

Maya, Inca, and Aztec

Grade: Fifth

Presented by: Lisa Berman, South Shore Charter School, Hull, MA.

Length of Unit: 22-25 days.

I. ABSTRACT

This unit covers the Mayan, Aztec and Inca cultures and histories through reading, writing, crafts and other hands-on activities. Among the many activities, students create timelines, perform mini-archeological digs, weave, build walls and model cities, use CD-ROMs, and write comparative essays. Aspects of this curriculum include art, math, technology and history. Portions of this unit allow for individual pacing, while others involve cooperative learning.

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
 - 1. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
- B. Content
 - 1. Meso-American Civilizations
 - 2. Arts and Crafts of the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas
 - 3. Archeology
 - 4. Architecture
 - 5. Writing
 - 6. Technology
 - 7. Math
- C. Skills to be taught
 - 1. Reading comprehension
 - 2. Compare and contrast essays
 - 3. Weaving
 - 4. Embroidery
 - 5. Archeological techniques
 - 6. Making timelines
 - 7. Test taking skills
 - 8. Mosaics
 - 9. Using CD-ROMs
 - 10. Building techniques

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For teachers:
- B. For students:

IV. RESOURCES

Literature

- A. Strohl, M. and S. Schneck. Mayas, Aztecs, Incas: Cooperative Learning Activities. New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 1994. ISBN 0-590-49504-6.
- B. Baquedano, E. Eyewitness Books: Aztec, Inca, and Maya. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993. ISBN 0-679-83883-x or 0-679-93883-4 (lib. bldg.).

CD-ROMs

- C. MayaQuest made by the Learning Company.
- D. Amazon Trail (I or II) made by the Learning Company.

V. LESSONS

Days One and Two: Comparative Timelines

A. Daily Objectives

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Students will make a timeline that compares the histories of the Aztecs, Incas and Mayas.
2. *Content Objectives:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
3. *Skill Objectives:*
 - a. How to make a timeline.
 - b. Measurement.

B. Materials:

1. Photocopy for each child of "Reference Maps and Dates," p. 6 (from Mayas, Aztecs, Incas)
2. 8 ½ x 11 inch white printer paper
3. pencils
4. colored pencils
5. rulers
6. tape
7. scissors
8. glue sticks

C. Key Vocabulary:

1. comparative
2. timeline

D. Procedures

1. Tell students that they are each going to make a timeline from which they can easily compare the histories of the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas.
2. Give students two sheets of paper each.
3. Tell them to hold them horizontally and tape them together so that they have a long, horizontal page.
4. Tell students to make three lines, evenly spaced, across the page.
5. They should label the top line, "Maya," the middle line, "Aztec," and the bottom line, "Inca."
6. On these timelines, 1 inch = 100 years. Students should start at 0 and label the lines every inch counting by 100's.
7. When this is done, students should cut and paste the dates and facts from their worksheets in the proper places on the timeline as closely as possible.
8. Students should place the 3114 BC Maya fact at the very beginning of the line with two // marks after it to show much time has passed since then.
9. When they are done, students should write 5 comparisons on a separate sheet of paper (i.e. The Spanish began their conquest of the Maya at the same time the Aztecs were at the height of their Empire.)

E. Evaluation/ Assessment

1. Teacher will evaluate timelines for accuracy and neatness.

F. Standardized/State Test Connections

1. Reading charts and graphs
2. Measurement.

Day Three: Reading and Questions on the Maya

A. Daily Objectives

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Facts about history, religion, geography and daily life of the Maya.
2. *Concept Objective:* Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
3. *Skill Objective:* Reading comprehension.

B. Materials:

1. Fifth Grade Core Knowledge books,
2. question sheet on the Maya (Appendix A)
3. fact sheets on Maya from the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas book with accompanying pictures

C. Key vocabulary:

1. hieroglyphics
2. sacrifices
3. ancestors
4. elite
5. maize

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Give out Core Knowledge books, fact sheets and question sheets.
2. Have students read (p. 107-110) independently or in pairs and answer the questions.
3. Use sheets for class discussion.
4. Tell students they will have a quiz on the Maya based on the fact sheets on Day 6.

E. Evaluation/Assessment

1. Teacher will collect and grade question sheets.

F. Standardized/State Test Connections

1. Reading comprehension.

Days Four, Five and Six: Weaving

A. Daily Objectives

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Weaving
 - b. History
 - c. culture
2. *Concept Objective:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
3. *Skill Objective:*
 - a. Following directions
 - b. Weaving.

B. Materials:

1. Angela Weaves a Dream
2. one wooden dowel per student
3. one plastic hanger per student
4. yarn of various colors
5. sturdy cardboard
6. ruler
7. scissors
8. single hole punch
9. quizzes (Appendix B).

C. Key vocabulary:

1. Warp
2. Weft
3. Shuttle
4. harness

D. Procedures/Activities.

1. Hand out quizzes. Allow 20 minutes for students to complete, then collect.
2. Read portions of Angela Weaves a Dream and show pictures of different weaving patterns and Angela's loom. The students will be making a very similar type of loom.
3. Cardboard Harness: Give students a piece of cardboard approximately 6 x 8 inches.
4. Hold it horizontally.
5. Measure and mark it at every inch.
6. Cut slits at each inch mark wide enough for a piece of yarn to fit through and most of the length of the cardboard leaving a border at the top and bottom.
7. It should resemble a portion of picket fence when you are done.
8. Punch holes in the middle of the "fence posts." You should have 7 holes and 7 slots.
9. Students now cut 7 pieces of yarn approximately four feet in length.
10. Loop each piece over the hanger so that two feet are hanging down.
11. These will be the warp threads.
12. Thread the other ends through the harness in an orderly manner, so that the strings alternate (one through a slot, one through a hole, etc.)
13. Gather the ends and tie them around the dowel.
14. Make shuttle by taking yarn and wrapping it around small squares of cardboard. The shuttle holds the weft yarn.
15. Hook the hanger around a doorknob or the leg of a table (children can sit on the floor or in chairs).
16. Tie a piece of yarn around your waist by attaching each end of this piece of yarn to the dowel. Sit back so the warp threads are taught.
17. Pull up on the harness. This should separate the warp threads so that when you put the shuttle through the middle, you are weaving.
18. Put the shuttle through.
19. Push the harness down and put the shuttle back through the way it came out last time.
20. Continue threading the shuttle back and forth with each push and pull of the harness.
21. Students can change colors and be creative.
22. When they are done cut and tie off the ends.
23. Have MayaQuest CD-ROM and Amazon Trail CD-ROM for children to use if/when they need a break, or set up a schedule for pairs to switch off every 15 minutes.
24. At the beginning of Day 6, give out quiz. Allow students twenty minutes to complete and then collect. Then, finish weaving. Let students take the weaving home.

E. Evaluation/Assessment

1. Teacher will collect and grade quizzes.
2. Completed belt.

F. Standardized/State Test Connection

1. Test taking skills.
2. Following directions.

Day Seven: Reading and Questions on the Aztec

A Daily Objectives

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Facts about history, religion, geography and daily life of the Aztecs.

2. *Concept Objective:*
 - a. To learn facts around history and culture of the Aztecs.
 3. *Skill Objective:*
 - a. Reading comprehension.
- B. Materials:
1. Fifth Grade Core Knowledge books
 2. question sheet on the Aztecs (Appendix C)
 3. fact sheets on Aztecs from the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas book with accompanying pictures.
- C. Key vocabulary:
1. Hieroglyphics
 2. Sacrifices
 3. ancestors,
 4. elite
 5. maize
- D. Procedures/Activities
1. Give out Core Knowledge books, fact sheets and question sheets.
 2. Have students read (p. 110-114) independently or in pairs and answer the questions.
 3. Use sheets for class discussion.
 4. Tell students they will have a quiz on the Aztecs based on the fact sheets on Day 13.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Teacher will collect and grade question sheets.
- F. Standardized/State Test Connections
1. Reading comprehension.

Days Eight, Nine and Ten: Aztec Counting, Calendars, and Food.

- A. Daily Objectives
1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Facts about Aztec math and daily life.
 2. *Concept Objective:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
 3. *Skill Objective:*
 - a. To count and do math using the Aztec number system.
- B. Materials:
1. Assorted books on Aztec life (see bibliography)
 2. worksheets from Mayas, Aztecs, Incas
 3. paper
 4. markers
 5. colored pencils
 6. CD-ROMs.
- C. Key vocabulary:
1. Chinampas
 2. glyphs
- D. Procedures/Activities
1. Give out worksheet on Aztec counting, the Aztec calendar and information about what the Aztecs ate.
 2. Students work independently on these assignments in any order.
 3. Make a schedule to have students work in pairs at the computer(s) on Amazon Trail and MayaQuest.
 4. Students complete the Aztec counting sheet according to the directions.

5. Students color the calendar and label different parts based on information that they find in books (Eyewitness Book, p.41).
 6. Students make a menu for an Aztec restaurant with meals based on the information they find in books on what the Aztecs ate (Eyewitness Book, p.24-25).
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Completed worksheets and menus.

Days Eleven and Twelve: Mosaics

- A. Daily Objectives
1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. To learn about the Aztec god of rain, Tlaloc.
 2. *Concept Objective:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
 3. *Skill Objective:*
 - a. To make a mosaic place mat.
- B. Materials:
1. Eyewitness Book
 2. cardboard cut to place mat size
 3. photocopies of Tlaloc (two-headed serpent) from the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas book (p. 52)
 4. small squares of blue and green construction paper (you can also use shiny paper available at craft stores)
 5. glue
 6. scissors.
- C. Key Vocabulary:
1. mosaic
- D. Procedures/Activities
1. Show students a picture of the mosaic serpent, or other mosaic pieces from the Eyewitness Book (on the cover).
 2. Talk with students about mosaics.
 3. Discuss the importance of gods of nature to the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas that they read about in previous assignments.
 4. Give each student a cardboard mat and a photocopy of Tlaloc.
 5. Students cut out and paste the serpent, cut out and trace it, or draw it free hand on their cardboard.
 6. Students then use the small squares and glue them on the serpent to make a mosaic look.
 7. Have CD-ROMs available for students who finish early.
 8. When they are done, laminate them.
 9. Students can then take them home.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Completed placemat.

Day Thirteen: Mayan, Aztec, and Incan Architecture (and a quiz).

- A. Daily Objectives
1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Use boxes to simulate how the Maya, Aztecs and Incas built walls and houses.
 2. *Concept Objectives:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
 3. *Skill Objectives:*
 - a. To build walls cooperatively.

- B. Materials:
 1. Aztec quiz (Appendix D)
 2. LOTS of boxes of different sizes
- C. Key vocabulary:
 1. mortar
- D. Procedures/Activities
 1. Hand out quiz to students and give them approximately 20 minutes to finish.
 2. Take the boxes and head to a large, open area, indoors or out.
 3. Pile all the boxes in the center of the space.
 4. Depending upon numbers of students, break them up into groups of five or six.
 5. Explain to students how the Incas built their walls without mortar, or cement to hold them together, but that they were so well built that it was not necessary.
 6. Have one group at a time use the boxes to construct a wall that has a doorway and a window. You can limit the time to 5 minutes to add to the excitement.
 7. Throw away or recycle boxes when done.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 1. Teacher will collect and grade quizzes.
 2. Walls should be complete.
 3. All members of a group should help.
- F. Standardized/State Test Connections
 1. Test taking skills.

Day Fourteen: Reading and Questions on the Inca.

- A. Daily Objectives
 1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Facts about history, religion, geography and daily life of the Incas.
 2. *Concept Objective:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
 3. *Skill Objective:*
 - a. Reading comprehension
- B. Materials:
 1. Fifth Grade Core Knowledge books
 2. question sheet on the Incas (Appendix E)
 3. fact sheets on Incas from the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas book with accompanying pictures
- C. Key vocabulary:
 1. mortar
 2. alpacas
 3. stonemasons
 4. sacred
 5. divine
 6. convert
- D. Procedures/Activities
 1. Give out Core Knowledge books, fact sheets and question sheets.
 2. Have students read (p. 114-116) independently or in pairs and answer the questions.
 3. Use sheets for class discussion.
 4. Tell students they will have a quiz on the Incas based on the fact sheets on Day 18.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 1. Teacher will collect and grade question sheets.
- F. Standardized/State Test Connections
 1. Reading comprehension.

Day Fifteen: Make a Quipu.

A. Daily Objectives:

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Learn how the Inca kept a record of their belongings.
2. *Concept Objective:*
 - a. Understand that although the Inca had no written language, they used a quipu to keep track of their belongings and this system used place value.
3. *Skill Objective:*
 - a. Make a quipu.

B. Materials:

1. Various colors of yarn.

C. Key vocabulary:

1. quipu

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Show picture of quipu from Eyewitness Book (p. 40) or other book.
2. Explain that the Inca used the quipu to keep track of items they traded or gave to the government.
3. Give students a list of items they might have, such as maize, bowls, weapons, and cloth.
4. Tell them to think of a three-digit number to represent the amount of these items that they have.
5. Take one long piece of yarn to be the main rope at the top of the quipu. Then tie one piece of yarn for each item onto the first piece of yarn. Tie knots in the yarn to represent hundreds (top), tens and ones (bottom).
6. Have students pair up with other students and have them read their quipu.

E. Evaluation/Assessment

1. Teacher will circulate around the room and ask students how many _____ they have. Teacher will look to see that they have made their quipus correctly.

Days Sixteen and Seventeen: Inca Embroidery.

A. Daily Objectives

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. To make a needlepoint to resemble Incan embroidery.
2. *Concept Objectives:*
 - a. To understand the importance of embroidery in Incan culture, historically and today.
3. *Skill Objectives:*
 - a. To use yarn and plastic canvas to re-create a Mayan, Aztec, or Incan symbol.

B. Materials:

1. plastic canvas cut into fourths (available at craft stores)
2. lots of yarn
3. large needles
4. books on the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas, crayons.

C. Key vocabulary:

1. Embroidery

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Show students pictures of Incan embroidery. (Eyewitness Book, p. 43, or other source).
2. Explain that Peruvian people are still known today for their embroidery skills.
3. Give each student a rectangle (approximately 4 x 5 inches) of plastic canvas. Explain to students that embroidery is usually done on cloth, but that the plastic canvas will make this activity easier for them.

4. Have students look through books and find an image they would like to create on their piece of embroidery.
 5. Once they find the image they want, they should trace or copy it onto the canvas using a dark colored crayon.
 6. They should then thread their needles (this may need a lesson in itself), double up the yarn and make a knot.
 7. Students sew on the canvas in whatever way they like to fill in their design.
 8. When they are all finished, you can have students sew them together for display in the school.
 9. Have Amazon Trail and MayaQuest CD-ROMs available for student use.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Students will explain their completed designs and why they chose it.

Days Eighteen and Nineteen: A Quiz and then an Archeological Dig.

A. Daily Objectives

1. *Lesson Content:*
 - a. Students simulate an archeological dig for Mayan, Aztec and Inca artifacts.
2. *Content Objectives:*
 - a. Understand the complex nature of a given culture: its history, religion, geography, art, and architecture.
3. *Skill Objectives:*
 - a. To dig carefully and document findings in an organized manner
 - b. following directions

B. Materials:

1. Self-drying clay (available at craft stores)
2. Feathers
3. Felt
4. tools to mark clay
5. "Dig Co-op cards" from Mayas, Aztecs, Incas
6. large sheet cake boxes (bottoms only)
7. string
8. marker
9. sand
10. spoons and brushes
11. record sheets

C. Key vocabulary:

1. Archeologist
2. Excavation
3. Artifact
4. dig site

D. Procedures/Activities.

Day 18

1. Give out Inca fact quiz and give students approximately 20 minutes to complete.
2. Break students into three groups of no more than 8 students.
3. Give each group one of the Co-op card sheets, and tell them to divide up the cards among people in the group and make the artifacts with the clay and other craft materials provided. Students will NOT dig up the artifacts that they make.
4. Let artifacts dry overnight.

Day 19

1. Explain to students that today they will be setting up their dig sites, and then digging up artifacts in much the same way that the archeologists do.

2. Go over techniques. Archeologists are CAREFUL. They don't take the artifact out right away when they find it. They draw a picture of it, examine it, etc.
 3. Have students label a box with the name of the civilization whose artifacts they made. They should then fill their box with sand and then make a grid with string over the top of the box. There should be 12 squares. One side of the box should label the rows with letters and the other should be labeled with numbers. Therefore, you can name the squares, such as "grid location-2C."
 4. Students should break up, then hide, one artifact in each square. All the pieces of that artifact should be placed in the same square. (Optional: You can cover the top of the sand with grass, rocks or other items.)
 5. When the groups are finished, they rotate and dig artifacts out of a different box. This makes the activity more interesting because they don't know what they will find. They also become familiar with the artifacts from a second civilization.
 6. Their "shovels" are the spoons, and the brushes will help them uncover the artifacts.
 7. Once an artifact is found, students should fill out a record sheet telling about where they found it. They should then take the record sheet over to another table to find the Co-op card that it matches. When they find the matching card, they should remove the artifact from the box and tie the card onto it.
 8. They can display their artifacts on a table for everyone to see.
 9. Students carry boxes out to playground to dump sand (you might want to save some for the model cities), and then throw out the boxes. You may need to sweep up or vacuum the sand.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Teacher will collect and grade quizzes.
 2. Completed artifacts.
 3. Completed Record Sheets.
- F. Standardized/State Test Connection

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITIES (3 days each)

A. Building Model Cities

In groups of four or five, students build model Aztec, Inca, or Mayan cities from recycled materials. Cities should include examples of all aspects of the culture (architecture, religion, food, arts, animals, etc.) Cities should have labels to show what aspects of the civilization are represented, and there should be a written explanation accompanying the model. Students should present their city to the class and be able to tell which part of the city they worked on.

B. Compare and Contrast Essays

Students use written materials to make a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the Aztecs and Mayas.

Students use the Venn diagrams to write a compare and contrast essay.

Students have the teacher edit the first draft, and then have a peer edit the second draft.

The final drafts are due on the third day.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix A: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Fifth Grade Social Studies
The Maya

Directions: Read pages 107-110 in the Fifth Grade Core Knowledge Book. Answer the questions below. Your answers must be in complete sentences.

1. What was Tikal? Describe it. _____

2. Describe what life was like inside a Mayan city on a normal day.

3. What do we know about the Mayan religion?

4. What are some of the theories that archeologists have come up with for the end of the Mayan civilization?

Appendix B: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Mayan Fact Quiz

Part I: Fill in the blank.

Use the words below to fill in the blank spaces in the sentences. Each word is used only once.

litter nobility dug-out canoes drums plaza market

1. The Maya fished and brought in trade goods in _____.
2. During processions, the governor was carried in a _____, which was a stretcher with a feather canopy and wooden throne.
3. Ceremonies, dances and festivals were held in the _____.
4. At the _____, people traded news as well as goods.
5. When guards saw travelers approach the city gates, they would play _____.
6. The _____ was in charge of all trade between cities.

Part II. Open response questions.

Answer the questions below.

1. Name three items that you could find in the Mayan market.

2. How did the Maya carry goods to the market?

3. How were products organized in the market?

4. Who lived in the houses closest to the temple?

Appendix C: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Fifth Grade Social Studies
The Aztec

Directions: Read pages 110-114 in the Fifth Grade Core Knowledge Book. Answer the questions below. Your answers must be in complete sentences.

1. Between what years did the Aztec Empire exist? _____

2. a. What was the most magnificent city in this empire? _____

b. What city is in the same spot today? _____

3. Write three facts that you learned about the Aztec religion. _____

4. a. How did Hernando Cortes try to trick Montezuma and the Aztec people? _____

b. What happened to Cortes' troops in this first attempt to conquer the Aztecs? _____

5. Reread the description of Tenochtitlan on the bottom of page 110. On the back, draw an OVERHEAD view of the city from this description. Label the items on your map.

Appendix D: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Aztec Fact Quiz

Part I: Fill in the blank.

Use the words below to fill in the blank spaces in the sentences. Each word is used only once.

Emperor chinampas Lake Texcoco adobe

6. The island gardens grown by the Aztec were called _____.
7. Most homes were made of _____ which are mud bricks.
8. Tenochtitlan was built on an island in _____.
9. The Royal Palace was the home of the _____.

Part II: True or False

Circle the correct answer.

1. The Aztec homes had windows. True False
2. The Aztecs ate chihuahuas. True False
3. There was no money at the Aztec markets; True False
people bartered.
4. The Aztecs took steam baths in small buildings
beside their homes. True False

Part II. Open response questions.

Answer the questions below.

1. Describe the typical Aztec home.

2. How did Aztec boys and girls spend their days?

Appendix E: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Fifth Grade Social Studies
The Inca

Directions: Read pages 114-117 in the Fifth Grade Core Knowledge Book. Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. a. Where did the Incas live? _____

b. Describe what it looked like. _____

2. Describe the importance that stone played in the Inca society. _____

3. Who was Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui? _____

4. What events caused the end of the Incan Empire? Write a good detailed summary of these events.

Appendix F: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Inca Fact Quiz

Part I: Fill in the blank.

Use the words below to fill in the blank spaces in the sentences. Each word is used only once.

suspension bridges llamas mita tambos

1. The Inca built _____ to travel across deep valleys.
2. All married farmers had to do _____ work, which was help building roads and buildings.
3. _____ were an important animal to the Inca.
4. _____ were rest houses located along travel routes.

Part II: True or False

Circle the correct answer.

1. The Inca did not use the wheel. True False
2. All Incas paid taxes. True False
3. The Inca used concrete to hold the stones in True False
 their walls together.

Part II. Open response questions.

Answer the questions below.

1. What did farmers do with their crops after the harvest?

2. Describe a typical Inca village.

3. From what materials were Inca homes constructed?

Appendix G: Maya, Aztec, Inca

Archeological Dig Record Sheet

1. Who uncovered the artifact? _____
2. Where was it found? Grid letter _____ Number _____
3. How deep in the sand was the artifact? _____ inches or _____ centimeters
4. Draw a sketch of the artifact.