

AZTECS INCA MAYA

WORLD HISTORY

APPLYING COMMON CORE

ACTIVITIES TO MEET ANCHOR STANDARDS



CHARLIE BOONE



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SOCIAL STUDIES SCHOOL SERVICE

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Introduction

Goals

The main goal of this book is to help students develop skills outlined in the Common Core Standards by clarifying what the standards are asking for and by giving teachers specific activities they can use to address the standards.

Organization

The book is mostly organized by the categories into which Common Core places its standards. The first three chapters are “Key Ideas and Details,” “Craft and Structure,” and “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.” Because “Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity” is addressed every time students read, it does not have its own chapter. Also, because it is common for many writing categories to overlap on a paper, the fourth chapter covers all the writing standards and is divided into the three main paper types: argumentative, informative, and narrative.

Activities open with an introductory page that includes every standard covered by the activities, directions, estimated lesson length, and additional teaching ideas. At the back of the book are selected answers for the reading activities.

Tracking Common Core Standards

On page 3, there is a chart that can help you track which Common Core Standards you have addressed and with which activities.

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is not required for social studies teachers, which is why there is no WHST.6-8.3. However, this form of writing was included in this book because numerous social studies teachers also teach language arts, for the many educators who find creative writing a valuable way to explore history, and because other required writing standards can be covered with narrative writing.

Common Core Standards

If a teacher covers the six reading activities and three papers outlined in this book, he or she will have addressed every 6–8 History/Social Studies Common Core Standard at least once. Although it is not expected that teachers cover every standard in each unit of study, this gives teachers a great way to see examples of every standard and have numerous assignments to choose from.

Common Core Standards

READING

Key Ideas and Details

RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

» *Summarize primary or secondary sources.*

RH.6-8.3

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

» *Summarize the steps of a process or historical event.*

Craft and Structure

RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

» *Use context to decipher the meanings of difficult words.*

RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

» *Determine how the author has ordered the information.*

RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

» *Interpret a reading with a visual.*

RH.6-8.8

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.6.1–SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6–8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

WRITING

Text Types and Purposes

WHST.6-8.1

Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

» *Argumentative writing.*

WHST.6-8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

» *Informative writing.*

W.6.3–W.8.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

» *Creative writing. (This is not required for social studies teachers.)*

Production and Distribution of Writing

WHST.6-8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization,

and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

» *Write for a specific audience.*

WHST.6-8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

» *Use writing process.*

WHST.6-8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

» *Publish writing for an audience.*

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

WHST.6-8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

» *Research to answer a question.*

WHST.6-8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

» *Use multiple credible sources when researching and summarize findings in own words.*

WHST.6-8.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

» *Support essays with information or quotes from texts.*

Range of Writing

WHST.6-8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Tracking Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY	Assignment	Assignment	Assignment	Assignment
<u>RH.6-8.1</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.2</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.3</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.4</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.5</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.6</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.7</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.8</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.9</u>				
<u>RH.6-8.10</u>				
<u>SL.6.1–SL.8.1*</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.1</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.2</u>				
<u>W.6.3–W.8.3*</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.4</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.5</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.6</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.7</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.8</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.9</u>				
<u>WHST.6-8.10</u>				

*Not required for social studies teachers.

Key Ideas and Details

ACTIVITY 1

Why Did the Maya Abandon Their Cities?

RH.6-8.1

RH.6-8.2

ACTIVITY 2

How Did Montezuma Die?

RH.6-8.1

RH.6-8.2

RH.6-8.3

ACTIVITY 1

CHAPTER
Key Ideas and Details

DURATION
2 class periods

Why Did the Maya Abandon Their Cities?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

DIRECTIONS

- Together, the class reads the preface to “Theories for Why the Maya Abandoned Their Cities,” underlining any pertinent facts or explanations for the abandonment.
- Students read the theories section independently, annotating as they did previously and writing doubts about each theory in the margins. Students share what they underlined and wrote with a neighbor, then the class. The class adds facts/explanations to the applicable rows on the “Evidence Chart.”
- Students partner up, each pair receiving one piece of evidence. (For larger classes, teachers can find new evidence not listed or have multiple copies of a few pieces of evidence.) The pair reads it and fills in the fitting section(s) of the “Evidence Chart,” making sure to list the evidence numbers. Students will do this 5–7 more times.
- When pairs are finished, they trade with another pair and repeat the above process, always making sure to get new pieces of evidence with each trade. (6–8 pieces each.)
- Students are placed into new groups of three to four people and share what they discovered. Students should add new information to their charts.
- Students independently complete “Why Did the Maya Abandon Their Cities?”

VARIATIONS

- The evidence could be organized into stations, with multiple pieces of evidence at most stations and a few laptops for independent research at one station. In this format, students rotate through the information in larger groups, one station at a time.
- Questions three and four could be expanded into a more comprehensive argumentative essay by including a rubric, adding an outline, allowing for extra time to research new information on the Internet, creating editing opportunities, and/or having them dispute a counterargument against the theory they found most likely.

IMPORTANT/DIFFICULT VOCABULARY

There are many ways to review vocabulary. Below are some words from which you may choose to create a review activity.

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ▪ Anemia | ▪ Fallow | ▪ Pollen |
| ▪ Emboldened | ▪ Imperialistic | ▪ Postulated |
| ▪ Erosion | ▪ Mayanists | ▪ Prophecy |
| ▪ Exacerbating | ▪ Peninsular | ▪ Stelae |

THEORIES FOR WHY THE MAYA ABANDONED THEIR CITIES ^{1/2}

The Maya were an amazing civilization, known for their written language, math system, astronomical discoveries, and architectural prowess. They flourished in Mexico and Central America for about two thousand years and by the ninth century may have numbered more than ten million people. Then, starting in that same century, over the span of about one hundred years, the Maya cities were abandoned. The Maya did not completely disappear; their descendants still populate Mexico and Central America today. Still, the rapid decline of this formidable culture remains shocking, and its cause, a historical mystery.

There are many theories for what happened, but some can be eliminated. Because it was a slow collapse, it is unlikely that a sudden catastrophic event wiped out most of the Maya civilization. Also, because the collapse happened more than five hundred years before Columbus arrived in the Americas, Spanish conquistadores had nothing to do with it. And don't even start with the aliens! The following are a few of the major theories that have been postulated that might explain their downfall.

Overpopulation/Drought

Supporters of the environmental catastrophe theory believe that the Maya population grew too large for the land to support. Usually, the Maya would leave their farmland fallow for years to replenish its nutrients, and then cut down trees to expand their farmland into the forests. However, after running out of forest, they may have been forced to abandon their policy of leaving the land fallow. This would have led to the land producing less food, exacerbating the problem of trying to feed so many people. This deforestation also may have resulted in drought conditions, which would have worsened the situation for the civilization's large population.

Natural Disaster

When people first began studying the decline of the Maya, the theory that a natural disaster led to their demise was proposed. Considering that the Maya's decline lasted about a century, this theory seems highly unlikely. However, there remains the possibility that a natural disaster could have greatly weakened the Maya and ultimately led to the abandonment of their cities. For example, a flood, volcano eruption, or earthquake could have negatively affected their farming, made them more vulnerable to an attack, and/or led people to believe that the gods were angry and that they should flee to the jungles.

Revolution

Devotees of the revolution theory believe that uprisings in various cities led to the overthrow of their rulers. Had people from other cities heard about rulers being overthrown, they may have been more emboldened to do so themselves. Maya scholars can definitely see reasons for why people would have issues with their rulers, as some Mayanists believe that the Maya kings were extremely harsh toward their subjects.

Invasion

Conquests are common throughout history, and the Maya, though powerful, may have been victim to an imperialistic neighbor. The fact that the Maya did not have one leader, but were a group of city-states, fits the pattern of how the cities were abandoned one by one over a long period (instead of all at once). Additionally, the invasion theory can be combined with other theories. Maybe overpopulation, drought, a natural disaster, a calendar prophecy, or a revolution weakened the Maya, enabling an enemy culture to lead a successful takeover.

EVIDENCE ^{1/4}

1. Current Farmers

After cultivating their land for a few years, modern Maya farmers leave their land fallow for four to ten years. When they do not follow this, their fields produce less and less yields each year. It is assumed that ancient Maya farmers also needed to practice a similar method if they wanted to keep their lands fertile.



2. Skulls

Around 80 percent of the skulls excavated from Copán show signs of anemia, which people suffer when they have a lack of iron in their diet. Iron is in many foods, and a lack of it could show that there was not enough food to go around. Interestingly, it appears that this did not just affect peasants, as various skulls believed to be of nobles have been found to show signs of anemia. For example, some skulls with anemia have elaborate designs carved into the teeth, a practice in which the upper class Maya partook.

3. Houses

Archaeologists have discovered ruins of houses dating from the eighth century that were located near hills. These ruins were found covered in debris that came from the erosion of the hills. This erosion may have resulted from farmers using the hills for agriculture after running out of flat farmland.

4. Monument

The Maya carved important information into many of their monuments. These included dates when people became king, the history of important leaders, or descriptions of battles. An artifact has been found in Copán that may have been part of a throne. Text is carved into parts of it, but some sides are blank or unfinished. One of the unfinished sides is dated February 10, 822 CE. It is believed that soon after this date the Maya had to quickly abandon the city.

5. Complex Human-Environment Interactions

Researchers from Arizona State University used archaeological data to look at the environment when the cities were abandoned. They found that rainfall had substantially decreased and that there had been a major increase in deforestation. Trees could have been cut down to create more farmland, for fuel, or for their limestone constructions (it took burning an estimated twenty trees to make the limestone plaster for one square meter of their buildings). Their findings were published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 2012. They did not think there was one culprit, but that “the ninth-century collapse and abandonment of the Central Maya Lowlands in the Yucatán peninsular region were the result of complex human-environment interactions.”



6. Climate Simulation Model by Columbia University Researchers

Climatologists believe that cutting down forests leads to less rain. This is because water evaporates more easily from leaves than it does from the soil. The evaporation of water is what leads to rain. Researchers from Columbia University wanted to investigate how deforestation at that time could have affected precipitation. For their study they took population records and created a computer model that could predict how deforestation would affect rainfall. According to their model, deforestation lowered precipitation by between 5 and 15 percent, with 60 percent of the drying attributed to deforestation. Benjamin Cook summarizes their findings saying, “We’re not saying deforestation explains the entire drought, but it does explain a substantial portion of the overall drying that is thought to have occurred.” Their study was published in *Geophysical Research Letters* in 2012.

7. NASA Climate Simulation Model

NASA-funded researchers used computer simulations to examine how deforestation may have affected the climate. They looked at the worst-case scenario, 100 percent deforestation, and estimated that this would result in a temperature increase of up to 5 degrees and a 20 to 30 percent drop in precipitation. NASA Science News published their results in 2009. Robert Griffin, one of the researchers, said, “The Maya are often depicted as people who lived in complete harmony with their environment. But like many other cultures before and after them, they ended up deforesting and destroying their landscape in efforts to eke out a living in hard times.”

8. Deforestation Not a Factor

A study published in 2010 in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that deforestation did not lead to the Maya abandoning their cities. Their study was titled “Evidence Disputing Deforestation as the Cause for the Collapse of the Ancient Maya Polity of Copan, Honduras.” The researchers examined pollen sediment over an extended period and found that the area was more densely forested between 600 and 900, the period during which the Maya civilization declined, than from the years 400 to 600. The study states, “Our evidence indicates that, despite a rising population and shrinking land base from A.D. 600–900, the Copan Maya were skilled managers of their landscape.”

9. Shifting Trade Routes

Mayanists believe that right before the beginning of the Maya decline, traders changed their routes from going across the Yucatán Peninsula to traveling around the coasts. Mayanists are not sure why the change in trade routes occurred. One hypothesis is that merchants were avoiding warfare that had broken out in the inland cities. A second hypothesis is that traders adopted larger canoes, making ocean travel more efficient. Either way, a decline in trade would have greatly weakened the inland cities and made them more vulnerable to an invasion or revolution.

10. Last Inscription Dates Map

The Maya dated many of their works. Archaeologists have used the most current inscription dates as estimates for when those cities were abandoned. The map on the right shows the last inscription dates for many of the major Maya cities. Some scholars have noticed that the dates fit a pattern (although not perfectly) of an invading army progressing east along the Usumacinta River, then going north.



Map: © Nystrom Education

11. The Decline of Tikal

Although it had artificial reservoirs, Tikal did not have a local water source; it was located near, but not on, the Usumacinta River and the Atlantic Ocean. Despite this, according to the last inscription dates (the Maya dated many of their works), Tikal was one of the last major cities to fall. If drought was what caused the Maya to abandon their cities, one would think that Tikal would have been one of the first cities to fall.



12. Broken Stelae

The Mayanist J. E. S. Thompson promoted the theory that a revolution within the Maya cities overthrew the kings and led to a general collapse of the city-states. Thompson based this theory on the broken stelae that were found from this time period. Many stelae depicted rulers or their king's relatives. Breaking these would be a way of expressing discontent with their rulers, or be done in the midst of a revolution.

13. Sapodilla Trees

The Maya environment shows various signs of stress before the Maya decline. For example, starting in 741, Tikal and Calakmul stopped using sapodilla trees for construction. Historians assume those trees were no longer available and it might be representative of other resources running out.

14. Fewer Deer

The number of white-tailed deer appears to have declined around the time the Maya began to abandon their cities. Overpopulation may have led to overhunting these animals. This may have had a significant impact on the Maya. They did not have many large mammals to hunt, so this would have eliminated a major source of protein for many people.

15. Arrowheads

Warfare had played a significant role in Maya life for years, but some Mayanists believe it increased in the years before the Maya left their cities. As evidence of this, archaeologists have found large numbers of arrowheads at various Maya sites from this time.

EVIDENCE CHART ^{1/2}

Theories	Facts/Reasons/Quotations That Support the Theory	Facts/Reasons/Quotations That Refute the Theory
Overpopulation/ Drought		
Natural Disaster		

Revolution		
Invasion		
Other		

1. Which evidence did you find the most convincing? Explain.
2. Which evidence did you find the least convincing? Explain.
3. Which theory did you find least likely? Support your answer with evidence.
4. Which theory did you find most likely? Support your answer with evidence.
5. Choose a theory that did not have much support in the evidence you saw or heard about. Describe what you would have expected to be discovered by archaeologists if this was what happened.

ACTIVITY 2

CHAPTER
Key Ideas and Details

DURATION
1 class period

How Did Montezuma Die?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.3

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

DIRECTIONS

- The class reads the first section of "How Did Montezuma Die?" together, underlining parts about which they have a question. Students draw a line from the underlined parts to the margins and write their questions.
- The class reads the second section together, summarizing each paragraph in the margins. With a neighbor, students answer the follow-up questions together. Students share their answers with the class.
- Students read the third section independently, summarizing each paragraph in the margins. Students repeat for the fourth and fifth sections. With a neighbor, students answer the follow-up questions together. Students share their answers with the class.
- Students independently answer "Montezuma Overview Questions."

EXTENSIONS

- Show students images from the *Codex Montezuma*, in particular the black and white image of Montezuma on the balcony with a noose around his neck.
- Have students read more excerpts from Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of New Spain* so students can judge how trustworthy of a narrator he is.
- Use primary sources to explore whether or not the Aztecs believed the Spanish were gods.

IMPORTANT/DIFFICULT VOCABULARY

There are many ways to review vocabulary. Below are some words from which you may choose to create a review activity.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Abdomen | ▪ Chid | ▪ Levelling |
| ▪ Admonish | ▪ Cu (temple) | ▪ Molested (harmd) |
| ▪ Arquebuses | ▪ Garrison | ▪ Musketeers |
| ▪ Cessation | ▪ Imperceptible | ▪ Pardon (excuse) |

HOW DID MONTEZUMA DIE? ^{1/5}

Background

In 1519 Hernán Cortés and a few hundred Spanish men landed on the coast of today's Mexico. On the march to the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, Cortés came into contact with various local tribes. In some instances skirmishes broke out. But with the help of an indigenous woman named Malinche and because many of these tribes considered the Aztecs their enemies, he was able to convince many local tribes to side with the Spanish. The Spanish entered Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital. After a brief stay, the Spaniards took Montezuma captive. Cortés had to leave the city, and while he was gone his second-in-command, Pedro de Alvarado, led a massacre of Aztecs during a religious ceremony. Defying the still-captive Montezuma's orders, the Aztecs began rioting against the Spanish. Cortés returned in the midst of this and he and the Spanish fled Tenochtitlan on June 30, 1520, with many Spanish killed as they escaped. While the Spanish were gone a smallpox epidemic ravaged the citizens of Tenochtitlan. In December 1520, the Spanish and allies returned and placed Tenochtitlan under siege. Eight months later, in August of 1521, the Aztec capital fell. It is believed that Montezuma was killed before the Spanish fled Tenochtitlan, but sources differ on how his death transpired. The following are four different sources about the subject.

I. Hernán Cortés

Hernán Cortés led the Spanish men who eventually took over the Aztec Empire. The below excerpt is from a letter he wrote to Charles V, dated October 30, 1520. This was after the Spanish had fled Tenochtitlan, but before the siege.

As soon as it was daylight, the enemy renewed the combat with still greater vigor than the day before, for the number of them was so immense that there was no need of levelling the guns, but only to direct them against the mass of Indians. And although the fire-arms did much injury, for we played off thirteen arquebuses besides matchlocks and crossbows, they produced so little impression that their effect scarcely seemed to be felt; since where a discharge cut down ten or twelve men, the ranks were instantly closed up by additional numbers, and no apparent loss was perceived. Leaving in the garrison a sufficient force for its defence, and as large as I could spare, I sallied forth with the rest, and took from the enemy several bridges, setting fire to a number of houses and destroying the people who defended them; but they were so numerous, that although we did them much injury, the effect was still imperceptible. Our men were compelled to fight all day long without cessation, while the enemy were relieved at intervals by fresh forces, and still had a superabundance of men. But we had none of our Spanish force killed on this day, although fifty or sixty were wounded, and we continued the contest till night, when we withdrew wearied into the garrison.



Hernán Cortés

Seeing the great mischief done us by the enemy in wounding and slaying our people, while they were either unharmed, or if we caused them any loss, it was immediately repaired by their great numbers, we spent all that night and the next day in constructing three engines of timber, each of which would contain twenty men, covered with thick plank to protect them from the stones that were thrown from the terraces of houses. The persons to be conveyed in the machines were musketeers and archers, together with others provided with spades, pickaxes, and bars of iron, to demolish the barricades erected in the streets, and pull down the houses. While we were building these machines, the enemy did not cease their attacks; and so resolute were they, that when we sallied forth from our quarters, they attempted to enter them, and we had trouble enough to resist their progress. Mutezuma, who was still a prisoner, (together with his son and many other persons of distinction, who had been secured at the beginning of operations) now came forward and requested to be taken to the terrace of the garrison, that he might speak to the leaders of his people and induce them to discontinue the contest. I caused him to be taken up, and when he reached a battlement projecting from the fortress, and sought an opportunity to address the people who were fighting in that quarter, a stone thrown by some one of his own subjects struck him on the head with so much force that he died in three days after. I then gave his dead body to two Indians who were amongst the prisoners, and taking it upon their shoulders, they bore it away to his people; what afterwards became of it I know not. The war, however, did not cease, but increased in violence and desperation every day.

Source: Cortés, Hernán. "Second Letter of Hernando Cortés to Charles V, October 30, 1520." In *The Dispatches of Hernando Cortés, The Conqueror of Mexico, Addressed to the Emperor Charles V, Written during the Conquest, and Containing a Narrative of Its Events*. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1843. Quoted in Early America Digital Archive, edited by Ralph Bauer, University of Maryland. http://mith.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=cortez_letter2.xml.

II. Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Bernal Díaz del Castillo was one of the soldiers who participated in the conquest of the Aztecs under Cortés. Unhappy with the histories coming out about the subject and believing that as someone on the conquest he could write a more accurate account, Díaz wrote *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España* (*True History of the Conquest of New Spain*) at the age of eighty-four. The following is from his book.

Here Cortés showed himself to be every inch a man, as he always was. Oh, what a fight! What a battle we had! It was something to see us dripping blood and covered with wounds, and others killed, but it pleased Our Lord that we should make our way to the place where we had kept the image of Our Lady. We did not find it, and it seems, as we learned later, Montezuma had become devoted to her and had ordered her to be cared for. We set fire to their idols and burned a good part of the room, with great help from the Tlaxcalans.

After this was done, while we were making our way back down, the priests that were in the temple and the three or four thousand Indians made us tumble six or even ten steps. There were other squadrons in the breastworks and recesses of the great *cú*, discharging so many javelins and arrows that we could not face one group or another, so we decided to return to our quarters, our towers destroyed and everybody wounded, with sixteen dead and the Indians continually pressing us. However clearly I try to tell about this battle, I can never explain it to anyone who wasn't there. We captured two of their principal priests and Cortés ordered us to take good care of them. . . .

The night was spent in treating wounds and burying the dead, preparing to fight the next day, strengthening the walls they had torn down, and consulting as to how we could fight without sustaining so many casualties, but we found no solution at all. . . .

We decided to ask for peace so that we could leave Mexico. With dawn came many more squadrons of warriors, and when Cortés saw them, he decided to have Montezuma speak to them from a rooftop and tell them to stop the fighting and that we wished to leave his city. They say that he answered, very upset, “What more does Malinche want from me? I do not want to live, or listen to him, because of the fate he has forced on me.” He would not come, and it was said too that he said that he did not want to see or hear Cortés, or listen to any more of his promises and lies.

The Mercedarian father and Cristóbal de Olid went to him, and showed him great reverence and spoke most affectionately, but Montezuma said, “I do not believe that I can do anything to end this war, for they have already elevated another lord and have decided not to let you leave here alive.”

Nevertheless Montezuma stationed himself behind a battlement on a roof top with many of our soldiers to guard him and began to speak to the Mexicans in very affectionate terms, asking them to stop the war and telling them that we would leave Mexico. Many Mexican chiefs and captains, recognizing him, ordered their men to be quiet, and not to shoot stones or arrows. Four of them reached a place where they were able to talk to Montezuma, and they said, crying as they talked, “Oh, Lord, our great lord, how greatly we are afflicted by your misfortune, and that of your sons and relations! We have to let you know that we have already raised one of your kinsmen to be our lord.”

They said that he was named Coadlavaca, lord of Iztapalapa. They also said that the war would have to go on to the end, for they had promised their idols not to stop until all of us were killed, and they prayed every day that he would be kept free and safe from our power. As everything would come out as they desired, they would not fail to hold him in higher regard as their lord than before, and they asked him to pardon them.

They had hardly finished this speech when there was such a shower of stones and javelins that Montezuma was hit by three stones, one on the head, another on the arm, and the third on the leg, for our men who were shielding him neglected to do so for a moment, because they saw that the attack had stopped while he was speaking with his chiefs.

They begged him to be doctored and to eat something, speaking very kindly to him, but he wouldn’t, and when we least expected it they came to say that he was dead.

Cortés wept for him, and all of our captains and soldiers. There were men among us who cried as though he had been our father, and it is not surprising, considering how good he was. It was said that he had ruled for seventeen years and that he was the best king Mexico had ever had. . . .

Finally Cortés directed that a priest and a chief among those we had imprisoned should be freed so that they could go and tell Coadlavaca and his captains that the great Montezuma was dead and that they had seen him die from the wounds his own people had caused him.

III. Fernando de Alva Cortés Ixtlilxochitl

Born after the Spanish took over the Aztec Empire, Alva was the great-great-grandson of Ixtlilxochitl II, an indigenous king of the city Texcoco, which sided with Cortés. Alva wrote the history of the region's indigenous people in the early seventeenth century. Knowing the native languages, he based his works on histories written by locals from the area. Below are selections from one of his writings.

[Cortez] entered Tenochtitlan with his army of Spaniards and allies on the day of St. John the Baptist, without being molested in any way.

The Mexicans gave them everything they needed, but when they saw that Cortes had no intention of leaving the city or of freeing their leaders, they rallied their warriors and attacked the Spaniards. This attack began on the day after Cortes entered the city and lasted for seven days.

On the third day, Motecuhzoma climbed onto the rooftop and tried to admonish his people, but they cursed him and shouted that he was a coward and a traitor to his country. They even threatened him with their weapons. It is said that an Indian killed him with a stone from his sling, but the palace servants declared that the Spaniards put him to death by stabbing him in the abdomen with their swords.

On the seventh day, the Spaniards abandoned the city along with the Tlaxcaltecas, the Huexotzincas and their other allies. They fled down the causeway that leads out to Tlacopan. But before they left, they murdered King Cacama of Tezcoco, his three sisters and two of his brothers.

Source: "The Account of Alva Ixtlilxochitl." In *The Broken Spears*. Edited and translated by Miguel León-Portilla. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966. Quoted in "Excerpts from the 'Account of Alva Ixtlilxochitl,'" Pearson Education. http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/1762/1804411/chap_assets/documents/doc16_2.html.

IV. Bernardino de Sahagún

Sahagún was born in Spain. He became a priest and moved to what the Spanish had named "New Spain," which included the area that had been the Aztec Empire. He learned the native language there and studied Aztec culture. He is most famous for compiling the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (*General History of the Things of New Spain*), also known as the *Florentine Codex*. This consists of twelve books and over 2,000 pages about the Aztecs. Below are citations from the twelfth book.



Bernardino de Sahagún

And when the sun was about to set, when there was still a little sun, thereupon Itzquauhtzin shouted forth; from the [palace] roof terrace he shouted forth. He said: "O Mexicans, O men of Tenochtitlan, O men of Tlatilulco, your ruler the *tlacatecutli* Moctezmua beesecheth you; he saith: 'Let the Mexicans hear! We are not the equals of [the Spaniards]! Let [the battle] be abandoned! Let the arrow, the shield be held back!'" . . .

And when he had gone to say this, thereupon the Mexicans raised a clamor. They chid him. Already they flew into a great fury. They were angry. One of them was much inflamed with rage. He said to him: "What doth Moctezuma say, O rogue? [Art thou] not one of his warriors?" Thereupon there was an outcry; then there arose an increasing outcry. Thereupon arrows fell upon the roof terrace. But the Spaniards sheltered Moctezuma and Itzquauhtzin under their shields lest the Mexicans pierce them with arrows. . . .

[The Spaniards] came to cast away [the bodies of] Moctezuma and Itzquauhtzin, who had died, at the water's edge at a place called Teoyoc. ...

And when they were seen, when they were known to be Moctezuma and Itzquauhtzin, then they quickly took up Moctezuma in their arms. They carried him to a place called Copulco. Thereupon they placed him on a pile of wood; thereupon they kindled it; they set fire to it. Thereupon the fire crackled, seeming to flare up, to send up many tongues of flame, many sprigs of flame seemed to arise. And Moctezuma's body seemed to lie sizzling, and it smelled foul as it burned.

And as it burned, only with fury, no longer with much of the people's good will, some chid him; they said: "This blockhead! He terrorized the world." . . . And still many who chid him groaned, cried out, shook their heads in disapproval.

Source: Sahagún, Bernardino de. "Book 12." In *Florentine Codex*. Translated by Arthur Anderson and Charles Dibble. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1975.

I. HERNÁN CORTÉS QUESTIONS

1. According to Cortès, how did Montezuma die?
2. Why might Cortès be motivated to lie about how Montezuma died?
3. Quote a line or phrase that shows that the fighting was not going well for the Spanish.
4. According to Cortés, what happened to Montezuma's body?
5. Break down the Cortès letter into three to five events.

II. BERNAL DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO QUESTIONS

1. According to Díaz, how did Montezuma die?

2. Why might Díaz be motivated to lie about how Montezuma died?

3. Quote a line or phrase that puts Cortés in a good light.

4. Quote a line or phrase that puts Montezuma in a good light.

5. According to Díaz, why didn't Montezuma want to go onto the balcony?

6. How is Díaz's account of Montezuma's decision to go on the balcony different from Cortés's account?

7. How are Cortés's and Díaz's accounts of Montezuma's time on the balcony similar and different?

III. FERNANDO DE ALVA CORTÉS IXTLILXOCHITL QUESTIONS

1. According to Alva, what are the two theories for how Montezuma died?
2. Why might the authors of the books Alva read be motivated to lie about how Montezuma died?
3. How is Alva's account of Montezuma on the balcony different from Díaz's account?
4. Summarize the main three to five events from Alva's account.

IV. BERNARDINO DE SAHAGÚN QUESTIONS ^{1/2}

1. Why might Sahagún's sources be motivated to lie about how Montezuma died?
2. How is Sahagún's account of Montezuma's time on the balcony similar to Cortés's account? How is it different?
3. How is Sahagún's account of what happened to Montezuma's body different from Cortés's account?
4. Quote a line or phrase that puts Montezuma in a bad light.

IV. BERNARDINO DE SAHAGÚN QUESTIONS 2/2

5. What did the Aztecs do with Montezuma's body?
6. Sahagún says that some Aztecs "shook their heads in disapproval" at Montezuma's body. What do you think they disapproved of?
7. Sahagún's account does not mention how Montezuma died. Why might this be?

MONTEZUMA OVERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. List the three different ways Montezuma is spelled. Why isn't there just one spelling?
2. Which of the sources would you consider primary sources? Which would you consider secondary sources? Explain.
3. Which source did you find the most trustworthy? Why?
4. What do you think happened to Montezuma's body after he died?
5. On a scale of one (not a chance) to ten (definitely happened), how likely do you think it is that Montezuma's death was caused by a stone thrown at him by his former subjects? Explain.

Craft and Structure

ACTIVITY 3

Battle of Cajamarca

RH.6-8.4

RH.6-8.6

ACTIVITY 4

Maya, Aztec, and Inca Compared

RH.6-8.5

ACTIVITY 3

CHAPTER
Craft and Structure

DURATION
2 class periods

Battle of Cajamarca

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.3

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

DIRECTIONS

- Students independently write synonyms for any vocabulary words they already know on "Battle of Cajamarca Vocabulary." Students share their synonyms with a partner, adding any they missed.
- With their partner, students use the context of the reading (all vocabulary words are in bold) to find synonyms for any vocabulary words they did not know. Students share their synonyms with the class, changing any they got wrong and adding any they could not figure out.
- The class reads the first six paragraphs together, underlining any loaded language and summarizing each paragraph in the margins.
- Students read the remaining paragraphs independently, underlining any loaded language and summarizing each paragraph in the margins. Students share what they underlined and their summaries with their neighbor, then the class.
- Students independently answer the questions.

EXTENSIONS

- Secondary sources disagree over whether or not Atahualpa put the Bible up to his ear and tried to "listen" to it. Use primary sources to investigate this claim.
- Assign students different parts from the reading and have them act out the scene.
- Delve deeper into the Inca's history before Atahualpa (e.g., *Viracocha Inca*, Pachacuti, the civil war between Atahualpa and Húascar).

BATTLE OF CAJAMARCA VOCABULARY

For each of the following vocabulary words, write a synonym that you know or can figure out by using context from the reading. Words are listed in the order that they appear in the reading.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| - Sedan: | - Friar: |
| - Inestimable: | - Absolve: |
| - Palanquin: | - Reverberated: |
| - Plumes: | - Sulphurous: |
| - Borla: | - Whither: |
| - Retinue: | - Perished: |
| - Traverse: | - Assailants: |
| - Breviary: | - Convulsive: |
| - Expound: | - Aailed: |
| - Doctrines: | - Cavaliers: |
| - Vicegerent: | - Forlorn: |
| - Abjure: | - Elude: |
| - Proffered: | - Affray: |
| - Salvation: | - Stentorian: |
| - Supremacy: | - Discrepancy: |
| - Tributary: | - Subvert: |
| - Vehemence: | - Dynasty: |

BATTLE OF CAJAMARCA ^{1/4}

On November 16, 1532, the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro and the Incan emperor Atahualpa met in the small Incan town of Cajamarca. Several thousand warriors accompanied Atahualpa, whereas Pizarro came with fewer than two hundred men. Because the meeting was supposed to be peaceful, none of Atahualpa's men were armed.

The below passage was written by William Prescott, an American historian. The excerpt is from his most famous book, *The Conquest of Peru*, which was first published in 1847. Prescott based much of the book on primary sources.

Elevated high above his vassals came the Inca Atahualpa, borne on a **sedan** or open litter, on which was a sort of throne made of massive gold of **inestimable** value. The **palanquin** was lined with the richly colored **plumes** of tropical birds, and studded with shining plates of gold and silver. The monarch's attire was much richer than on the preceding evening. Round his

neck was suspended a collar of emeralds of uncommon size and brilliancy. His short hair was decorated with golden ornaments, and the imperial **borla** encircled his temples. The bearing of the Inca was sedate and dignified; and from his lofty station he looked down on the multitudes below with an air of composure, like one accustomed to command.

As the leading files of the procession entered the great square, larger, says an old chronicler, than any square in Spain, they opened to the right and left for the royal **retinue** to pass. Everything was conducted with admirable order. The monarch was permitted to **traverse** the plaza in silence, and not a Spaniard was to be seen. When some five or six thousand of his people had entered the place, Atahualpa halted, and, turning round with an inquiring look, demanded, "Where are the strangers?"

At this moment Fray Vicente de Valverde, a Dominican friar, Pizarro's chaplain, and afterward Bishop of Cuzco,

came forward with his **breviary**, or, as other accounts say, a Bible, in one hand, and a crucifix in the other, and, approaching the Inca, told him, that he came by order of his commander to **expound** to him the **doctrines** of the true faith, for which purpose the Spaniards had come from a great distance to his country. The friar then explained, as clearly as he could, the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, and, ascending high in his account, began with the creation of man, thence passed to his fall, to his subsequent redemption by Jesus Christ, to the



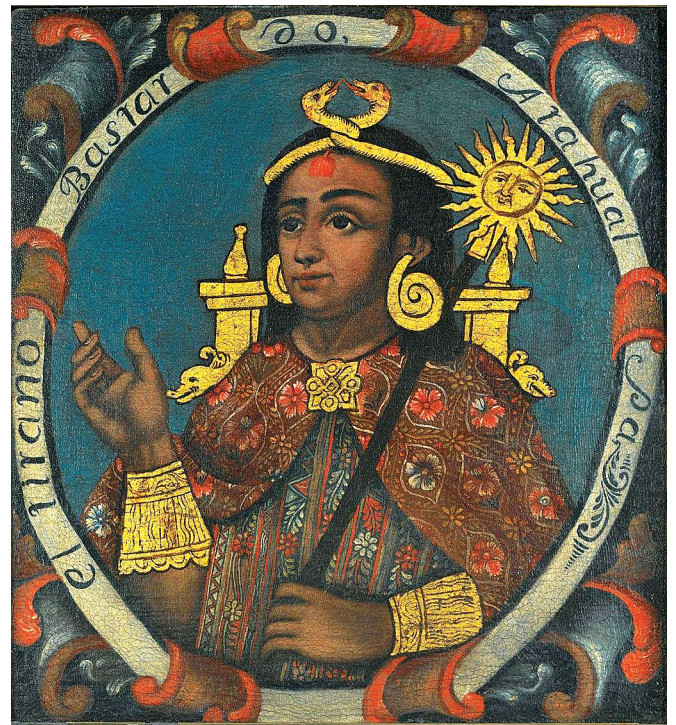
crucifixion, and the ascension, when the Saviour left the Apostle Peter as his **Vicegerent** upon earth. This power had been transmitted to the successors of the Apostle, good and wise men, who, under the title of Popes, held authority over all powers and potentates on earth. One of the last of these Popes had commissioned the Spanish emperor, the most mighty monarch in the world, to conquer and convert the natives in this western hemisphere; and his general, Francisco Pizarro, had now come to execute this important mission. The friar concluded with beseeching the Peruvian monarch to receive him kindly; to **abjure** the errors of his own faith, and embrace that of the Christians now **proffered** to him, the only one by which he could hope for **salvation**; and, furthermore, to acknowledge himself a tributary of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who, in that event, would aid and protect him as his loyal vassal.

Whether Atahualpa possessed himself of every link in the curious chain of argument by which the monk connected Pizarro with St. Peter, may be doubted. It is certain, however, that he must have had very incorrect notions of the Trinity, if, as Garcilasso states, the interpreter Felipillo explained it by saying, that “the Christians believed in three Gods and one God, and that made four.” But there is no doubt he perfectly comprehended that the drift of the discourse was to persuade him to resign his sceptre and acknowledge the **supremacy** of another.

The eyes of the Indian monarch flashed fire, and his dark brow grew darker as he replied,—“I will be no man’s **tributary**. I am greater than any prince upon earth. Your emperor may be a great prince; I do not doubt it, when I see that he has sent his subjects so far across the waters; and I am willing to hold him as a brother. As for the Pope of whom you speak, he must be crazy to talk of giving away countries which do not belong to him. For my faith,” he continued, “I will not change it. Your own God, as you say, was put to death by the very men whom he created. But mine,” he concluded, pointing to his Deity,—then, alas! sinking in glory behind the mountains,—“my God still lives in the heavens, and looks down on his children.”

He then demanded of Valverde by what authority he had said these things. The friar pointed to the book which he held, as his authority. Atahualpa, taking it, turned over the pages a moment, then, as the insult he had received probably flashed across his mind, he threw it down with **vehemence**, and exclaimed,—“Tell your comrades that they shall give me an account of their doings in my land. I will not go from here, till they have made me full satisfaction for all the wrongs they have committed.”

The **friar**, greatly scandalized by the indignity offered to the sacred volume, stayed only to pick it up, and, hastening to Pizarro, informed him of what had been done, exclaiming, at the same time,—“Do you not see, that, while we stand here wasting our breath in talking



Atahualpa, last emperor of the Inca

with this dog, full of pride as he is, the fields are filling with Indians? Set on, at once; I **absolve** you.” Pizarro saw that the hour had come. He waved a white scarf in the air, the appointed signal. The fatal gun was fired from the fortress. Then, springing into the square, the Spanish captain and his followers shouted the old war-cry of “St. Jago and at them.” It was answered by the battle-cry of every Spaniard in the city, as, rushing from the avenues of the great halls in which they were concealed, they poured into the plaza, horse and foot, each in his own dark column, and threw themselves into the midst of the Indian crowd. The latter, taken by surprise, stunned by the report of artillery and muskets, the echoes of which **reverberated** like

thunder from the surrounding buildings, and blinded by the smoke which rolled in **sulphurous** volumes along the square, were seized with a panic. They knew not **whither** to fly for refuge from the coming ruin. Nobles and commoners,—all were trampled down under the fierce charge of the cavalry, who dealt their blows, right and left, without sparing; while their swords, flashing through the thick gloom, carried dismay into the hearts of the wretched natives, who now, for the first time, saw the horse and his rider in all their terrors. They made no resistance,—as, indeed, they had no weapons with which to make it. Every avenue to escape was closed, for the entrance to the square was choked up with the dead bodies of men who had **perished** in vain efforts to fly; and, such was the agony of the survivors under the terrible pressure of their **assailants**, that a large body of Indians, by their **convulsive** struggles, burst through the wall of stone and dried clay which formed part of the boundary of the plaza! It fell, leaving an opening of more than a hundred paces, through which multitudes now found their way into the country, still hotly pursued by the cavalry, who, leaping the fallen rubbish, hung on the rear of the fugitives, striking them down in all directions.

Meanwhile the fight, or rather massacre, continued hot around the Inca, whose person was the great object of the assault. His faithful nobles, rallying about him,

threw themselves in the way of the assailants, and strove, by tearing them from their saddles, or, at least, by offering their own bosoms as a mark for their vengeance, to shield their beloved master. It is said by some authorities, that they carried weapons concealed under their clothes. If so, it **availed** them little, as it is not pretended that they used them. But the most timid animal will defend itself when at bay. That they did not so in the present instance is proof that they had no weapons to use. Yet they still continued to force back the **cavaliers**, clinging to their horses with dying grasp, and, as one was cut down, another taking the place of his fallen comrade with a loyalty truly affecting.



Francisco Pizarro

The Indian monarch, stunned and bewildered, saw his faithful subjects falling round him without fully comprehending his situation. The litter on which he rode heaved to and fro, as the mighty press swayed backwards and forwards; and he gazed on the overwhelming ruin, like some **forlorn** mariner, who, tossed about in his bark by the furious elements, sees the lightning's flash and hears the thunder bursting around him with the consciousness that he can do nothing to avert his fate. At length, weary with the work of destruction, the Spaniards, as the shades of evening grew deeper, felt afraid that the royal prize might, after all, **elude** them; and some of the cavaliers made a desperate attempt to end the **affray** at once by taking Atahualpa's life. But Pizarro, who was nearest his person, called out with **stentorian** voice, "Let no one, who values his life, strike at the Inca"; and, stretching out his arm to shield him, received a wound on the hand from one of his own men,—the only wound received by a Spaniard in the action.

The struggle now became fiercer than ever round the royal litter. It reeled more and more, and at length, several of the nobles who supported it having been slain, it was overturned, and the Indian prince would have come with violence to the ground, had not his fall been broken by the efforts of Pizarro and some other of the cavaliers, who caught him in their arms. The imperial borla was instantly snatched from his temples by a soldier named Estete, and the unhappy monarch, strongly secured, was removed to a neighboring building, where he was carefully guarded.

All attempt at resistance now ceased. The fate of the Inca soon spread over town and country. The charm which might have held the Peruvians together was dissolved. Every man thought only of his own safety. Even the soldiery encamped on the adjacent fields took the alarm, and, learning the fatal tidings, were seen flying in every direction before their pursuers, who in the heat of triumph showed no touch of mercy. At length night, more pitiful than man, threw her friendly mantle over the fugitives, and the scattered troops of Pizarro rallied once more at the sound of the trumpet in the bloody square of Caxamalca.

The number of slain is reported, as usual, with great **discrepancy**. Pizarro's secretary says two thousand natives fell. A descendant of the Inca—a safer authority than Garcilasso—swells the number to ten thousand. Truth is generally found somewhere between the extremes. The slaughter was incessant, for there was nothing to check it. That there should have been no resistance will not appear strange, when we consider the fact, that the wretched victims were without arms, and that their senses must have been completely overwhelmed by the strange and appalling spectacle which burst on them so unexpectedly. "What wonder was it," said an ancient Inca to a Spaniard, who repeats it, "what wonder that our countrymen lost their wits, seeing blood run like water, and the Inca, whose person we all of us adore, seized and carried off by a handful of men?" Yet though the massacre was incessant, it was short in duration. The whole time consumed by it, the brief twilight of the tropics, did not much exceed half an hour; a short period, indeed,—yet long enough to decide the fate of Peru, and to **subvert** the **dynasty** of the Inca.

BATTLE OF CAJAMARCA QUESTIONS ^{1/2}

1. Is this excerpt a primary or a secondary source? Explain.

2. Based on Prescott's biography, would you expect him to be biased towards the Spanish, the Inca, or neither? Explain.

3. Quote an example of loaded language Atahualpa uses to put himself in a good light.

4. Quote an example of loaded language the friar uses to express contempt towards Atahualpa and/or his subjects.

5. What did Atahualpa do to the Bible?

6. What did Pizarro do during the fighting?

7. In the eighth paragraph, Prescott discussed how some sources believed the Inca were hiding weapons inside their clothes. Why did Prescott decide that this was probably not the case?
8. In the final paragraph, Prescott discussed how there were different estimates for how many people died at the Battle of Cajamarca. What were the two estimates? Why might the Spanish estimate have been lower? If you were asked how many people died at Battle of Cajamarca, what do you think would be the best way to answer that question?
9. Historians respect Prescott's work, but he has been accused of sacrificing accuracy to make it a more enjoyable read. Which part or parts do you think may not be entirely historically accurate? Explain why.
10. Break down the Battle of Cajamarca into five to seven events.

ACTIVITY 4

CHAPTER
Craft and Structure

DURATION
1 class period

Maya, Aztec, and Inca Compared

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/ social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently..

RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

DIRECTIONS

- The class reads the first two paragraphs of the reading together, highlighting parts they can connect to, have a question about, or are surprised by. Students should draw a line from the highlighted part to the margins and explain their connection, ask their question, or describe why they were surprised.
- Students read the remaining paragraphs independently, annotating as they did in the previous step. Students share what they highlighted with a neighbor, then the class.
- With a partner, students use the reading to complete the Venn diagram. Students should aim to find two to three facts for each section (which may be difficult for the Inca and Maya, but not Aztec section). Students share what they wrote with the class.
- Students independently complete “Maya, Aztec, and Inca Questions.”

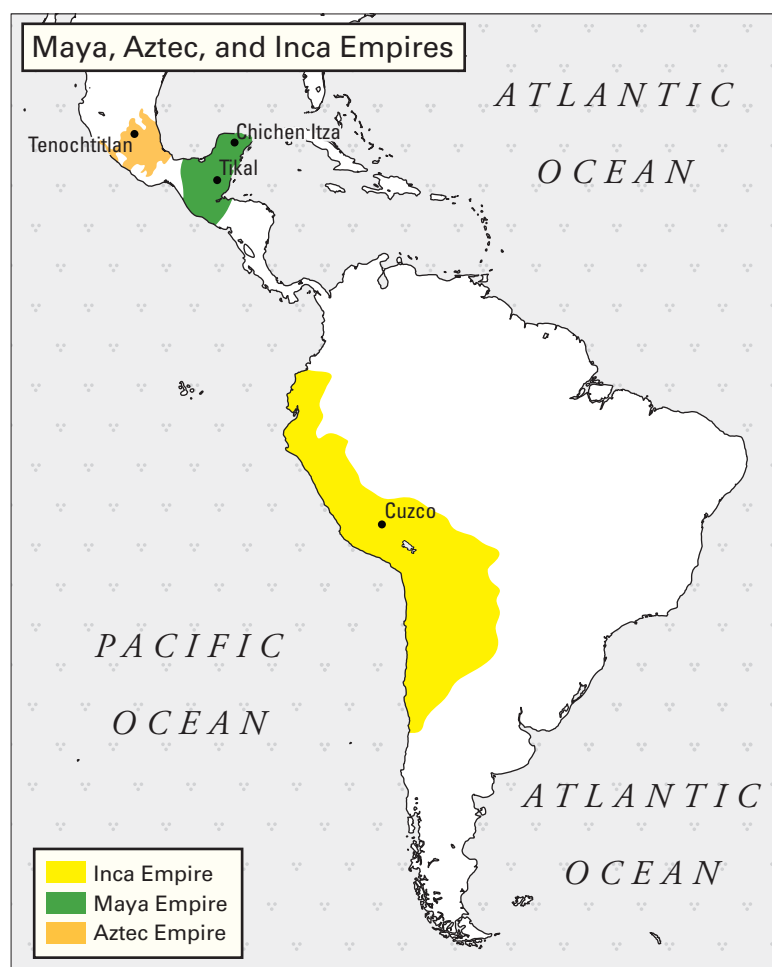
EXTENSIONS

- Split students into three groups: Inca, Aztec, and Maya. Each group’s job is to learn additional information about their group (arts, achievements, social structures, etc). Students share what they learned with the other groups.
- Explore the ideas of Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, specifically, how these three factors explain the Spanish conquering the Aztecs and Inca, and not the other way around.
- Show students relevant and appropriate *Horrible Histories*, a BBC show that creates historically accurate spoofs on history. It has various skits on the Aztecs and Inca.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MAYA, AZTEC, AND INCA ^{1/3}

In 1492 Columbus tried to sail around the world to India, famously landing in the Caribbean Islands instead. Although he failed in his attempt to find a faster trade route to Asia, what transpired because of this mistake would prove to be much more world-changing, as Europe, Asia, and Africa began to interact with two continents full of people previously unknown to them and the distinct cultures, foods, and histories of those people. Three groups of people from this area that particularly stand out are the Inca, Aztec, and Maya. The Inca Empire was centered in today's Peru, the Aztec Empire was located in today's Mexico, and the Maya civilization flourished in Central America. These cultures share many similarities with each other, but do have some key differences.

The Aztecs' and Inca's experiences with the Spanish were quite similar. Each civilization was at its peak when the Europeans arrived. In 1325 the Aztecs founded Tenochtitlan (where Mexico City is today). Through treaties and war, by 1519 the Aztecs ruled an estimated five hundred states in Mesoamerica, six million people, and an area covering over eighty thousand square miles. They were still enlarging their empire when the Spanish arrived in 1519; by 1521, Tenochtitlan had fallen. The Inca established Cuzco, in today's Peru, as their capital in the twelfth century, but did not begin expanding much until the fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century, the empire reached all the way from today's Ecuador south to modern-day Chile. The Spanish arrived in 1532 and by 1533 had taken over their capital. The Maya, on the other hand, were not taken over by the Spanish at their peak, which had occurred between around 200 and 900. There were still Maya when the Spanish arrived though, and their resistance to Spanish domination lasted over a century. Still, the Inca and Aztecs became much more defined by their interactions with the Spanish. Each of these two civilizations likely would have sustained its peak for longer, possibly much longer. Additionally, the ways in which both empires were conquered share many details. A key characteristic of each conquest was the arrival of a small number of Spaniards and the kidnapping of the leader of the indigenous empire. This was no



accident; the Spanish leaders who overthrew each empire were related, and Francisco Pizarro (who conquered the Inca) was inspired by the exploits of his second cousin (Hernán Cortés) against the Aztecs.

Although chronologically the peaks of the Aztecs and Inca have much in common, culturally the Aztecs and Maya were the most similar. The Aztecs and Maya lived very close to each other, with the extents of their empires overlapping. This led to them farming many of the

same vegetables (corn, beans, and squash) and eating some of the same animals (deer, dog, turkey, and duck). There were commonalities, but noteworthy differences too, between these cultures and the

Inca in terms of cuisine. For example, the Inca

ate corn, but it was the most important food for

the Maya and Aztecs. Also, all three cultures

had potatoes, but it was the staple of the

Inca diet. (The Inca had over two hundred

varieties of potatoes!) The Maya and Aztecs

had other cultural similarities that were not

based as much on geography. Both groups had

a similar calendar, math system, and a written

language based on glyphs. This has much to

do with how exceptionally advanced the classical

Maya were. The Aztecs, like the other cultures in

Mesoamerica, took on many of the Maya's practices.

However, although the Inca and Aztecs came to power centuries after

the decline of the Maya, the Inca never adopted a written language and the Aztecs' system was much less comprehensive than what the Maya had used.

Of the three civilizations, the Inca and Maya had the least in common. This does not mean they did not possess a number of similarities, but most of their likenesses were also shared with the Aztecs. Besides their interactions with the Spanish and food, all three groups had similar religions. The Aztecs and Maya were most similar again, actually sharing some gods and specific beliefs. All three cultures worshipped gods that were mostly devoted to agriculture. The Aztecs had at least three corn goddesses! Human sacrifice was also found in all three cultures and was performed for religious purposes. It is not known how much exactly the classical Maya participated in this practice, but increasing archaeological evidence points to it being an integral part of their belief structure. What is certain is that the Aztecs sacrificed prolifically. The Aztecs believed that to thank their gods for giving them life they should give the ultimate gift back, life. Estimates widely vary, but some historians approximate that around 20,000 people a year could have been sacrificed. One similarity unique to the Maya and Inca is that they each created an architectural marvel that is one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. The organization New7Wonders nominated twenty-one candidates and allowed voters to decide which seven were the most amazing. Over 100 million people voted and the Maya's Chichén Itzá and the Inca's Machu Picchu were two of the seven honorees.



Calendar stone

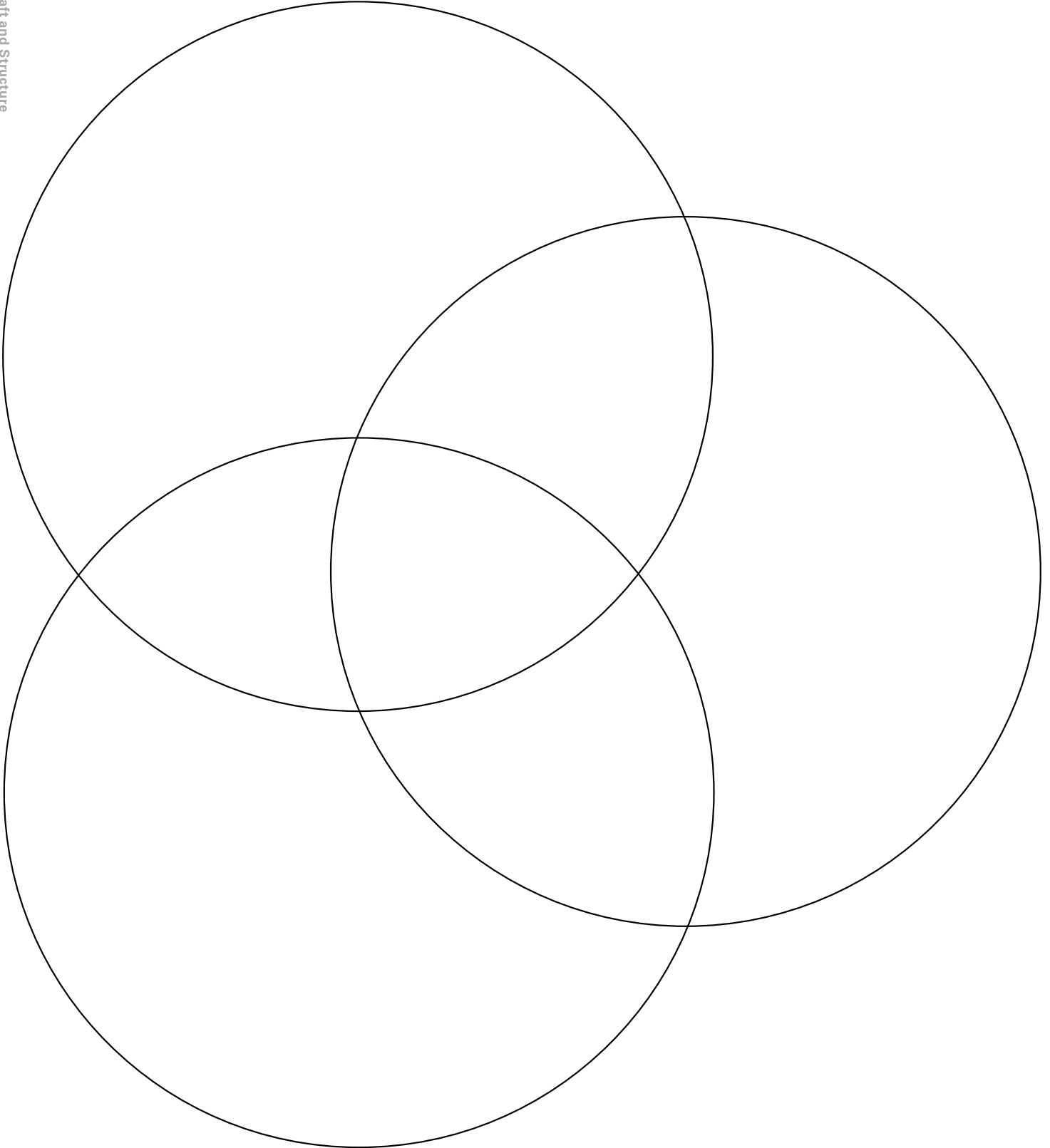
Although the Spanish eventually dominated all three groups, it is important to note that descendants of these groups are still plentiful today. Around 45 percent of Peruvians consider themselves Quechua, the language group of the Inca, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is estimated that there were over 5 million speakers of a Maya language. Although there are fewer people who are 100 percent Aztec, most modern Mexicans are considered mestizo, a mix of Spanish and indigenous peoples like the Aztecs. The Aztec cultural heritage can still be seen in many aspects of Mexico's culture. The indigenous peoples of the Americas may have suffered disproportionately when their world collided with the Europeans, but the influences of the distinctive cultures of the Inca, Aztec, and Maya remain.



Aztec depiction of a lizard

MAYA, AZTEC, AND INCA VENN DIAGRAM

Label each circle Maya, Aztec, or Inca. Use the Venn diagram to show how they were alike and how they were different. Try to get two to three facts per section.



MAYA, AZTEC, AND INCA QUESTIONS ^{1/2}

1. Which civilization had the potato as their staple food?
2. Which civilization had Tenochtitlan as their capital?
3. Which civilization declined before the Spanish arrived?
4. Was the reading organized sequentially, comparatively, or causally? Explain.
5. Why do the Maya and Aztec have so much in common?
6. What do the Inca and Aztec have in common?

7. What do all three cultures have in common?

8. Why do the Inca and Maya have the least in common of these pairings?

9. Which of the three groups would you most like to learn more about? Why?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

ACTIVITY 5

Overcoming Geography

RH.6-8.7

ACTIVITY 6

Machu Picchu

RH.6-8.8

RH.6-8.9

ACTIVITY 5

CHAPTER
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

DURATION
1 class period

Overcoming Geography

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

DIRECTIONS

- Each student is handed one of the four “Extreme Geography” images. They quietly consider the following questions: Why might people settle here? How might people farm here? Why would this be a hard place to farm?
- With a partner who had a different image, students share their answers to these questions and discuss which terrain would be the most difficult to farm. Students share their answers with the class.
- The teacher shows “Maya, Inca, and Aztec Geography” images one at a time, with the class answering the questions from the previous step about each.
- The class reads the first three paragraphs of the reading together, underlining lines or phrases about why this geography would be hard to farm and highlighting lines or phrases that discuss how the civilization overcame difficulties with its geography. Students also write a question they have in the margins next to each paragraph.
- Students independently repeat the previous step’s annotations with the remaining paragraphs. Students share what they highlighted and their questions with a neighbor, then the class.
- Students independently answer “Overcoming Geography Questions.”

IMPORTANT/DIFFICULT VOCABULARY

There are many ways to review vocabulary. Below are some words from which you may choose to create a review activity.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Aqueducts | ▪ Chinampa | ▪ Slash-and-burn |
| ▪ Arctic | ▪ Dredge | ▪ Subarctic |
| ▪ Arid | ▪ Malleable | ▪ Terrace farming |
| ▪ Causeways | ▪ Plains | ▪ Terrain |

EXTREME GEOGRAPHY: DESERT



Image source: Photo of Desert. By iStock.com/fallbrook

EXTREME GEOGRAPHY: ARCTIC

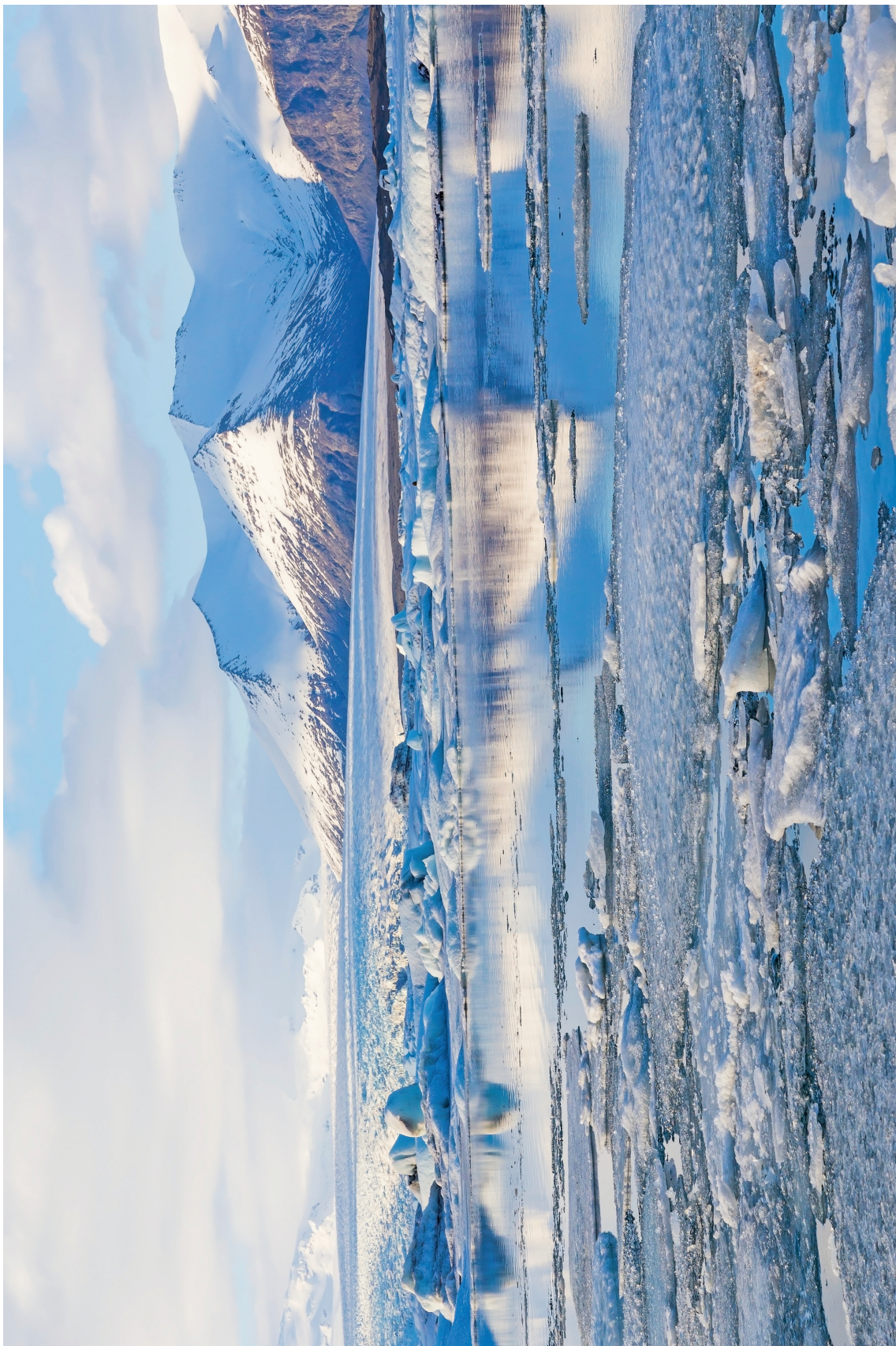


Image source: Photo of Arctic. By iStock.com/pranodhm

EXTREME GEOGRAPHY: PLAINS



Image source: By cm195902 (CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons), <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>

EXTREME GEOGRAPHY: MOON

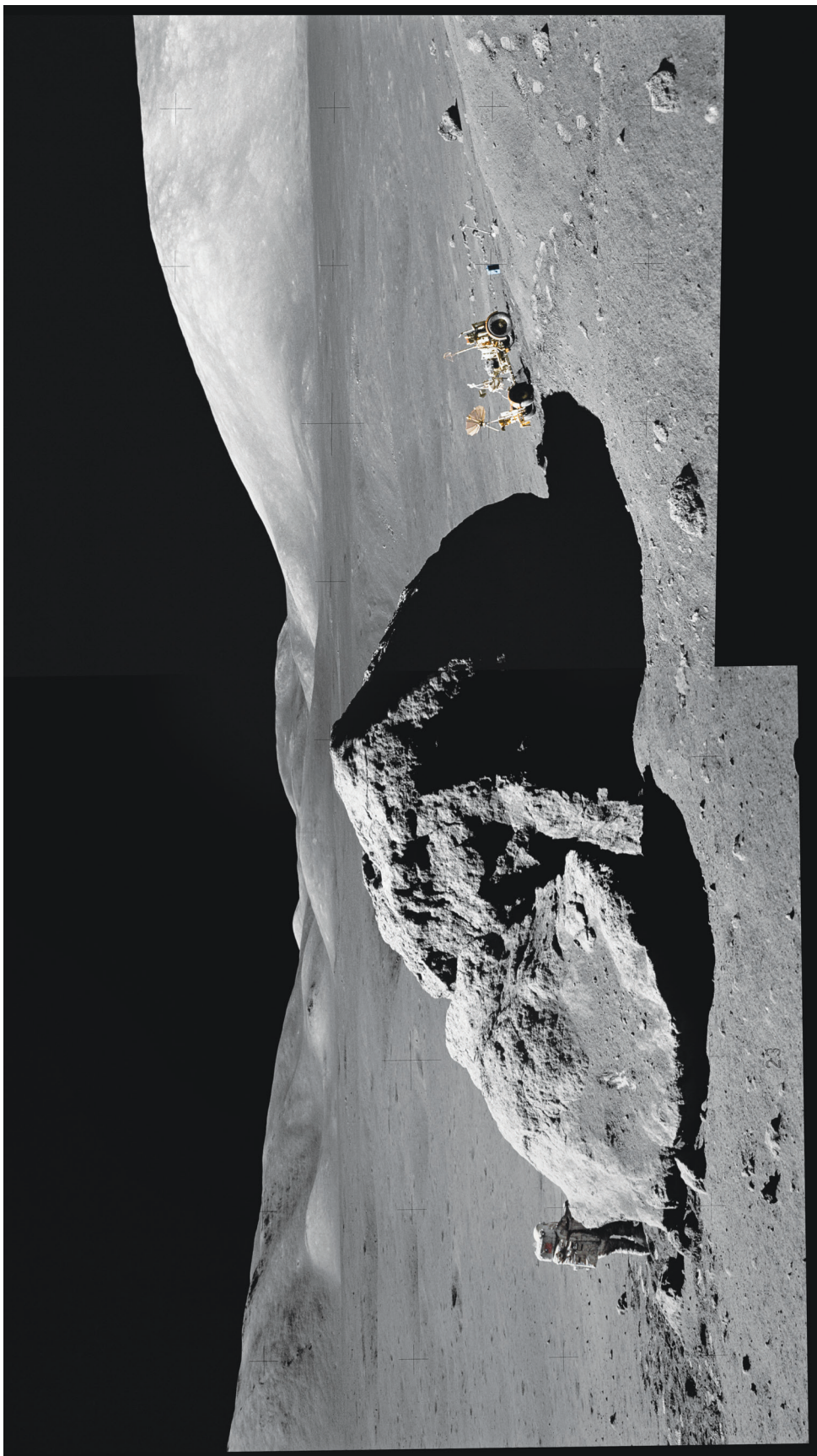


Image source: Tracy's Rock. By Eugene A. Cernan, 1972, Taurus-Littrow lunar landing site, NASA Human Space Flight Gallery

MAYA, INCA, AND AZTEC GEOGRAPHY: RAIN FOREST



Image source: Photo of Rain Forest. By iStock.com/bogdanhoria

MAYA, INCA, AND AZTEC GEOGRAPHY: ANDES MOUNTAINS



Image source: Photo of the Andes. By Paolo Costa Baldi; CC-BY-SA 3.0

MAYA, INCA, AND AZTEC GEOGRAPHY: LAKE TEXCOCO



OVERCOMING GEOGRAPHY ^{1/3}

The Maya, Inca, and Aztec were impressive civilizations that reached significant cultural heights despite living in areas that were not ideal for a settled society.

The Maya civilization developed in today's Central America, including all or parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, and El Salvador. Much of the climate in these locations is tropical, with hot, humid rain forests covering a great deal of the land. It might seem that living in such a fertile terrain would be a good thing for a civilization. In fact, this is a good example of how it is possible to have too much of a good thing. As one would expect, there was much life there, but the jungle made it extremely difficult to develop a settled civilization. Clearing the dense rain forest to build towns or create farmland was hard enough, but the vegetation continued to come back. Also, the amount of rainfall greatly depended on the

season, meaning farmers had to endure months with very little precipitation. Lastly, the soil was actually quite thin and deficient in most nutrients. The Maya overcame these challenges to create a large, advanced civilization that developed innovations in writing, math, and astronomy. How did they do it?

The Maya tamed the jungle terrain by using slash-and-burn agriculture. This entailed cutting down part of the forest, then lighting the dried trees and brush on fire. After using the cleared land for a period of time, the Maya left that land fallow for a few years, allowing the vegetation to grow back and the land to recover, before slashing and burning again. Not only did



Slash-and-burn agriculture

this successfully clear out large sections of the jungle, but it also added nutrients to the soil. Using this method, the Maya successfully harvested corn, squash, and beans. Additionally, the Maya took advantage of the excess rain from the wet season by creating irrigation systems that allowed them to save water for the dry months.

The Inca Empire stretched along the world's longest above-water mountain range, the Andes. At its height the Inca Empire included all or parts of the modern countries of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia. It would seem strange to walk along the Andes, which reach heights of over 20,000 feet, and think, "Let's start a farm here." Making it even more difficult for the Inca, the Pacific coast they lived near was bordered by the Atacama Desert. But even before the Inca, the people of this area, referred to as the Andean peoples, decided to live in large numbers as farmers in the Andes Mountains.

The Andean peoples made adaptations that helped them to make the Andes not only a livable terrain, but also one they could thrive in. They used a method called terrace farming. They carved “steps” in the sides of mountains. This made level ground where crops could be planted, without fear that rain would just wash them away down the mountainside. The Andean peoples also fashioned aqueducts into many of their terraces, which enabled rainwater to reach each step. Many of these aqueducts are still used in Peru today. Along with the mountains’ steep slopes, the weather at extreme heights also made mountain farming difficult. In many parts of the Andes, temperatures go from quite hot to very cold—in the same day. The Andeans used the cold nights to their advantage, freezing certain foods, and thus extending the amount of time those food had nutritional value. A frozen potato, called the *chuño*, became quite popular in the area. The Andean people also pounded meat thin, salted it, and freeze-dried it, creating *ch’arki*. This is where “jerky” comes from. The Inca also took great advantage of two animals that populated the Andes, the llama and the alpaca. Both were domesticated and used for their wool, milk, meat, and carrying capabilities.

No one quite knows why the Aztecs moved to the Valley of Mexico. According to their legend, they were originally from an island named “Aztlán,” and their gods told them to settle where they saw an eagle eating a snake while perched on a cactus. Regardless of how the Aztecs got there, they arrived in the Valley of Mexico in the fourteenth century and eventually put down their roots on an island in Lake Texcoco.

The Aztecs showed considerable ingenuity in how they used the lake. They dredged parts of it, expanded to a second island, connected their land to the shores, and created a canal system. This became their capital, Tenochtitlan. Nowhere to farm? No problem. Using soil from the dredging, they created chinampas, so-called floating gardens that helped to feed the growing city. The chinampas were quite large, with dimensions ranging from ten to twenty-five feet wide and fifty to three hundred feet long. Unsurprisingly, the people of the city supplemented their diets with animals and vegetables that resided in or on the lake, even ingesting such unique foods as spirulina, an algae that today is considered quite healthy.

By the time the Spanish arrived, Tenochtitlan was one of the biggest cities in the world and housed gardens, temples, and zoos. It was described by the Spaniard Bernal Díaz del Castillo, “And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight and level causeway leading to [Tenochtitlan], we were astounded. . . .



Inca terraces

It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before.” Unfortunately, the Spanish razed Tenochtitlan. But upon its ruins Mexico City was born, to this day one of the biggest cities in the world.

The Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations are certainly not the only people to overcome a difficult geography. The early residents of Mesopotamia may have become the world’s first farmers despite settling in today’s Iraq and relying on unpredictable floods that were just as likely to destroy agriculture as nurture it. And even though the Inuit were never farmers, that people can survive at all in an arctic or subarctic climate is a testament to humankind’s adaptability. One moral of all the successes these civilizations had in overcoming geography is that throughout time and history, humankind has proven very malleable and able to create civilizations where many would least expect it.



Chinampas

1. What is a question you still have about the information in the reading? Propose a possible answer.
2. Which terrain (rain forest, mountains, or lake) would you most like to visit for a vacation? Why?
3. Which terrain (rain forest, mountains, or lake) would you most like to farm? Why?
4. Why would it be difficult to live in a rain forest?
5. Why would it be difficult to live near a lake?

6. Why would it be difficult to live in the mountains?
7. What did the Maya do to farm in the rain forest?
8. What did the Aztecs do to farm on a lake?
9. How did the Inca farm on mountainsides?
10. Between the Maya, Aztecs, and Inca, which civilization do you think was the most impressive in overcoming its geography? Explain.

ACTIVITY 6

CHAPTER
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

DURATION
1 class period

Machu Picchu

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.8

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

DIRECTIONS

- The class reads the first four paragraphs of “Machu Picchu” together, filling in the first two columns of the “Machu Picchu Chart” as they go. The teacher should let students know that not all columns will be filled in.
- Students read the rest of “Machu Picchu” independently, filling in the first two columns of the “Machu Picchu Chart” as they go. Students share what they wrote with a neighbor, then the class.
- Without writing in it, students discuss with a neighbor how likely they think each theory is and why, and what percentage they are leaning toward writing in the third column. After hearing their neighbor’s reasoning, students complete the third column. Students share what they wrote and why with the class.
- Students independently answer “Machu Picchu Questions.”

EXTENSIONS

- Have students research and share what they learn about the other New7Wonders.
- Give students copies of a news story about the disagreement Yale and the Peruvian government had over the Machu Picchu artifacts housed at Yale. This could be used to discuss larger questions about when countries should return museum items to the countries from which they originated.

MACHU PICCHU ^{1/3}



Machu Picchu

“Surprise followed surprise in bewildering succession. I climbed a marvelous stairway of granite blocks, walked along a pampa where the Indians had a small vegetable garden, and came to a clearing in which were two of the finest structures I had ever seen. Not only were there blocks of beautifully grained white granite, the ashlar[squared blocks] were of Cyclopean size, some 10 feet in length and higher than a man. I was spellbound.” The previous excerpt is from Hiram Bingham, describing when he came across Machu Picchu in 1911. Bingham had been looking for Vilcabamba, Peru’s “lost city.” Deep in rural Peru, Bingham and his party came across two local farmers, who offered his party sweet potatoes and mentioned some ruins on Machu Picchu (which translated to “old peak”). Bingham’s group hiked up to the mountain’s ridge through cold and rain, led at the end by a ten-year-old local boy. When Bingham arrived at the ruins, he was stunned by the abandoned city’s maze of temples, sanctuaries, homes, stairways, baths, terraces, and plazas.

Machu Picchu is now one of the most popular destinations in the world, with more than one million tourists visiting the almost 8,000 feet high ruins in 2014. In 1983 it was made a UNESCO World Heritage site and it was voted in as one of the New7Wonders of the World

in 2007. It is believed that Machu Picchu was built in the early fifteenth century during the Inca king Pachacuti's reign and abandoned around one hundred years later. But why did this town on the top of a mountain even exist? This question continues to be asked, although scholars believe they are getting closer to an answer.

Theory 1: The Lost City

During the 1530s, the Inca tried to fend off a takeover by the Spanish. In 1536, the Inca resistance retreated into the jungle and soon after founded a new capital, Vilcabamba. Vilcabamba became the Inca's last stronghold, the center of a resistance that held off the Spanish until 1572. After the Inca succumbed to the Spanish takeover, Vilcabamba was abandoned. Eventually, most people did not know where it even had been. This earned Vilcabamba the name the "Lost City."

Various adventurers were trying to find Vilcabamba, and Hiram Bingham thought he had done so himself when he came upon Machu Picchu. Today, archaeologists believe Vilcabamba is a place now known as Espíritu Pampa. Ironically, Bingham had visited Espíritu Pampa before Machu Picchu but thought it was too small to be Vilcabamba. In the 1960s and 1980s, Vincent Lee did more excavations and found it was bigger than Bingham's estimate. Lee noted, "It turns out there were 400 to 500 buildings at the site . . . but Bingham had only seen about 20." Additionally, people from the area sometimes referred to the ruins as Vilcabamba Grande. John Verano, an anthropologist from Tulane University, believes that Bingham initially identified Machu Picchu as Vilcabamba "because that's what he was actively looking for."

Theory 2: Convent

Another theory proposed by Bingham was that it was a convent for the Peruvian Chosen Women (or "Virgins of the Sun"). The Chosen Women were selected from villages between the ages of eight to ten and sent to live in temples for around seven years under the administration of a priestess. This was considered a great honor. Bingham had George Eaton analyze excavated skeletons from Machu Picchu. Eaton deduced that around 75 percent were women. Why would such a high proportion of the people at Machu Picchu be female? Bingham hypothesized that Machu Picchu may have been one of the convents for the Chosen Women.

But there was a major problem with this theory; there actually weren't more women than men. In 2000, John Verano studied skeletons from Machu Picchu and found there to be around the same number of males and females. Verano thinks Eaton may have misidentified the remains because the skeletons of indigenous people from the area were significantly smaller than those of Europeans and Africans, which were what Eaton had done much of his earlier work on. Verano noted, "[Eaton] probably saw the small bones and assumed they were female."

Theory 3: Royal Resort

The most accepted current theory is that Machu Picchu was a place where the emperor went for a vacation of sorts. Pachacuti is thought to have built it for when he needed to take a break from royal business. This would have been a place where he and his royal entourage could hunt, relax, and host visitors.

One piece of evidence that Machu Picchu was a royal resort is that a sixteenth century Spanish document mentioned a royal estate called “Picchu,” which was located in the same general area as Machu Picchu. Also, Machu Picchu was not constructed like the average Inca town: It was not connected to the Inca road network and most of the dwellings appeared to be only for elites or servants. Furthermore, its use as a royal retreat would fit the time line of when it was believed to have been abandoned. Although many experts believe smallpox led to Machu Picchu’s desertion, the city was abandoned right when the Spanish were attacking the Inca, in the 1530s. Clearly, this would not have been a good time for the Inca royalty, faced with the invasion of their empire, to go on vacation.

Theory 4: Geographic Significance

There is also evidence that Machu Picchu may have been selected for its geographic significance. John Reinhard, author of *Machu Picchu: Exploring an Ancient Sacred Center* (1991), believed it was chosen because of its “sacred geography.” He notes that the Urubamba River, which the Inca called the Sacred River, completely encircles the mountain on which Machu Picchu was constructed. Also, during the June solstice, the sun shines through a window in the Temple of the Sun and onto a rock that may have been an altar. The sun was particularly sacred to the Inca, who believed they were its descendants. John Reinhard explained, “It’s an example of cosmology intertwining with sacred landscape that is virtually unique in the Andes . . . that takes on a degree of sacrality because it combines the Earth and the sky, which are also combined in Incan thought.” This does not mean that Machu Picchu can’t also be a retreat. As Reinhard put it, “It probably was a royal [retreat] . . . but to say it’s a retreat . . . doesn’t tell me why it is where it is, and why so much effort went into building it.”

Other

There have been other theories as well, including that Machu Picchu was a place for experimenting with agriculture or that it was key stop on a path a type of Inca pilgrimage. But perhaps the simplest explanation, at least for why the location of Machu Picchu is where it is, was given by Richard Burger, a researcher from Yale: “Pachacuti may well have picked out the site simply because it was so beautiful.”

MACHU PICCHU CHART

	Evidence For	Evidence Against	Probability of Being True (as a %)
Theory 1: The Lost City			
Theory 2: Convent			
Theory 3: Royal Resort			
Theory 4: Geographic Significance			

MACHU PICCHU QUESTIONS ^{1/3}

1. What percentage did you assign to the likelihood that Machu Picchu was the “Lost City”? Explain why you gave that theory that percentage.
2. What percentage did you assign to the likelihood that Machu Picchu was built to be a convent? Explain why you gave that theory that percentage.
3. What percentage did you assign to the likelihood that Machu Picchu was built to be a royal resort? Explain why you gave that theory that percentage.
4. What percentage did you assign to the likelihood that Machu Picchu’s site was the chosen for its geographical significance? Explain why you gave that theory that percentage.

5. How have scholars used primary sources to learn about Machu Picchu?
6. There are multiple quotations from scholars about Machu Picchu. In what ways are these primary sources? In terms of finding out Machu Picchu's purpose, how could these be considered secondary sources?
7. How can archaeological evidence be considered a primary source? How can it be considered a secondary source?
8. Choose a piece of evidence that is mentioned in the reading. Draw a conclusion from this evidence that is different from what is explained in the reading.

9. It appears that Bingham was wrong when he proposed that Machu Picchu was a convent. Do you think his convent theory was a fact, opinion, or reasoned judgment? Explain.
10. What do you think Machu Picchu was built for? Do you think your stance is a fact, opinion, or reasoned judgment? Explain.

Writing Standards

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

Postcard from Mesoamerica

WHST.6-8.1
WHST.6-8.4
WHST.6-8.5
WHST.6-8.6
WHST.6-8.7
WHST.6-8.8
WHST.6-8.9
WHST.6-8.10

INFORMATIVE WRITING

Inca Idol

WHST.6-8.2
WHST.6-8.6
WHST.6-8.7
WHST.6-8.8
WHST.6-8.9
WHST.6-8.10

NARRATIVE WRITING

Maya Mystery Story

W.6.3–W.8.3
WHST.6-8.5
WHST.6-8.9
WHST.6-8.10

Postcard from Mesoamerica

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

WHST.6-8.1

Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

WHST.6-8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

WHST.6-8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

WHST.6-8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

WHST.6-8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

WHST.6-8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

WHST.6-8.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

WHST.6-8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

DIRECTIONS

- Students are assigned one of the Mesoamerican sites.
- Students research their subject, recording information on the “Mesoamerican Site Research Page.”
- Students use their research to complete “Postcard Brainstorm.”
- Each student is given a 4" by 6" notecard. Students write their letter on one side of the notecard. The teacher could have students create a stamp and draw a line for an address. This would make it more realistic, but it takes away space for writing.
- Students cut out the picture from the subject page and paste it onto the other side of the postcard.
- Students trade postcards with a peer who wrote about a different site and fill out “Mesoamerican Sites Share.” They repeat this two more times with different partners.

POSTCARD FROM MESOAMERICA

Overall

There are many reasons to visit Mexico and Central America. Besides the nice weather, beautiful beaches, interesting museums, wonderful people, and delicious food are numerous archaeological ruins. The many varied residents of Mesoamerica throughout history, including the Aztecs, Maya, Zapotecs, and Olmecs, left fascinating remains of their civilizations that are a great addition to any trip. For this assignment you will learn about one site and write a postcard as though you have just visited it. Your job is to use an enthusiastic voice and interesting facts to convince a reader that this would be a fantastic place to see.

Requirements

- Written to someone you know from your perspective (use “I”).
- Contains essential facts about the site (e.g., which people/civilization used it, where it is, around when it was built, what it is).
- Explains other facts that show how amazing the site is.
- Includes details someone would write in a real postcard (e.g., why the recipient might like it, how you miss the recipient, what you plan to do next).
- Glue a picture of the site on one side of the notecard.
- Fill in the entire written side. A second notecard can be used if necessary.

Mesoamerican Sites

- Copan
- Chichén Itzá
- Tikal
- Palenque
- Tenochtitlan
- Teotihuacan
- Calixtlahuaca
- La Venta
- San Lorenzo
- Monte Alban

Rubric

	Exceeding	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Argument	Uses an enthusiastic voice and selects interesting facts to make this site sound like an amazing place to visit.	Uses a believable voice and selects appropriate facts to make this site sound like a good place to visit.	Written as a postcard, but is not convincing due to a weak voice and/or choosing facts that do not make the site stand out.	Not written as a postcard.

MESOAMERICAN SITES ^{1/5}



Copan



Chichén Itzá

Image sources: Photo of Ball Game Court. By iStock.com/icon72.

Photo of Chichén Itza. By iStock.com/rockdrigo68



Tikal



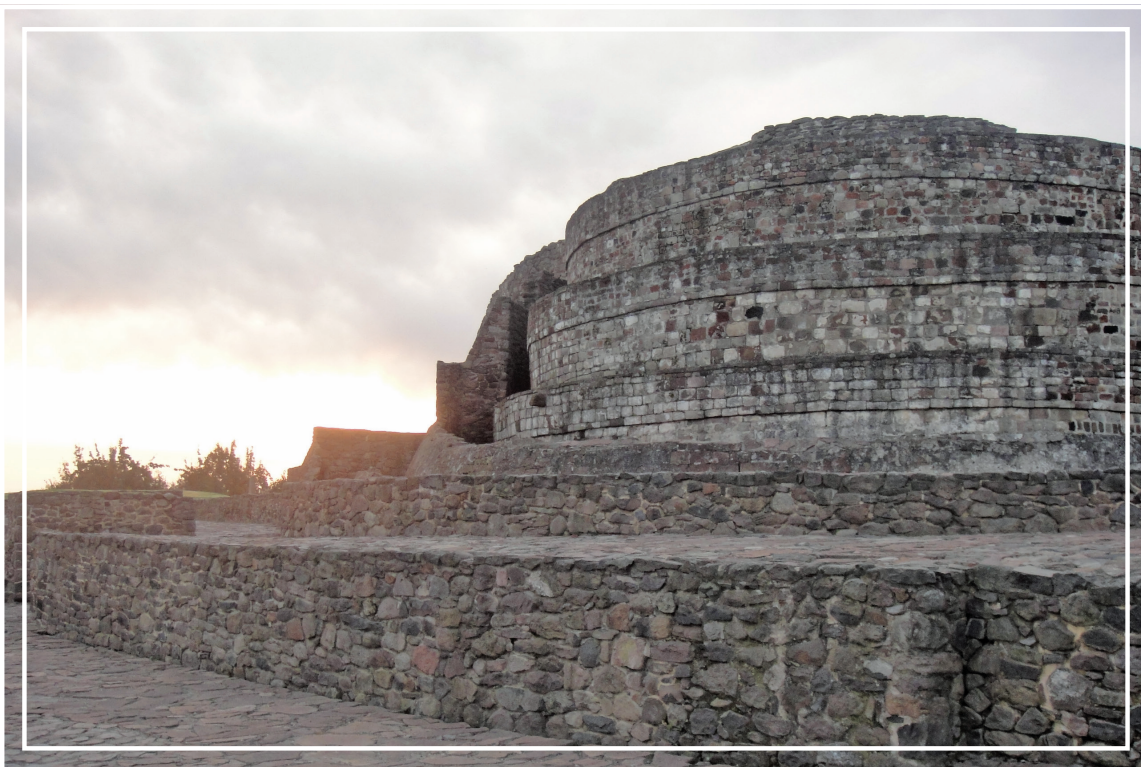
Palenque

Image sources: Temple of the Jaguar at Tikal. By iStock.com/Geoarts.

Palenque – Mayan city ruins. By iStock.com/rafal_kubiak.



Teotihuacan



Calixtlahuaca

Image sources: Teotihuacan Pyramids. By iStock.com/f9photos.

Sunrise at the Temple of Ehécatl. By Gumr51; CC BY-SA 4.0, 3.0 Unported, 2.5, 2.0, 1.0



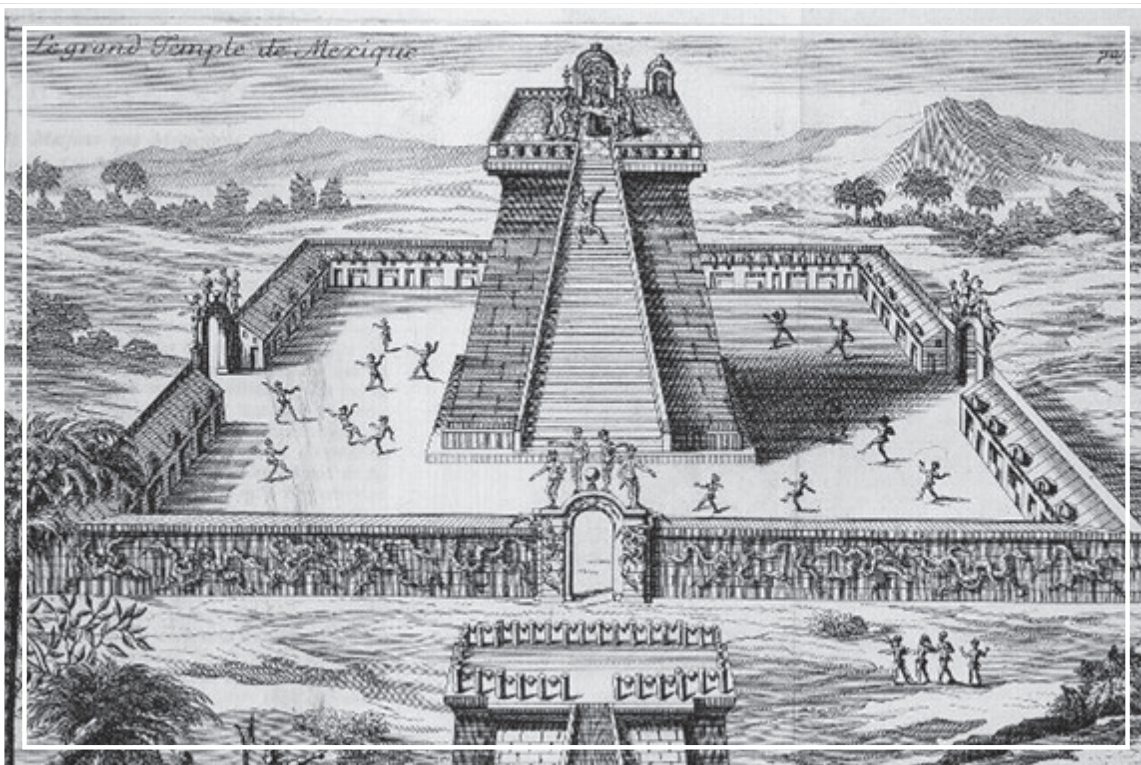
La Venta



San Lorenzo



Monte Alban



Tenochtitlan

Image sources: Monte Alban. By iStock.com/mikeblue.

Le grande temple de Mexique. By Jan Karel Donatus Van Beecq, in M. Foucard, and Antonio Solis, *Illustrations of the History of the Conquest of Mexico or New Spain*, Paris: J. Boudot, 1691, the National Library of France, Paris

MESOAMERICAN SITE RESEARCH PAGE

Essential Facts (e.g., Which people/civilization used the site? What is it? Where is it? Around when was it built?)	Other Interesting Facts

POSTCARD BRAINSTORM

1. Which essential facts do you plan to include?
2. What facts make your site sound amazing?
3. To whom are you writing the postcard? What might he or she like about the site?
4. What details will you add that would make sense in a postcard, but are not necessarily about the site (e.g., how you miss the recipient, what else you have done on your trip, what the weather is like)?

MESOAMERICAN SITES SHARE

Site Name	_____	_____	_____
Which people/ civilization used it?			
What is it?			
Where is it?			
Around when was it built?			
What other interesting facts are there about it?			
What is amazing about it?			

INFORMATIVE WRITING

CHAPTER
Writing Standards

DURATION
3–5 class periods

Inca Idol

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

WHST.6-8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

WHST.6-8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

WHST.6-8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

WHST.6-8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

WHST.6-8.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

WHST.6-8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

DIRECTIONS

- Students are placed into pairs and given an achievement of the Inca. More than one group can be assigned the same achievement.
- Pairs research their achievement together, recording information on the “Inca Achievement Research Page” and keeping track of their sources as they go.
- The teacher explains rhyme schemes and what a verse and chorus are. The teacher finds a current song with appropriate lyrics and has students in pairs determine its rhyme scheme, count the number of unique lines, and locate the verse and chorus.
- Students independently complete “Rhyming Schemes.” Students share what they wrote with the class.
- Pairs write a song about an Inca achievement.
- Pairs share the lyrics to their song with the class. Students fill out “Inca Achievements Share” for all achievements presented except for their own.
- Pairs have the option to sing their song in front of the class. The class votes which pair should win “Inca Idol.”
- Some pairs may choose to record their songs as videos that they play for the class.

INCA IDOL

Overall

The Inca had many amazing achievements. For this assignment you will research an achievement and turn facts about it into a song. Your song can be based on a real song or be completely original. After you are finished, you will share your lyrics with the class.

Requirements

- Includes main aspects of achievement
- 16–20 unique lines in the song
- Verses have a rhyme scheme
- Chorus does not have to rhyme
- Label each stanza “chorus” or “verse”
- Label the rhyme scheme of the verses
- Includes a Works Cited page

Inca Achievements

- Agricultural terraces
- “The Beautiful Road”
- Brain surgery
- Chasquis (messengers)
- Domesticated animals
- Gold work
- Hunting
- Mummification
- Music
- Potato cultivation
- Pottery
- Quipu
- Reed rafts
- Stone architecture
- Suspension bridges
- Weaving

Rubric

	Exceeding	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Informative	Comprehensively informs about an Inca achievement.	Sufficiently informs about an Inca achievement.	Informs about some aspects of an Inca achievement.	Includes few to no accurate facts about an Inca achievement.
Writing	Creates a well-written song about an Inca achievement with at least sixteen original lines, a catchy chorus, and a consistent rhyme scheme.	Creates a song about an Inca achievement with at least sixteen original lines, a chorus, and at least two rhyming lines per verse.	Creates a song about an Inca achievement, but it is either missing a chorus, it is too short, or there are not enough lines that rhyme.	Creates a song about an Inca achievement, but it is either much too short or does not rhyme.

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INFORMATIVE WRITING Writing Standards

INCA ACHIEVEMENT RESEARCH PAGE

Achievement: _____

Facts	
What Makes This Achievement Stand Out	

INCA ACHIEVEMENTS SHARE ^{1/2}

Achievements	Three Facts	What Makes This Achievement Stand Out?
Agricultural terraces		
"The Beautiful Road"		
Brain surgery		
Chasquis (messengers)		
Domesticated animals		
Gold work		
Hunting		
Mummification		

Achievements	Three Facts	What Makes This Achievement Stand Out?
Music		
Potato cultivation		
Pottery		
Quipu		
Reed rafts		
Stone architecture		
Suspension bridges		
Weaving		

RHYMING SCHEMES

Use the different rhyme schemes to write about a dog named Clyde. Some details that can be included about Clyde are that he is white, has a beard, is cute, is small, was adopted from the pound, is a mutt (maybe a Terrier-Maltese mix), jumps on people, and will run away if he gets out. Information can be repeated between the different rhyme schemes.

AABB

First two lines rhyme and last two lines rhyme

A:

A:

B:

B:

ABAB

Every other line rhymes

A:

B:

A:

B:

ABCB

Only second and fourth lines rhyme

A:

B:

C:

B:

NARRATIVE WRITING

CHAPTER
Writing Standards

DURATION
2–3 class periods

Maya Mystery Story

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

W.7.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

WHST.6-8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

WHST.6-8.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

WHST.6-8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

DIRECTIONS

- This project makes the most sense as a culminating assignment for students to apply what they learned about the Maya, with students using their class notes as reference to create their own story of how the Maya civilization collapsed. If some areas have not been covered in class (such as geography, social classes, achievements, or collapse theories), the teacher can provide supplementary materials or allow students to research those areas.
- Students can work in groups. The size of groups will depend on the medium they choose for their project.
- Students complete “Maya Mystery Brainstorm,” bouncing ideas off their partners or neighbors as they work.
- Students work on their projects (with their group members, if applicable) outside of class.
- Students share their final projects with the class.

MAYA MYSTERY STORY

Overall

No one knows for sure why the Maya began abandoning their cities. For this assignment you will take everything you have learned about the Maya and create a story of how the civilization may have fallen, from the perspective of someone living during that time. You will get to use the medium of your choice to create this story.

Requirements

- Setting (Where are you?)
- Social structure (Who are you?)
- Discussion of at least three achievements of the Maya (choose from math, astronomy, writing, calendar, ball game, and architecture)
- A collapse theory

Theories of Maya Decline

- Drought
- Overpopulation
- Natural disaster
- Revolution
- Invasion
- Combination of factors

Possible Mediums

- Letters (4–6 letters)
- Journal entries (4–6 entries)
- Historical fiction short story (1–2 pages)
- Play
- Cartoon panels
- Video (at least 3 minutes/no more than 5 people per group/all group members are in it)
- Animation (at least 3 minutes)
- Codex
- Own idea

Rubric

	Exceeding	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Product	Creates a high-quality, extremely engaging product about how the Maya civilization may have fallen.	Creates a quality, engaging product about how the Maya civilization may have fallen.	Story is at times engaging, but has issues with a confusing plot, quality, and/or length.	Story is not engaging due to significant issues with plot, quality, and/or length.
Information	Comprehensively informs about the Maya by including extensive details about their geography, a social status, three achievements, and a possible collapse theory.	Sufficiently informs about the Maya by including accurate details about their geography, a social status, three achievements, and a possible collapse theory.	Sufficiently informs about some aspects of the Maya, but is missing some key details about their geography, a social status, achievements, and/or a possible collapse theory.	Does not sufficiently inform about the Maya, missing significant details about their geography, a social status, achievements, and/or a possible collapse theory.

1/2

You do not have to fill out the following questions in order.

1. Which theory of collapse do you plan to use? Add details of what exactly may have happened.
2. Which medium do you plan to use (e.g., letters, story, cartoon panels, video)?
3. How old is your protagonist? What is his or her name?
4. What social structure(s) will your character be from? What details about this social class should you keep in mind as you write your story?

Selected Answers

ACTIVITY 1

Evidence Chart

Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility.

Theories	Facts/Reasons/Quotations that Support Theory	Facts/Reasons/Quotations that Refute the Theory
Overpopulation/ Drought	<p>They may have run out of food and water because they were not able to support such a large population.</p> <p>1: If land is not left fallow for four to ten years after use, it produces smaller harvests.</p> <p>2: An excavation in Copan unearthed skulls, 80 percent of which had signs of anemia. A drought or overpopulation could have caused people to not have enough food, which can result in people becoming anemic.</p> <p>3: There is evidence that the Maya were farming on hills, which is something people might do when they are running out of flat, traditional farmland.</p> <p>5: Rainfall amounts had decreased, which would make it harder to grow as many crops.</p> <p>6: "[Deforestation] does explain a substantial portion of the overall drying that is thought to have occurred."</p> <p>7: "They ended up deforesting and destroying their landscape in efforts to eke out a living in hard times."</p> <p>13: The Maya stopped using a particular tree, likely because they ran out of it.</p> <p>14: The number of a type of deer decreased, which probably resulted from overhunting.</p>	<p>8: "Our evidence indicates that, despite a rising population and shrinking land base from A.D. 600–900, the Copan Maya were skilled managers of their landscape."</p> <p>11: Tikal was one of the last cities to be abandoned even though it did not have much water.</p>
Natural Disaster	A flood or earthquake could have negatively affected the Maya city-states, who then were taken over by an invading army.	The cities were abandoned over the course of about a hundred years. One major disaster did not cause the Maya decline.
Revolution	<p>The Maya people may have risen up against harsh rulers.</p> <p>4: A monument was left unfinished. Perhaps the people of the city rose up against the ruler.</p> <p>9: After trade routes shifted, the inland city-states rulers may have weakened, making them easier to rise up against.</p> <p>12: Broken stelae have been excavated from the time that the cities fell. Because the stelae were often images of kings, this may have shown dissatisfaction with their rulers.</p> <p>15: A large number of arrowheads were found at the Maya cities. This might be a result of violence that occurred as Maya citizens rose up against their rulers.</p>	This might affect a few cities, but it seems unlikely that every city would have a revolution.
Invasion	<p>10: The cities were abandoned at different times, as if invaders took over the various Maya city-states one at a time.</p> <p>4: A monument was left unfinished. Perhaps the Maya were attacked.</p> <p>9: After trade routes shifted, the inland city-states may have weakened, making them easier to take over.</p> <p>10: The cities were abandoned as if an invading army had been marching down the river.</p> <p>15: A significant amount of arrowheads have been discovered at Maya sites, which might show that there was a lot of fighting between the Maya and invading armies.</p>	
Other	It could be a combination of factors.	

ACTIVITY 2

I. Hernán Cortés Questions

1. A stone thrown by an Aztec hit Montezuma while he was on a balcony. He died a few days later
2. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Perhaps Cortés had Montezuma killed and wanted that to remain a secret.
3. "They were so numerous, that although we did them much injury, the effect was still imperceptible"; "We had trouble enough to resist their progress"; "The war, however, did not cease, but increased in violence and desperation every day"; and other similar quotes.
4. His body was given to two Aztec prisoners, and he does not know what they did with it.
5. (1) The Aztecs attacked the greatly outnumbered Spanish; (2) the Spanish built a wooden structure to protect their men; (3) the Aztecs continued to attack; (4) Montezuma tried to calm the Aztecs down, but was killed; and (5) the fighting between the Spanish and Aztecs continued.

II. Bernal Díaz del Castillo Questions

1. Three stones thrown by Aztecs killed Montezuma. He died a few days later.
2. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Díaz greatly respected Cortés; he might lie to cover up that his former leader had killed Montezuma.
3. "Here Cortés showed himself to be every inch a man, as he always was"; "We captured two of their principal priests and Cortés ordered us to take good care of them"; "Cortés wept for him"; and other similar quotes.
4. "Montezuma had become devoted to her and had ordered her to be cared for"; "[Montezuma] began to speak to the Mexicans in very affectionate terms"; "It was said that he had ruled for seventeen years and that he was the best king Mexico had ever had"; and other similar quotes.
5. Montezuma says that he should not speak since the Aztecs had already made up their mind and taken on a new ruler.
6. According to Cortés, Montezuma offered to go on the balcony, but in Díaz's account, the speech was Cortés's idea and Montezuma did not want to speak to his people.
7. They are similar because in both accounts, Montezuma speaks to the mob of Aztecs and they throw objects at him. But in Díaz's account, the Aztecs first quieted down and listened to Montezuma.

III. Fernando de Alva Cortés Ixtlilxochitl Questions

1. One theory is that the stone slung by the Aztec mob killed Montezuma. A second theory is that the Spaniards killed Montezuma by stabbing him.
2. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Alva got most of his information from Aztecs. Being bitter about how the Spanish took them over may have led them to falsely claim that the Spanish had killed Montezuma.
3. In Díaz's account Montezuma speaks nicely and is listened to by some Aztecs. In Alva's account Montezuma scolds the Aztecs and they only respond negatively to him.
4. (1) The Spaniards are allowed into Tenochtitlan and treated well; (2) when the Aztecs realize the Spaniards will not leave, they rise up against them; (3) Montezuma unsuccessfully tries to get the Aztecs to stop attacking the Spanish; and (4) the Spanish flee Tenochtitlan.

IV. Bernardino de Sahagún Questions

1. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Sahagún received most of his information from the Aztecs, who might not want to admit that their ancestors killed one of their greatest leaders.

2. Both accounts claim Montezuma stood on the balcony and that the Aztecs threw objects at him. But according to Sahagún, Montezuma did not give the speech and was protected from the objects by Spanish soldiers.
3. According to Cortés, Montezuma's body was given to two Aztec prisoners. Sahagún's account claims that his body was thrown out of the palace.
4. "This blockhead"; "He terrorized the world"; "O rogue"; and other similar quotes.
5. They burned his body.
6. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Maybe they disapproved of the way people were yelling at his dead body.
7. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Maybe Sahagún's account left out the details of Montezuma's death because there were multiple accounts and he did not believe he knew which one was true.

Montezuma Overview Questions

1. Moctezuma, Montezuma, and Motecuhzoma. There are different spellings because there is not an exact way to translate it from the native language into Spanish or English. Each spelling is an attempt to make it pronounced correctly in Spanish or English.
2. Cortés and Díaz's accounts are primary sources because those two were writing about events they witnessed. Alva and Sahagún's accounts are secondary sources because they were writing about events they did not witness.
3. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: I found Díaz's account to be the most trustworthy. He was there, and because he was not the leader, he had less of a reason to lie than Cortés. Also, he is very detailed in his descriptions. It is hard to imagine him making all of that up.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.

ACTIVITY 3

Battle of Cajamarca Questions

1. It is a secondary source because Prescott is writing about the event based on other people's accounts of it.
2. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Because William Prescott did not have Inca or Spanish heritage, I would expect him to be neutral.
3. "I am greater than any prince upon earth."
4. "Do you not see, that, while we stand here wasting our breath in talking with this dog, full of pride as he is, the fields are filling with Indians?"
5. Atahualpa threw the Bible.
6. Pizarro captured Atahualpa.
7. Prescott thought that if the Inca had concealed weapons they would have used them during the massacre.
8. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: The estimates Prescott mentioned are 10,000 and 2,000. The Spanish may have had a lower estimate to make the battle appear to be less of a slaughter. If someone asked me, I would say between 2,000 to 10,000 Inca were killed.
9. Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: I think the line, "The eyes of the Indian monarch flashed fire, and his dark brow grew darker as he replied," is an example of Prescott adding descriptions to make his retelling more interesting. It is unlikely that the sources he read would mention these descriptions of the monarch. It seems more likely that Prescott used artistic license here.

10. (1) Atahualpa enters with a procession of people, (2) the friar explains Christianity to Atahualpa and tells Atahualpa he is now ruled by the Spanish king, (3) Atahualpa gets angry and throws the Bible, (4) the Spanish attack and massacre the unarmed Inca, and (5) Atahualpa is kidnapped.

ACTIVITY 4

Maya, Aztec, and Inca Questions

1. Inca
2. Aztec
3. Maya
4. Comparatively—The reading looks at what the Aztec, Inca, and Maya have in common.
5. The Maya and Aztec lived in the same general area.
6. The Inca and Aztec empires were at their peaks when the Spanish arrived, they were both conquered by the Spanish, the leaders who conquered them were related, and other similar answers.
7. All were conquered by the Spanish, ate corn, practiced human sacrifice, and other similar answers.
8. The Inca and Maya peaked at different times and lived farther away from each other.
9. Answers will vary.

ACTIVITY 5

Overcoming Geography Questions

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary, but the following is one possible answer: Rain forests have thick vegetation that is hard to clear and that grows back even after it has been cleared.
5. Answers will vary, but the following is one possible answer: You cannot farm a lake.
6. Answers will vary, but the following is one possible answer: Mountains are steep so rain can cause plants to wash out of the soil and down the mountain. Also, mountain temperatures can get very cold.
7. The Maya used a slash-and-burn method, which quickly cleared the vegetation for farming and added nutrients to the soil.
8. The Aztecs dredged parts of the lake to create more land. And then they used soil from the dredging to create *chinampas*, floating gardens, to grow food.
9. The Inca carved terraces into the mountains, creating flat land to grow crops. This allowed water to soak in to the land better and to flow down steps.
10. Answers will vary.

ACTIVITY 6

Machu Picchu Chart

Answers will vary, but the following are possibilities:

	Evidence For	Evidence Against	Probability of Being True (as a %)
Theory 1: The Lost City	Archaeologists had not yet established the location of Vilcabamba, the “Lost City,” when Bingham found the Machu Picchu ruins.	A different location, Espiritu Pampa, seems much more likely to be Vilcabamba. There are the right amount of buildings there, and it was called Vilcabamba Grande by locals.	Answers will vary.
Theory 2: Convent	Seventy-five percent of the skeletons analyzed by Eaton were women. Also, the Inca had a cultural tradition of sending young girls to live in temples.	A more recent analysis of the skeletons shows that there actually were not more women than men.	Answers will vary.
Theory 3: Royal Resort	Machu Picchu appears be less fortified than most towns and only consists of dwellings for the elite and servants. Also, a Spanish document refers to a royal estate known as “Picchu.”		Answers will vary.
Theory 4: Geographic Significance	The Urubamba River, known as “Sacred River” to the Inca, surrounds the mountain, and on a solstice the sun shines onto an altar in the Temple of the Sun.		Answers will vary.

Machu Picchu Questions

- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary.
- Scholars have used a Spanish document, ruins, excavated skeletons, and what names locals in the area called places.
- The quotations are primary sources because they are direct quotes of what someone has said. They are secondary sources about Machu Picchu because the people who said these things weren’t at Machu Picchu when it was an actual town.
- Archaeological evidence can be considered a primary source because it is looking at evidence from the time that Machu Picchu was a town. It can be considered a secondary source because archaeologists are analyzing and interpreting the evidence to formulate theories and opinions. These theories and opinions are secondary sources.
- Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: That the defensive walls were less strong than a regular town was used as evidence that it was a type of resort. This could also just show that this area, an extremely remote one, was less concerned about enemy attacks than most Inca towns.
- Answers will vary, but the following is one possibility: Even though Bingham appears to be wrong about Machu Picchu being a convent, I would consider it a reasoned judgment. He used evidence to make a reasonable hypothesis.
- Answers will vary.

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