation systems for their terraces.

## “Keeping It All Together,” Pages 49–51

Scaffold understanding as follows:

Have students read the section “Keeping It All Together” to themselves.

After students read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—How did the Inca overcome the challenge of a lack of a written language?

- » One solution was the use of a quipu, an object that allowed for record keeping and sharing of information throughout the empire. They also used a network of runners to convey messages.

**LITERAL**—How far was a message able to travel each day in the Inca Empire?

- » A message could travel 150 miles in a day.

**EVALUATIVE**—Explain how the roads and communication systems of the Inca helped keep the empire united and under control.

- » Possible answer: Because all parts of the empire were at most just a few days from news, instruction, or actual government force, the government was able to maintain strict control over all parts of the empire. Problems and conflicts were less likely to grow and develop.

from it. By tying knots in a certain pattern on a quipu, an official could record how many warriors were headed for a village or how much corn was in a storehouse.

The Inca also used messengers trained to run short distances to carry news. Since the Inca had no written language, these messengers did not carry a written note. Instead, a runner memorized his message and sprinted to a station, a mile or so away. There, the next runner would be waiting. Without slowing the pace, the second messenger would pass the message to the first messenger to hear the message. Then the second messenger continued on.



messengers quickly over the full length of the empire.

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The system was fast! A message could travel 150 miles in a day. This meant news could travel all the way from Quito (now Quito) to Cuzco in a little over a week. In the 1860s, the famous pony express riders of the American West were only able to cover about two hundred miles a day—and they rode on horseback!

**City in the Clouds**

Another marvel of Inca engineering is the famous city of Machu Picchu (mah'choo'peek'choo'). Machu Picchu is a mountain fortress seven thousand feet above sea level, located about fifty miles northwest of Cuzco. It sits in a high valley, between two peaks of the Andes.

Today, visitors can stand in the center of Machu Picchu. From there, they can see the ruins of an open plaza, a temple, and a place where archaeologists discovered Inca skeletons. The surrounding hillside is terraced for farming.

Archaeologists estimate that Machu Picchu was built in the mid-1400s. For years it was a vacation spot for Inca emperors. Today it is the leading tourist attraction in Peru.

Machu Picchu is not an easy place to visit. Tourists now take a railroad pathway up the mountain. Then they follow a steep, twisting road to the top. Energetic hikers can walk on an old Inca trail that climbs up the steep slopes of the Andes.

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## “City in the Clouds” and “Expanding the Empire,” Pages 51–53

Scaffold understanding as follows:


Have students read through both sections to themselves. When they finish, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Where is Machu Picchu located?

- » It is seven thousand feet above sea level, in a high valley between two peaks in the Andes. It's located about fifty miles northwest of Cuzco.

**LITERAL**—According to the text, what is one purpose that the city of Machu Picchu served in the Inca Empire?

- » It was a vacation spot for emperors.



The ruins of Machu Picchu rest high in the Andes Mountains.

**Expanding the Empire**

Like the Aztec, the Inca built their empire by conquering other people. They also sacrificed human beings for religious purposes. However, human sacrifice seems to have been less widespread in the Inca Empire. The Inca focused more on turning conquered people into loyal subjects.

When conquered people were cooperative, the Sapa Inca made few changes. Inca architects and managers went to new regions. Their job was to oversee the building of roads and temples. The Inca taught their language to the local people. They also asked

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them to worship the sun god Inti. The worship of local gods was allowed. Sometimes those gods were even made a part of the Inca religion.

If conquered people were uncooperative, the Sapa Inca moved swiftly. He shipped troublemakers from their homes to villages. There, they were surrounded by local Inca citizens. He also shipped loyal Inca citizens to live among the conquered people. In this way, the Sapa Inca was able to quickly build a large and unified empire. This empire would endure until the Spanish conquistadors made their fateful appearance.

Page 53

**INFERENTIAL**—What can you infer about the fate of neighboring people conquered and captured by the Inca?

- » They were not used extensively as human sacrifices. Instead, they were taken into the empire and made into loyal subjects, when possible.

**LITERAL**—What methods were used to help newly conquered people adapt, adjust, and become loyal Inca subjects?

- » They were connected to the rest of the empire with roads and introduced to the Inca language and religion. Their own native religion was not eliminated and in some cases was incorporated into the Inca religion.

**LITERAL**—How did the Sapa Inca treat conquered people who were not cooperative?

- » He focused on the troublemakers, removing them to places where they were surrounded by loyal Inca.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

**Ask students to:**

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “How did the Inca use their engineering skills to manage and grow their empire?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: They built a network of roads and bridges that enabled quick transportation and communication throughout the empire. They found ways to grow food, such as making terraces on mountainsides and developing irrigation systems.
- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary terms (*official, engineer, mortar, suspension bridge, or terrace*), and write a sentence using the word.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.

## Additional Activities

### Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (RI.5.1, RI.5.2, RI.5.3) 30 MIN

Activity Page



AP 2.1

**Materials Needed:** Extra copies of the Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1) found on page 94 in the Teacher Resources section.

Have students take out their Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 2.1). Some students may have lost their copies; provide them with an extra activity page as necessary. Have students complete the Inca sections of the graphic organizer. Encourage students to refer to Chapters 5 and 6 of the Student Reader to help them complete the chart. After the chart is completed, lead students in a discussion about the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. Ask students to explain in what ways the three civilizations are similar to and different from one another.



## Virtual Field Trip to Machu Picchu (RI.5.7, RI.5.9)

45 MIN

**Materials Needed:** Internet access

The following activity is aimed at extending student understanding of and appreciation for Inca engineering accomplishments.



**Background for Teachers:** The Inca civilization is famed for its engineering and building techniques. Inca structures were built of stone, carefully cut and fitted so that they held together without mortar. Some of these structures have stood for centuries, withstanding the elements and seismic activity.

One of the most outstanding examples of Inca skill is seen in the ruins of Machu Picchu. This site, high in the Andes, reveals a great deal about Inca culture.

Background information about Machu Picchu may be found by using this primary unit link to the Core Knowledge web page, where specific links to UNESCO and National Geographic sites may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

### Explore Machu Picchu

Review with students the MachuPicchu360.org map of the layout of Machu Picchu, found by using the primary unit link. Help students gain an appreciation for the setting and scale of Machu Picchu by clicking on areas of the map to view Machu Picchu in panoramic format.

**Note to Teachers:** The top and bottom of the website feature site sponsors, including a beer company. Make sure to limit display of the website to just the map and not the portion below.

Accompany students to the UNESCO and National Geographic websites to see a number of photographs of Machu Picchu.



## Discuss the Virtual Tour of Machu Picchu

Review with students what they have seen and learned about Machu Picchu.

**Ask:** How does Machu Picchu reveal the many environmental challenges that faced the Inca? *(The mountain environment must have been very difficult to reach, to build in, and to raise food in.)*

**Ask:** In what ways do the ruins of Machu Picchu reveal the great skill and ingenuity of the Inca? *(The ruins demonstrate the great skill of Inca builders in cutting and fitting stone together to build long-lasting structures. The terraces that supported crops and livestock show the way the Inca managed to support themselves in an inhospitable setting. Also, there is evidence of their understanding of the stars and sun based on the placement of key buildings.)*

## CHAPTER 7

# The End of Two Empires

**The Big Question:** What were the factors that contributed to the end of the Aztec and Inca Empires?

## Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Describe the Aztec and Inca reactions to the Spanish conquistadors' arrival in Mexico and South America. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Identify Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro as Spanish conquistadors who led invasions in Mexico and South America. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Explain why the Spanish were rapidly able to conquer the Aztec and Inca Empires. (RI.5.2)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *expedition*, *smallpox*, *immunity*, and *epidemic*; and of the phrase "religious ceremony." (RI.5.4)

## What Teachers Need to Know

For more background information about the content taught in this lesson, see:

[www.coreknowledge.org/about-spanish-conquerors](http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-spanish-conquerors)

## Materials Needed

Activity Pages



AP 1.1

AP 1.3

AP 1.5

- World Map (AP 1.1); Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3); and Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5) f
- Enlarged versions of AP 1.1, AP 1.3, and AP 1.5 for reference

## Core Vocabulary (Student Reader page numbers listed below)

**expedition, n.** a special journey taken by a group that has a clear purpose or goal (56)

*Example:* The soldiers' expedition was successful.

*Variation(s):* expeditions

**“religious ceremony,” (phrase)** a special gathering or event that has a religious purpose or theme (58)

*Example:* The two people were married in a religious ceremony.

*Variation(s):* religious ceremonies

**smallpox, n.** a serious disease that spreads from person to person and causes a fever and rash (58)

*Example:* Many people died of a disease called smallpox.

**immunity, n.** a body’s ability to remain free of illness even after being exposed to the cause of the illness (58)

*Example:* The disease spread quickly because nobody had immunity to it.

**epidemic, n.** a situation in which a disease spreads to many people in an area or region (59)

*Example:* As a result of the epidemic, nearly half the students were absent from school.

*Variation(s):* epidemics

## THE CORE LESSON 35 MIN

### Introduce “The End of Two Empires”

5 MIN

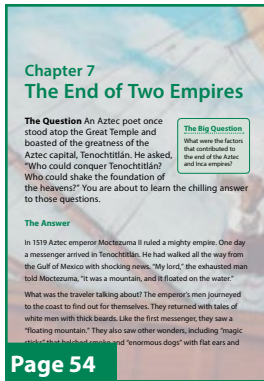
Remind students that in 1492, the Spanish king and queen paid for Christopher Columbus’s trip that led to his encounter with the Americas, including the islands in the Caribbean. Explain that, after Columbus, many explorers from Spain and other European countries also set out on voyages to the Americas. Tell students that in this chapter they will learn about two groups of Spanish explorers, who encountered the Aztec and the Inca. Call attention to the Big Question, and encourage students to look for factors that led to the end of the Aztec and Inca civilizations as they read.

### Guided Reading Supports for “The End of Two Empires”

30 MIN

When you or a student reads aloud, always prompt students to follow along. By following along, students may acquire a greater understanding of the content. Remember also to provide classroom discussion opportunities.

## “The Question” and “The Answer,” Pages 54–56



### Scaffold understanding as follows:

**SUPPORT**—Review with students the World Map (AP 1.1), Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America (AP 1.3), and Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.5). Help students recognize that Spain is a country in Europe, which is separated from the Americas by thousands of miles and the Atlantic Ocean. In the early 1500s, the people living in the Aztec and Inca Empires did not know that Europe or Spain existed or that people lived there. The Spanish had only recently become aware of the existence of the land and people of the Americas.

**Invite a volunteer to read “The Question” on page 54.**

**Ask students to independently read “The Answer,” beginning on page 54 and continuing to page 56.**

**After students read the text, ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How did Moctezuma II learn about the arrival of the Spanish in his territory?

- » A traveler carried a report about what he had seen on the coast, including details about strange things and people.

**INFERENTIAL**—What can you infer from the strange description the traveler gave Moctezuma II about what he had seen?

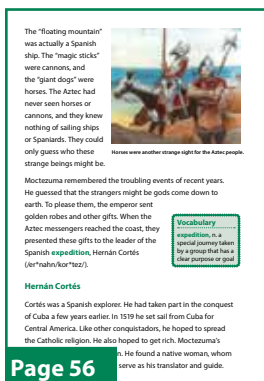
- » The Aztec had never seen any human beings so different from themselves, and they had never imagined things like the Spanish ships, weapons, and horses. They had no words for these things.

**LITERAL**—What made Moctezuma think that the newcomers to his land might be gods?

- » They did not look like the Aztec people, and there had been strange and troubling signs in recent times.

**LITERAL**—What did Moctezuma do in response to the arrival of strangers in his land?

- » He sent them gifts and tried to welcome them.



## “Hernán Cortés” and “Cortés the Conqueror,” Pages 56–59

Scaffold understanding as follows:

Read aloud the “Hernán Cortés” section beginning on page 56.

Ask a volunteer to read the first two paragraphs of the “Cortés the Conqueror” section beginning on page 57. Call attention to the phrase “religious ceremony” on page 58. Ask students if they know the meaning of the two words that make up this term.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Ask another volunteer to read the final paragraphs on pages 58 and page 59. Note the terms *smallpox*, *immunities*, and *epidemic*. Invite students to explain how these three terms are related. (*The Aztec did not have immunity to European diseases, one of which was smallpox. As a result, epidemics occurred, killing many Aztec.*)

After students read the text, ask the following questions:

**INFERENTIAL**—What do you think the text means when it says that the gifts that Moctezuma sent to Cortés caught Cortés’s attention?

- » The gifts made Cortés aware that there were wealthy people living nearby who could help him fulfill his goal of becoming rich.

**LITERAL**—What did Cortés encounter as he traveled west toward Tenochtitlán?

- » He encountered many conquered people who had been treated harshly by the Aztec and who wanted revenge on their conquerors.

**LITERAL**—What happened when the Spanish first arrived in Tenochtitlán?

- » They were welcomed as guests.

**EVALUATIVE**—Do you think the Spaniards were correct to distrust the Aztec? Why or why not?

- » Possible answer: It is true that Moctezuma had tried to stop the Spanish from entering the city and that the welcome given to the Spaniards may not have been sincere. The Spaniards had some basis for worrying that the Aztec would not put up with them for long.


**LITERAL**—What did the Spaniards do after they fled Tenochtitlán?

- » They rebuilt their army using unhappy subjects of the Aztec Empire.

**LITERAL**—What factors helped enable the final Spanish conquest of the Aztec capital?

- » The population was weakened by hunger and the effects of disease. The Spanish army was bolstered by many native fighters and by superior weapons.

Then he set off with his men toward the Aztec capital. As he journeyed west, Cortés marched through areas the Aztec had conquered. The people in these areas had been forced to pay tribute to the Aztec. They had also watched their young men dragged off to Tenochtitlán to be offered as sacrifices. Many of the conquered people Cortés met hoped the newcomers would help them get revenge on the Aztec.



**Cortés the Conqueror**

Moctezuma learned that Cortés was getting support from old enemies. He tried to talk Cortés out of coming to Tenochtitlán and even sent magicians to cast spells on the Spaniards. But Cortés and his men marched on. Moctezuma at last accepted that he could not stop the Spaniards, so he decided to welcome them as honored guests.

For a while, all was peaceful in Tenochtitlán. The Spaniards, however, grew nervous. They knew they were greatly outnumbered and that even their superior weapons could not subdue the Aztecs. Moctezuma hostage. In addition, they

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demanded that the emperor order the Aztec to stop sacrificing to their gods. Moctezuma refused. A few weeks later, fighting broke out. The Spanish grew fearful that the Aztec priests were plotting against them. The Spaniards attacked and killed hundreds of priests during a religious ceremony.



The Aztec responded by trying to wipe out the Spanish. Many men were killed on both sides. Among the victims was Moctezuma himself. The Spaniards then fled Tenochtitlán.

The Spaniards rebuilt their army by enlisting more of the Aztec's old enemies. In 1521, Cortés and his allies surrounded the capital. With no supplies coming into Tenochtitlán, city residents began to starve. An outbreak of smallpox also swept through the city. This disease was carried by the Spaniards and had no known cure.

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**Vocabulary**

**“Religious ceremony”**  
A special gathering or event that has religious purposes or themes.

**smallpox**  
A serious disease that spreads from person to person and causes a fever and rash.

**immunity**  
A body's ability to resist infection or illness even after being exposed to the cause of the illness.

As a result, the diseases hit very hard and spread quickly. Warriors, commoners, and nobles alike died in the epidemic.

In May of 1521, Cortés organized a final bloody attack. Spanish forces, armed with guns and cannons and joined by thousands of native allies, advanced along the causeways. The Aztec fought bravely but were overwhelmed by their attackers. Meanwhile, the smallpox epidemic left thousands dead or dying in the streets. Others were too sick to fight. Tenochtitlán fell in August of 1521. The once-great city lay in ruins, and the mighty empire of the Aztec was defeated.

**The End of the Inca**

A few years later, a similar series of events unfolded in South America. One day, a messenger dropped to the ground before the Sapa Inca. He delivered startling news.

“A house!” he exclaimed. “It drifts on the sea along the coast!” He went on to speak of bearded ones with white skin. They were masters of lightning and thunder!

The Sapa Inca felt fear. There had been frightening signs in recent times. Violent earthquakes had split the ground. The sea had tossed gigantic waves ashore.

Not long after, the bearded ones disappeared in their “sea house.” But they left something behind—deadly diseases the natives had never seen before. The long coast became sick first. Later,

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**Vocabulary**

**epidemic**  
A situation in which a disease spreads to many people in an area rapidly.

## “The End for the Inca,” “Francisco Pizarro,” and “A Deadly Bargain,” Pages 59–63

### Scaffold understanding as follows:

Read the section “The End for the Inca” out loud. After reading the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—How were the experiences of the Aztec and Inca with Spanish explorers similar?

- » The Sapa Inca heard a report from a messenger about a strange bearded people in a huge “floating house” that appeared off the coast. He felt fear because he connected the Spanish arrival with strange signs seen in his empire in recent times.

**LITERAL**—What did the strange Spanish visitors leave behind that affected the Inca?

- » The Spanish brought diseases that had a deadly impact on the Inca.

### Scaffold understanding as follows:

Have students read the sections “Francisco Pizarro” and “A Deadly Bargain” to themselves. After students read the text, ask the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What lured Pizarro to the empire of the Inca?

- » He had heard rumors of an empire of even greater wealth than the Aztec Empire. This rumor was confirmed when he came upon an Inca temple decorated in gold and silver.

**INFERENTIAL**—What lesson might the Sapa Inca have taken from the experience of the Aztec if he had had knowledge of what occurred to them?

- » He might have understood that even a small army of invaders can topple a mighty empire.

**EVALUATIVE**—Do you think Pizarro treated the Sapa Inca honorably when he arranged a meeting at Cajamarca?

- » Possible answer: Pizarro tricked the Inca by calling on them as friends and by hiding his armed forces. Then, he killed thousands of unarmed Inca.


travelers carried the disease inland. The Inca people had no natural ability to fight off the European germs. They became very ill and died by the thousands.

When the Sapa Inca died, two of his sons claimed the throne. This led to a civil war. The fighting was as bloody as any the Inca people had ever waged. When the battles were over, the son named Atahualpa (ah-tah-wah-pah) had won. Atahualpa would not rest easy on his throne, however. Before long, another message arrived from the coast. The bearded ones had returned!

**Francisco Pizarro**

The bearded strangers were Spanish conquistadors led by Francisco Pizarro. Pizarro had heard rumors of an empire in South America that was even richer than the Aztec Empire. In 1527, Pizarro led a group of about 160 men to find this empire. When Pizarro found Inca temples decorated with gold and silver, he figured he had found what he was looking for.

The Spaniards marched toward Cuzco. They traveled along the very roads that the Inca had built to unite their empire. Meanwhile, speedy Inca messengers told Atahualpa that the Spaniards were at



Francisco Pizarro helped to find even more gold in South America.

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take the Spaniards seriously, however. The signs from a few years earlier had been forgotten during the civil war. Also, the Inca had no contact with the Aztec. As a result, they had no way of knowing what had happened to their neighbors to the north. Besides, what could the mighty Sapa Inca, all-powerful son of the sun, have to fear from a small band of men?

When the Spaniards approached Atahualpa's camp near the town of Cajamarca (kah-hah-mah-ah-kuh), a meeting was arranged. Atahualpa agreed to meet Pizarro in the town square. It was here that Pizarro set an ambush. His soldiers hid inside buildings surrounding the square. Though well-armed, the Spaniards waited nervously. They knew they were greatly outnumbered.

"They approach!" Pizarro's lookout shouted. As Pizarro had requested, Atahualpa came as a friend. The Sapa Inca had left his warriors outside the city. He was marching into Cajamarca with six thousand unarmed nobles and attendants.

When the Sapa Inca reached the main square, a startling figure stepped from a doorway. A Spanish priest, dressed in a white robe and black hood, walked toward the Sapa Inca's group. Spanish laws forbade Pizarro from attacking without warning. Before using force, he had to ask the enemies to surrender and become Christians peacefully. So the priest urged Atahualpa to accept Christianity. The priest offered a Catholic prayer book to Atahualpa. The Inca ruler knocked the book to the ground.

This was the moment the Spaniards were waiting for. Pizarro had given the signal for attack. The Inca was not a battle. It was a massacre!

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Canons fired. Steel swords slashed. Spaniards on horses charged around, cutting down the unarmed Inca. Less than an hour later, Atahualpa was a prisoner, and thousands of Inca people lay dead.

**A Deadly Bargain**

Atahualpa offered to pay a ransom for his release. The Sapa Inca placed his hands high on the wall of his prison room. "I will fill the room to this height with gold," he told Pizarro. "This I give in exchange for my freedom."

The Sapa Inca's orders went out. His subjects stripped temples of their gold. They emptied storehouses and gathered up gold that



Spaniards were waiting for Pizarro had given the signal for attack. The Inca was not a battle. It was a massacre!

**Page 62**

would be worth tens of millions of dollars today. Once the Inca paid this fantastic ransom, Pizarro broke his promise. He charged Atahualpa with plotting against the Spaniards and had him executed.

The Sapa Inca's death was the beginning of the end for the Inca Empire. The Inca were highly successful in battle, but they had been weakened by civil war, ravaged by deadly disease, and upset by the loss of their leader. They were in no condition to oppose the Spaniards. By June of 1534, Pizarro had conquered Cuzco and Quito. A few years later, the Spanish conquest of the region was mostly complete.

In twenty years, the Spaniards had destroyed two mighty empires and set up a new empire of their own. The conquerors congratulated themselves for stopping human sacrifice and bringing Christianity to the Americas. However, their greed for gold and thirst for power also led to the destruction of two of the most amazing civilizations in history. The changes they had begun would lead to the deaths of millions of people.



Atahualpa was the Inca god of creation. The Inca had their own deep religious beliefs, and did not want to give them up.

**Page 63**

**LITERAL**—What did Pizarro do after he collected the ransom offered for Atahualpa?

- » Pizarro ordered the Sapa Inca to be murdered.

**INFERENTIAL**—What can you infer about the state of the Inca Empire by its quick collapse following the death of Atahualpa?

- » Possible answer: The Inca had had their spirit crushed by the impact of disease and the death of their leader. The empire quickly fell as a result of the Spanish attacks.

## Timeline

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- Show students the Chapter 7 Timeline Image Cards. Read and discuss the captions, making particular note of any dates.
- Review and discuss the Big Question: “What were the factors that contributed to the end of the Aztec and Inca Empires?”
- Post the image cards on the right side of the Timeline, under the dates referencing the 1400s and 1500s; refer to the illustration in the Unit 2 Introduction for further guidance on the placement of each image card to the Timeline.



### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING 10 MIN

#### Ask students to:

- Write a short answer to the Big Question, “What were the factors that contributed to the end of the Aztec and Inca Empires?”
  - » Key points students should cite include: The arrival of the Spanish placed a strain on both empires. The Spanish were able to defeat both the Aztec and Inca, in part, because they had weapons and technology that the Aztec and Inca did not have. The Aztec and Inca were also greatly weakened by disease, which the Spanish unintentionally introduced to the Americas. The Aztec were made vulnerable by their harsh treatment of conquered people.
- Choose one of the Core Vocabulary words or the phrase (*expedition*, “religious ceremony,” *smallpox*, *immunity*, or *epidemic*), and write a sentence using the word or phrase.

To wrap up the lesson, ask several students to share their responses.



## Additional Activities

### Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7 (RI.5.4)

15 MIN

Activity Page



AP 7.1

**Materials Needed:** (1) Sufficient copies of the Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7 (AP 7.1), (2) pens and pencils for all students.

Distribute Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7 (AP 7.1) found on pages 98 and 99 of the Teacher Resources section. Ask students to use the words in the word box to complete the statements and then to use the number clues to find the mystery word. Allow students to work through the activity pages independently, or arrange students in pairs or groups.

### Cortés’s Letter to Charles V (RL.5.2, RI.5.8)

45 MIN

**Materials Needed:** (1) Sufficient copies of “Cortés’s Letter to Charles V” (NFE 1), found in Teacher Resources, pages 101–102.

The following activity is aimed at helping students appreciate the cultural conflict and interaction that occurred when the Spanish conquistadors arrived in the Americas, looking to achieve wealth and spread the Catholic religion among populations they considered to be godless barbarians.

#### Background for Teachers

This activity focuses on a primary source document from Hernán Cortés to his king, Charles V. Cortés was among a number of enthusiastic Spaniards who came to the Americas in the aftermath of Christopher Columbus’s encounter with the native people of the Americas in 1492. Columbus’s experience motivated other explorers to set sail with the prospect of wealth and glory. To learn more about Columbus’s impact on the Americas and about Cortés, use this primary unit link to the Core Knowledge web page, where a specific link to an article about Cortés in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

Distribute copies of “Cortés’s Letter to Charles V” to students. Read through the document together as a class, helping students with some of the challenging vocabulary. For example, you can help students understand that:

- *situated* (paragraph 1) means “located”
- *league* (paragraph 1) is a unit of measure that equals about 3.5 miles
- *edifice* (paragraph 3) means “building”
- *habitations* (paragraph 3) means “places where people live”
- *domestic* (paragraph 5) means “having to do with the home”

- *appointments* (paragraph 5) means “furnishings”
- *prostrated* (paragraph 6) means “lay flat on the ground”

After students have finished reading the excerpt, briefly discuss the story as a class, using the following questions as a guide:

1. What seems to be Cortés’s purpose in writing to his king?
  - » He seems to be writing to describe the most interesting aspects of Tenochtitlán for the king.
2. Do you think Cortés is impressed with Tenochtitlán? Why or why not?
  - » In general, Cortés seems very impressed with Tenochtitlán.
3. Cortés seems to admire many parts of the city. What are some examples of features he highlights and praises?
  - » Possible answers: Cortés praises the vitality of the marketplace, the construction of the buildings, the ingenious water system, and the fine quality of the houses.
4. What does Cortés imply about the wealth of Moctezuma?
  - » Cortés implies that Moctezuma is very wealthy and lives in great splendor.
5. What does this letter tell you about the attitude of the Spanish conquistadors toward the Aztec?
  - » Students should recognize that the letter shows that the Spanish were impressed by what they found in Tenochtitlán. The Spanish described the city as “grand” and made reference to the relative size of the city compared to ones in Spain, as well as referring to the “grandeur” of its buildings.

## History of the Conquest of Peru (RL.5.2, RI.5.8)

45 MIN

**Materials Needed:** (1) Sufficient copies of *History of the Conquest of Peru* (NFE 2) found in Teacher Resources, pages 103–105.

The following activity is aimed at helping students appreciate the military culture of the Inca civilization, including the advanced system they had developed to mobilize, transport, and care for troops who went to battle.



### Background for Teachers

This activity focuses on a primary source document written in the year 1800 by William H. Prescott. Prescott’s book focuses on Pizarro’s conquest of the Inca. The excerpt selected for students to read, however, focuses on Inca military practices.

Go to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* websites to learn more about Francisco Pizarro and William H. Prescott. The primary unit link will take you to the Core Knowledge web page, where the specific links for this information may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities](http://www.coreknowledge.org/hgca-g5-maya-aztec-inca-activities)

Distribute the *History of the Conquest of Peru* nonfiction excerpt to students. Read through the document together as a class, helping students with some of the challenging vocabulary. For example, you can help students understand that:

- *probable* (paragraph 1) means “likely to happen”
- *contemporaries* (paragraph 1) means “people who are about the same age living at the same time”
- *subaltern* (paragraph 1) means “low in status”
- *casque* (paragraph 2) means “helmet”
- *sufficed* (paragraph 3) means “to be enough”
- *magazines* (paragraph 4) means “places to store supplies”
- *traverse* (paragraph 4) means “to go across”
- *burghers* (paragraph 4) means “wealthy people” (this is a German word)
- *prevail* (paragraph 5) means “to win or succeed”
- *confederated* (paragraph 5) means “in an alliance”
- *maxim* (paragraph 6) means “a short saying”
- *benevolence* (paragraph 6) means “kindness”
- *prudence* (paragraph 6) means “caution”
- *protracted* (paragraph 7) means “long-lasting”
- *obstinate* (paragraph 7) means “stubborn”
- *annals* (paragraph 7) means “historical records”
- *sanguinary* (paragraph 7) means “causing bloodshed”

After students have finished reading the excerpt, briefly discuss the excerpt as a class, using the following questions as a guide:

1. What was the role of the military in Inca culture?
  - » People from all levels of society fought in the military. They trained extensively and were ready to fight at a moment’s notice.
2. How did the weapons and dress of Inca soldiers reflect their rank in society?
  - » People of lower ranks wore much simpler armor and carried simpler weapons. People of higher ranks in society adorned their weapons with gold and silver. They also decorated their armor with things like feathers.

3. What factors made it easier for the Inca to call together the army and march to war? What does this tell you about the Inca civilization?
  - » The Inca used their complex system of roads and bridges to move people from place to place. They also made sure that the soldiers would have places to stay and places where they would be fed. This shows that the Inca were well prepared for conflict.
4. The excerpt says about the Sapa Inca, “[H]e allowed his troops to commit no unnecessary outrage on person or property.” What does this statement tell you about the Inca?
  - » The Sapa Inca, even though his people were at war, did not want them to cause any damage that did not absolutely have to happen to win. This shows that the Inca were a benevolent people, even to their enemies. It also reflects the fact that the Inca wanted to include the people they conquered in their empire.
5. Why do you think the Inca took care of their soldiers by providing food and shelter and letting them return home if they had been gone for too long?
  - » The Inca knew it was important to take care of your soldiers. If the soldiers are unhappy or unhealthy, they’re less willing and able to fight for the empire.

# Teacher Resources

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## Unit Assessment: *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*

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**Circle the letter of the best answer for each question.**

- Where was the Maya civilization located?
  - in present-day Argentina
  - in present-day Brazil
  - in and around the Yucatán Peninsula
  - in and around the Andes Mountains
- What structures would an archaeologist most likely find among the ruins of a Maya city?
  - canals
  - suspension bridges
  - causeways
  - ball courts
- The Maya had advanced scientific knowledge, but they did not develop
  - telescopes.
  - a system of numbers.
  - an accurate calendar.
  - a system of writing.
- Which were the tallest and most important buildings in Maya cities?
  - pyramids
  - storehouses for food
  - observatories to study the stars
  - ball courts
- Where did the Aztec build the capital of their civilization?
  - in Cuzco in present-day Peru
  - in Tenochtitlán in present-day Mexico
  - on an island in the Caribbean
  - in the rainforests of the Yucatán Peninsula
- Which word best describes the Aztec before they built their empire?
  - sailors
  - farmers
  - wanderers
  - scientists

7. The Aztec were best known as
  - a) great road builders.
  - b) fierce warriors.
  - c) talented musicians.
  - d) kindly rulers.
  
8. Which of the following was not found in both the Maya and Aztec civilizations?
  - a) the practice of human sacrifice
  - b) a number of independent city-states
  - c) impressive cities with grand buildings
  - d) life built around religion
  
9. Who was the Aztec ruler in 1519?
  - a) Hernán Cortés
  - b) Moctezuma II
  - c) Atahualpa
  - d) Francisco Pizarro
  
10. Which of the following best describes the Aztec government?
  - a) an empire united under a single ruler
  - b) a collection of city-states, each with its own ruler
  - c) tribal groups with no central government
  - d) a democracy with a president elected by the commoners
  
11. What was unusual about the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán?
  - a) It was surrounded by dense rainforest.
  - b) It had a network of expertly built stone roads.
  - c) It was built on an island.
  - d) It was built high in the mountains.
  
12. What was one reason the Aztec waged war so often?
  - a) They were always under attack from their neighbors.
  - b) They needed prisoners for human sacrifices.
  - c) They believed the gods enjoyed seeing humans fight.
  - d) They needed more land for growing crops.
  
13. What region did the Inca rule?
  - a) central Mesoamerica
  - b) east coast of Central America
  - c) Gulf coast of South America
  - d) Pacific coast of South America



- 14.** Which mountain range runs through the middle of the Inca Empire?
- a) Atlas
  - b) Andes
  - c) Rockies
  - d) Himalayas
- 15.** Who was the Sapa Inca?
- a) sole ruler of the Inca Empire
  - b) Inca god of the sun
  - c) Inca high priest in charge of sacrifices
  - d) wife of the Inca emperor
- 16.** The He-Who-Sees-Everything was
- a) the main Inca god.
  - b) an Inca tax collector and matchmaker.
  - c) the Sapa Inca.
  - d) a priest who lived on top of Machu Picchu.
- 17.** What animal played a central role in the life and culture of the Inca?
- a) camel
  - b) llama
  - c) horse
  - d) eagle
- 18.** For what purpose did the Inca use *quipu*?
- a) to cross a river
  - b) to cure an illness
  - c) to kill an enemy
  - d) to record information
- 19.** How were the Inca able to farm on mountainsides?
- a) They used alpacas to plow for them.
  - b) They cut terraces into the land.
  - c) They planted crops with long roots.
  - d) They built the Royal Road.
- 20.** What do Cuzco, Machu Picchu, and Quito have in common?
- a) They were European diseases.
  - b) They were Inca gods.
  - c) They were Inca communities.
  - d) They were Inca rulers.

- 21.** Inca stonework was especially impressive because
- a) the Inca had no way to cut stone.
  - b) there were few flat stones in the Andes.
  - c) the Inca did not use mortar.
  - d) earthquakes often knocked down Inca buildings.
- 22.** Which pair of adjectives best describes the way the Aztec and Inca first greeted the Spanish?
- a) threatening and violent
  - b) curious and friendly
  - c) bored and uninterested
  - d) bold and angry
- 23.** Who led the Spanish invasion of the Aztec Empire?
- a) Francisco Pizarro
  - b) Christopher Columbus
  - c) Hernán Cortés
  - d) Huayna Capac
- 24.** What did Moctezuma and Atahualpa have in common?
- a) They were Spanish conquerors.
  - b) They were emperors taken hostage by the Spanish invaders.
  - c) They were cities destroyed by the Spanish.
  - d) They were languages spoken by the Inca and Aztec.
- 25.** Which of the following is not a reason that the Spaniards were able to quickly conquer the Aztec and Inca empires?
- a) Epidemics weakened the native people.
  - b) Native populations were not fully united behind native rulers.
  - c) The Spanish had better weapons and military technology.
  - d) The Spanish forces outnumbered the native forces.

**Match each term to its definition.**

**Terms**

26. \_\_\_\_\_ empire

27. \_\_\_\_\_ engineer

28. \_\_\_\_\_ nomadic

29. \_\_\_\_\_ temple

30. \_\_\_\_\_ hieroglyph

31. \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice

32. \_\_\_\_\_ city-state

33. \_\_\_\_\_ immunity

34. \_\_\_\_\_ expedition

35. \_\_\_\_\_ reign

**Definitions**

a) moving around often in search of food

b) to give or to kill something for a religious purpose

c) a city that is an independent political state with its own ruling government

d) a period of time in which a king or queen rules

e) a building with religious use or meaning

f) a body's ability to remain free of illness even after being exposed to the cause of the illness

g) a group of countries or territories under the control of one ruler

h) a special journey taken by a group that has a clear purpose or goal

i) someone who uses science and math to design useful objects or buildings

j) a picture or symbol representing an idea, an object, a syllable, or a sound

## Performance Task: *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*

**Teacher Directions:** The Spaniards who came to the Americas and eventually conquered the Aztec and Inca empires expressed admiration for the wealth and achievements of the civilizations they encountered.

Ask students to write a brief essay about the achievements of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. Encourage students to use their Student Readers to take notes and organize their thoughts about the great achievements of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca on the table provided.

A sample table, completed with possible notes, is provided below to serve as a reference for teachers, should some prompting or scaffolding be needed to help students get started. Individual students are not expected to provide a comparable finished table. Their goal is to provide four to six specific examples or arguments about the great achievements of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations to use as the basis of their essay.

Achievements	Maya	Aztec	Inca
<b>Science, Mathematical, and Engineering Skill (Including Inventions and Architecture)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had a highly accurate calendar</li> <li>Had detailed knowledge of stars</li> <li>Math system had a zero and allowed for complex calculations</li> <li>Built enormous temples and pyramids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built the city of Tenochtitlán on an island in a lake with complex of canals and causeways</li> <li>Created floating gardens to help feed huge population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built a network of roads, bridges, and cities with expert stonework</li> <li>Created terraced farms on mountainsides</li> </ul>
<b>Writing and Record Keeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hieroglyphic writing system with more than eight hundred symbols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had a writing system featuring pictograms</li> <li>Kept records in codices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used <i>quipu</i> to keep records</li> </ul>

<b>Rulers/Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created large city-states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created a huge city and conquered a large empire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created efficient administration to oversee a huge empire, with central control of a population of twelve million</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Features (Including Myths and Religious Practice)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Played sacred ball game</li> <li>Recorded beliefs in <i>Popol Vuh</i></li> <li>Had complex religious beliefs featuring human sacrifice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had complex religious beliefs featuring human sacrifice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilled weavers, used cotton and wool from alpacas and llamas</li> <li>Had complex religious beliefs featuring human sacrifice</li> </ul>

## Performance Task Scoring Rubric

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**Note:** Students should be evaluated on the basis of their written responses, using the rubric.

Students should not be evaluated on the completion of the evidence table, which is intended to be a support for students as they first think about their written responses.

<b>Above Average</b>	Response is accurate and detailed and demonstrates strong background knowledge of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. Student writing includes at least five examples of impressive achievements, including at least one from each of the three major civilizations of the Americas. Student writing uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas, demonstrating strong understanding of the subject discussed. A few minor errors may be present.
<b>Average</b>	Response is mostly accurate and somewhat detailed and demonstrates background knowledge of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. Student writing includes at least four examples of impressive achievements, including at least one from each of the three major civilizations of the Americas. Student writing uses some linking words or phrases to connect ideas. Some minor errors may be present.
<b>Adequate</b>	Response is mostly accurate and demonstrates some background knowledge of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations, but the response lacks detail. The essay gives several facts about the achievements of the great civilizations of the Americas but does not give examples from each. Student writing may exhibit issues with organization, focus, and/or control of standard English grammar.
<b>Inadequate</b>	Response is incomplete and demonstrates minimal background knowledge of content discussed in the unit. Student writing may exhibit major issues with organization, focus, and/or control of standard English grammar.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Performance Task Activity: *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations***

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The Spaniards who came to the Americas and eventually conquered the Aztec and Inca empires expressed admiration for the wealth and achievements of the civilizations they encountered. Write an essay that describes the great achievements of the three civilizations of the Americas—the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. In your writing, cite at least five different achievements, at least one from each civilization.

Use the table on the next page to take notes and organize your thoughts. You may look back at the chapters in *Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations*.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations Performance Task Notes Table**

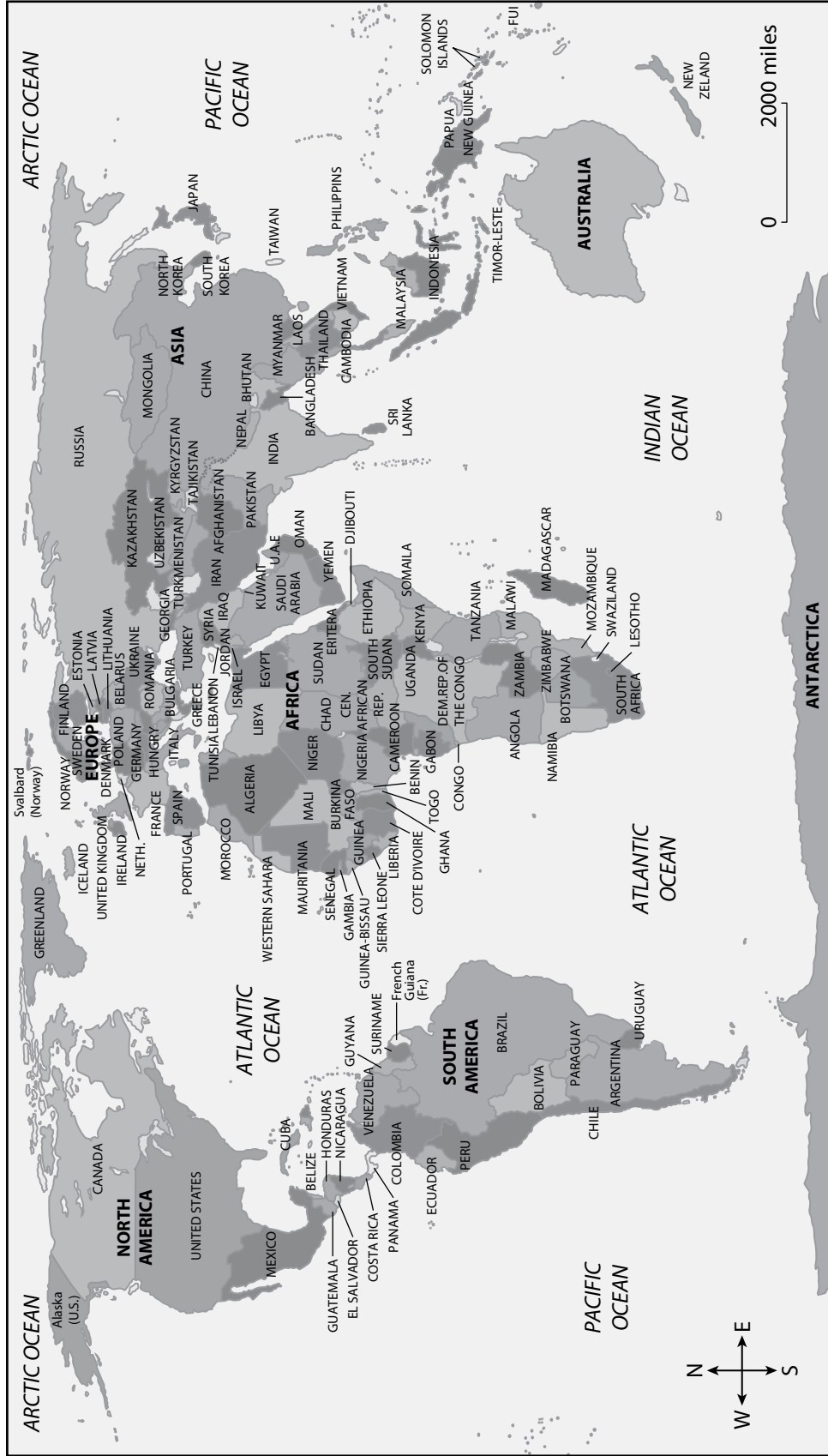
Use the table below to help organize your thoughts about the achievements of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. You do not need to complete the entire table to write your response, but you should try to list five different achievements, at least one from each of the three civilizations.

<b>Achievements</b>	<b>Maya</b>	<b>Aztec</b>	<b>Inca</b>
<b>Science, Mathematical, and Engineering Skill (Including Inventions and Architecture)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had a highly accurate calendar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created floating gardens to help feed huge population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created terraced farms on mountainsides</li> </ul>
<b>Writing and Record Keeping</b>			
<b>Rulers/Government</b>			
<b>Cultural Features (including Myths and Religious Practice)</b>			

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### World Map



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 1.2: World Geography**

**Use with Chapter 1**

1. What body of water separates the Americas from Europe and Africa?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. About how many miles by sea are the Americas from Spain?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What body of water separates the Americas from Asia and Australia?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which continent is Spain a part of?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Which continent is Peru a part of?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Activity Page 1.3: Modern Map of North America, Central America, and South America

Use with Chapter 1

#### Modern Map of the Americas



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 1.4: Geography of the Americas**

**Use with Chapter 1**

1. In which country is the largest part of the Yucatán Peninsula found? \_\_\_\_\_
2. On which continent are the Andes Mountains located? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What major river is located in South America? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name one country in North America. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name three countries in South America. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name the countries in South America that the Andes Mountains pass through. \_\_\_\_\_
7. What ocean borders the west coast of South America? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Page 1.5: Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations

Use with Chapter 1

### Map of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 1.6: Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations**

**Use with Chapter 1**

1. Which civilizations were located in present-day Mexico and Central America?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which civilization was located in South America?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Use the distance scale to estimate the geographic size of the Maya civilization.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 2.1: Summary of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations**

**Use with Chapters 2, 4, and 6**

## Civilizations of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca

Fill in the table below with information about each civilization.

Civilization	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Location			
Dates of Existence			
Architecture			
Religion			
Inventions/ Developments			
Cultural Elements			



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity Page 2.1 (continued)**

## Civilizations of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca

Fill in the table below with information about each civilization.

Civilization	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Language/ Writing			
Rulers/ Government			

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity Page 4.1: Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4

**Circle the correct term from the options presented to complete each sentence.**

**Example:** The Maya were known for building great \_\_\_\_\_ structures.

wood

stone

brick

1. An Aztec \_\_\_\_\_ was a kind of book made out of folded bark.

codex

pictogram

scribe

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ civilization rose in the rainforests of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Aztec

Maya

nomadic

3. Losers of a Maya *pok-ta-pok* game might be used as a human \_\_\_\_\_.

initiation ceremony

sacrifice

priest

4. The Maya calendar included a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ that fell every four years.

leap year

equinox

codex

5. The Aztec capital was an island connected by \_\_\_\_\_ to the mainland.

litters

canals

causeways

6. The Maya civilization was made up of a number of different \_\_\_\_\_ that often fought each other.

city-states

empires

emperors

7. Through the work of \_\_\_\_\_, we have learned a lot about the ancient world of Mesoamerica.

architecture

astronomy

archaeologists

8. Tenochtitlán was known for its Great Temple, a \_\_\_\_\_ that rose ninety feet into the air.

pyramid

hieroglyph

civilization

9. During the \_\_\_\_\_ of Moctezuma, Tenochtitlán reached its height of glory.

civilization

reign

Mesoamerica

10. Maya \_\_\_\_\_ were responsible for writing down important events in the empire.

scribes

hieroglyphs

emperors

**Activity Page 4.2: Create a Codex**

## Create a Codex

Observe the pictures below. They are symbols from the Aztec writing system. These symbols represent words. A codex, with many symbols, can tell a story.

**crocodile****water****dog****rain****flower****grass****house****eagle****rabbit****reed****jaguar****lizard****motion****deer****wind****monkey****Directions**

1. Think about the way you travel to school every day. Visualize what the roads are like and what you see out the window along the way. Write your thoughts down on a piece of notebook paper.
2. Fold a piece of construction paper six times in an accordion style to make a book.
3. Think of a symbol that represents each idea or object related to your journey to school. Use a pencil to draw these symbols on each page of the codex. Draw them in the order in which they occurred during your journey.
4. Color in each symbol.
5. Switch codices with a partner. Try to guess the story that your partner is telling through the symbols. Let your partner know if he or she is correct.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity Page 7.1: Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7

Use the words to complete each statement. Then, use the number clues to solve the mystery word.

llama	engineers	pictograms	suspension bridge	mortar
smallpox	plateau	religious ceremony	alpaca	census
immunity	epidemics	conquistadors	expedition	litter
Inca	terraces	clans	geographical diversity	official

- The pages of the Aztec codex were covered with \_\_\_\_\_.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- The \_\_\_\_\_ that crossed the Apurimac River in Peru got a new set of ropes every two years.  
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
- The Inca depended on the \_\_\_\_\_ for wool and the \_\_\_\_\_ as a pack animal.  
27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37
- In order to set taxes for a village, the Inca first took a \_\_\_\_\_ to count how many people lived there.  
38 39 40 41 42 43
- The world of the Inca included great \_\_\_\_\_, including coastlines, arid plains, and high mountains.  
44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55  
56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64
- Because they had no \_\_\_\_\_ against European diseases, the Aztec suffered terrible \_\_\_\_\_ of diseases such as \_\_\_\_\_.  
65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72  
73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89
- The Inca were skilled \_\_\_\_\_ who were expert at construction.  
90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98
- Inca workers cut and fit stones together very carefully and did not use any \_\_\_\_\_.  
99 100 101 102 103 104
- The Inca \_\_\_\_\_ traveled throughout the empire to make sure people obeyed the laws.  
105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity Page 7.1 (continued)

10. Hernán Cortés led the \_\_\_\_\_ on  
113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125  
an \_\_\_\_\_ to the Aztec capital.  
126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135
11. Human sacrifice was a kind of \_\_\_\_\_.  
136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152
12. Wherever he went, the Sapa Inca was carried on a \_\_\_\_\_.  
153 154 155 156 157 158
13. The \_\_\_\_\_ carved \_\_\_\_\_ into the mountainsides to help them farm  
159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170  
the rugged land.
14. Among the land ruled by the Sapa Inca was the broad \_\_\_\_\_ between the twin  
171 172 173 174 175 176 177  
ranges of the Andes Mountains.
15. All Inca people belonged to \_\_\_\_\_ that included several other families.  
178 179 180 181 182

**Mystery Word:** We know about the great ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica and South America in part because of the work of these type of experts.

8 22 38 51 84 90 100 112 123 140 154 170 174 182

## Answer Key: Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations

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### Unit Assessment

1. c 2. d 3. a 4. a 5. b 6. c 7. b 8. b 9. b 10. a 11. c  
12. b 13. d 14. b 15. a 16. b 17. b 18. d 19. b 20. c  
21. c 22. b 23. c 24. b 25. d 26. g 27. i 28. a 29. e  
30. j 31. b 32. c 33. f 34. h 35. d

### Activity Pages

#### World Geography (AP 1.2)

1. the Atlantic Ocean
2. about 4,000 miles at the shortest point
3. the Pacific Ocean
4. Europe
5. South America

#### Geography of the Americas (AP 1.4)

1. Mexico
2. South America
3. Amazon River
4. Mexico, United States, Canada
5. Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana
6. Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina
7. Pacific Ocean

#### Geography of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 1.6)

1. Maya and Aztec
2. Inca
3. approximately 250 miles wide and 500 miles long

#### Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 1–4 (AP 4.1)

1. codex
2. Maya
3. sacrifice
4. leap year
5. causeways
6. city-states
7. archaeologists
8. pyramid
9. reign
10. scribes

#### Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 5–7 (AP 7.1)

1. pictograms
2. suspension bridge
3. alpaca, llama
4. census
5. geographical diversity
6. immunity, epidemics, smallpox
7. engineers
8. mortar
9. official
10. conquistadors, expedition
11. religious ceremony
12. litter
13. Inca, terraces
14. plateau
15. clans

Mystery word: archaeologists

## Nonfiction Excerpts

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### Nonfiction Excerpt 1: *Cortes's Letter to Charles V*

*In 1520, Hernán Cortés wrote a letter to the king of Spain, Charles V. In this letter, Cortés describes Tenochtitlán.*

This great city of Tenochtitlán is situated in a lake, and from the main land to the denser parts of it, by whichever route one chooses to enter, the distance is two leagues. There are four avenues or entrances to the city, all of which are formed by artificial causeways, two spears' length in width. The city is as large as Seville or Cordova; its streets, I speak of the principal ones, are very wide and straight; some of these, and all the inferior ones, are half land and half water, and are navigated by canoes. All the streets at intervals have openings, through which the water flows, crossing from one street to another; and at these openings, some of which are very wide, there are also very wide bridges. . . . This city has many public squares, in which are situated the markets and other places for buying and selling. There is one square . . . where are daily assembled more than sixty thousand souls, engaged in buying and selling; and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords. . . .

Every kind of merchandise is sold in a particular street or quarter assigned to it exclusively, and thus the best order is preserved. They sell everything by number or measure; at least so far we have not observed them to sell anything by weight. There is a building in the great square that is used as an audience house, where ten or twelve persons, who are magistrates, sit and decide all controversies that arise in the market, and order delinquents to be punished. . . .

This great city contains a large number of temples, or houses, for their idols, very handsome edifices, which are situated in the different districts and the suburbs; in the principal ones religious persons of each particular sect are constantly residing, for whose use, besides the houses containing the idols, there are other convenient habitations. . . . Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families. Around the interior of the enclosure there are handsome edifices, containing large halls and corridors, in which the religious persons attached to the temple reside. There are fully forty towers, which are lofty and well built, the largest of which has fifty steps leading to its main body, and is higher than the tower of the principal tower of the church at Seville. . . . All these towers

are the burial places of the nobles, and every chapel in them is dedicated to a particular idol, to which they pay their devotions. . . .

This noble city contains many fine and magnificent houses; which may be accounted for from the fact, that all the nobility of the country, who are the vassals of Moctezuma, have houses in the city, in which they reside a certain part of the year; and besides, there are numerous wealthy citizens who also possess fine houses. All these persons, in addition to the large and spacious apartments for ordinary purposes, have others, both upper and lower, that contain conservatories of flowers. Along one of these causeways that lead into the city are laid two pipes, constructed of masonry, each of which is two paces in width, and about five feet in height. An abundant supply of excellent water, forming a volume equal in bulk to the human body, is conveyed by one of these pipes, and distributed about the city, where it is used by the inhabitants for drink and other purposes. The other pipe, in the meantime, is kept empty until the former requires to be cleansed, when the water is let into it and continues to be used till the cleaning is finished. . . . Reservoirs resembling canals are constructed on the bridges, through which the fresh water is conveyed. These reservoirs are of the breadth of the body of an ox, and of the same length as the bridges. . . .

In regard to the domestic appointments of Moctezuma, . . . I know not where to begin. . . . He was served in the following manner: Every day as soon as it was light, six hundred nobles and men of rank were in attendance at the palace, who either sat, or walked about the halls and galleries, and passed their time in conversation, but without entering the apartment where his person was. . . . The meals were served in a large hall, in which Moctezuma was accustomed to eat, and the dishes quite filled the room, which was covered with mats and kept clean. . . .

Both at the beginning and end of every meal, they furnished water for the hands; and the napkins used on these occasions were never used a second time; this was the case also with the plates and dishes, which were not brought again; but new ones in place of them. . . . He is also dressed every day in four different suits, entirely new, which he never wears a second time. . . . Whenever Moctezuma appeared in public, which is seldom the case, all those who accompanied him, or whom he accidentally met in the streets, turned away without looking towards him, and others prostrated themselves until he had passed. . . .



## Nonfiction Excerpt 2: *History of the Conquest of Peru*

(excerpts from the book by William Hickling Prescott)

It seems probable that every Peruvian, who had reached a certain age, might be called to bear arms. But the rotation of military service, and the regular drills, which took place twice or thrice in a month, of the inhabitants of every village, raised the soldiers generally above the rank of a raw militia. The Peruvian army, at first inconsiderable, came, with the increase of population, in the latter days of the empire, to be very large, so that their monarchs could bring into the field, as contemporaries assure us, a force amounting to two hundred thousand men. They showed the same skill and respect for order in their military organization, as in other things. The troops were divided into bodies corresponding with our battalions and companies, led by officers, that rose, in regular gradation, from the lowest subaltern to the Inca noble, who was entrusted with the general command.

Their arms consisted of the usual weapons employed by nations, whether civilized or uncivilized, before the invention of powder: bows and arrows, lances, darts, a short kind of sword, a battle-axe or partisan, and slings, with which they were very expert. Their spears and arrows were tipped with copper, or, more commonly, with bone, and the weapons of the Inca lords were frequently mounted with gold or silver. Their heads were protected by casques made either of wood or of the skins of wild animals, and sometimes richly decorated with metal and with precious stones, surmounted by the brilliant plumage of the tropical birds. These, of course, were the ornaments only of the higher orders. The great mass of the soldiery were dressed in the peculiar costume of their provinces, and their heads were wreathed with a sort of turban or roll of different-colored cloths, that produced a gay and animating effect. Their defensive armor consisted of a shield or buckler, and a close tunic of quilted cotton, in the same manner as with the Mexicans. Each company had its particular banner, and the imperial standard, high above all, displayed the glittering device of the rainbow,—the armorial ensign of the Incas, intimating their claims as children of the skies.

By means of the thorough system of communication established in the country, a short time sufficed to draw the levies together from the most distant quarters. The army was put under the direction of some experienced chief, of the blood royal, or, more frequently, headed by the Inca in person. The march was rapidly performed, and with little fatigue to the soldier; for, all along the great routes, quarters were provided for him, at regular distances, where he could find ample accommodations. The country is still covered with the remains of military works,

constructed of porphyry or granite, which tradition assures us were designed to lodge the Inca and his army.

At regular intervals, also, magazines were established, filled with grain, weapons, and the different munitions of war, with which the army was supplied on its march. It was the especial care of the government to see that these magazines, which were furnished from the stores of the Incas, were always well filled. When the Spaniards invaded the country, they supported their own armies for a long time on the provisions found in them. The Peruvian soldier was forbidden to commit any trespass on the property of the inhabitants whose territory lay in the line of march. Any violation of this order was punished with death. The soldier was clothed and fed by the industry of the people, and the Incas rightly resolved that he should not repay this by violence. Far from being a tax on the labors of the husbandman, or even a burden on his hospitality, the imperial armies traversed the country, from one extremity to the other, with as little inconvenience to the inhabitants, as would be created by a procession of peaceful burghers, or a muster of holiday soldiers for a review.

From the moment war was proclaimed, the Peruvian monarch used all possible expedition in assembling his forces, that he might anticipate the movements of his enemies, and prevent a combination with their allies. It was, however, from the neglect of such a principle of combination, that the several nations of the country, who might have prevailed by confederated strength, fell one after another under the imperial yoke. Yet, once in the field, the Inca did not usually show any disposition to push his advantages to the utmost, and urge his foe to extremity. In every stage of the war, he was open to propositions for peace; and although he sought to reduce his enemies by carrying off their harvests and distressing them by famine, he allowed his troops to commit no unnecessary outrage on person or property.

“We must spare our enemies,” one of the Peruvian princes is quoted as saying, “or it will be our loss, since they and all that belongs to them must soon be ours.” It was a wise maxim, and, like most other wise maxims, founded equally on benevolence and prudence. The Incas adopted the policy claimed for the Romans by their countryman, who tells us that they gained more by clemency to the vanquished than by their victories.

In the same considerate spirit, they were most careful to provide for the security and comfort of their own troops; and, when a war was long protracted, or the climate proved unhealthy, they took care to relieve their men by frequent

reinforcements, allowing the earlier recruits to return to their homes. But while thus economical of life, both in their own followers and in the enemy, they did not shrink from sterner measures when provoked by the ferocious or obstinate character of the resistance; and the Peruvian annals contain more than one of those sanguinary pages which cannot be pondered at the present day without a shudder. It should be added, that the beneficent policy, which I have been delineating as characteristic of the Incas, did not belong to all; and that there was more than one of the royal line who displayed a full measure of the bold and unscrupulous spirit of the vulgar conqueror.





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