Early Civilizations of the Americas

Teacher Guide

Maya calendar

Inca sun god

Maya ball game
# Early Civilizations of the Americas

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UNIT 5

Introduction

About This Unit

The Big Idea

People who lived in North and South America long ago created several different, powerful civilizations.

This unit continues the exploration of ancient history begun in earlier Grade 1 Core Knowledge History and Geography™ (CKHG™) units, which focused on civilizations that flourished in Mesopotamia, on the continent of Asia, and in ancient Egypt, on the continent of Africa.

*Early Civilizations of the Americas* begins with the arrival of the first humans into the Western Hemisphere, from around thirty thousand to around fifteen thousand years ago. These first peoples were nomadic hunters from Asia, who were likely following big game as they roamed from Asia to North America. Eventually, these ancient peoples made the shift from hunting and gathering to farming, which resulted in the settlement of permanent communities in North and South America. This gave rise to three great indigenous civilizations in the Americas—those of the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca.
What Students Should Already Know

Students in Core Knowledge schools should be familiar with the following:

- what maps and globes represent and how to use them
- what rivers, lakes, and mountains are and how they are represented on maps and globes
- the location of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the North and South Poles, and the seven continents
- the name and location of their continent, country, state, and community
- the use of map keys and symbols, as well as directions (north, south, east, west) on a map
- the locations of the Indian and Arctic Oceans, North America (United States, Canada, Mexico, and the countries of Central America), the equator, and the Northern and Southern Hemispheres
- the meaning of peninsula, harbor, bay, and island
- the importance of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- the development of writing and its impact on civilization
- the geography of Africa: the Sahara and the flooding of the Nile
- the Code of Hammurabi and why laws and rules are important
- religion in ancient Mesopotamia: worship of many gods
- important pharaohs: Tutankhamen, Hatshepsut
- Egyptian religion: pyramids, mummies, animal gods, the sphinx
- religions as the basis of significant events and ideas in world history
- Judaism: belief in one god, Exodus, Israel, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Star of David, Torah, synagogue
- Christianity: developed from Judaism, Jesus as the Messiah, Christmas, Easter, symbol of the cross
- Islam: origin in Arabia, Allah, Muhammad, Mecca, Koran, mosque, Ramadan, Eid Al-Fitr, symbols of crescent and star
- the concept of religious freedom
What Students Need to Learn

- the route from Asia to North America taken by some of the first peoples of the Americas
- alternative theories about how early people migrated
- the everyday life of the nomadic hunters and gatherers who crossed the Bering Strait land bridge
- how and why some early peoples shifted from hunting and gathering to raising crops
- how the development of farming led to the building of permanent communities
- Maya accomplishments in architecture, astronomy, writing, religion, math, and farming
- possible reasons for the mysterious decline of the Maya civilization
- the everyday life and social system of the Aztec
- how the Aztec built their city on a lake
- Aztec accomplishments in engineering, medicine, and education
- how the Aztec were fierce warriors
- how the Inca built their cities up in the mountains
- where the Inca lived
- the achievements of the Inca
- why people of early civilizations looked to religion to help them understand how the world was created
- how stories get passed down through generations
- the Maya creation myth
- how the Maya, Aztec, and Inca people of today still follow their ancestors’ traditions
At a Glance

The most important ideas in Unit 5 are:

- The first peoples to arrive in the Americas, from around thirty thousand to around fifteen thousand years ago, were nomadic hunters from Asia.
- These peoples were following big game as they roamed east across a “land bridge” that once connected Asia and North America but that was later submerged as the last Ice Age ended.
- The shift from big-game hunting to small-game hunting and/or food gathering and/or farming took place at different times in different places over thousands of years.
- With the shift to farming, some people, but not all, settled in permanent communities that over time grew into towns and cities.
- The Maya, Aztec, and Inca are examples of indigenous groups that developed a variety of cultural traits and that were in existence when the explorers from other continents arrived in North and South America.

What Teachers Need to Know

The Earliest People: Hunters and Nomads

For many years, the dominant migration theory was that early humans entered North America by way of the Bering Strait land bridge. Recently, however, scientists have begun to question this route, indicating that they believe that the earliest Americans who arrived may have followed a much warmer route along the now submerged coastal plains. Still others may have arrived in small boats by water; the peopling of the Americas continues to be a hotly debated topic.

Experts disagree on when the first peoples crossed the land bridge between Asia and North America. The estimates range from around thirty thousand to around fifteen thousand years ago. During that period, Earth was undergoing the last Ice Age, and a great deal of Earth’s water was frozen into snow or ice, so the ocean levels were lower. Asia and North America were connected by land, not divided by water as they are today. As the last Ice Age ended around ten thousand years ago, the climate changed and temperatures rose. As snow and ice melted and ran into the oceans, the water level in the oceans rose and the land between Asia and what is today Alaska was submerged. Today, the waterway that separates Asia and Alaska is known as the Bering Strait. The “land bridge” that once connected the two continents is sometimes called Beringia. Yet, evidence has emerged that humans were living south of the ice sheets before the corridor opened, and a settlement in Monte Verde, Chile, shows that people had migrated down to South America fifteen thousand years ago and were possibly also in Florida 14,500 years ago. This evidence means that the first peoples entering the Americas may have taken a different route than the land bridge. Emerging theories posit that human migration may have been along the coasts instead.

The first peoples to cross into North America probably did not make the journey on purpose. They were likely hunting prehistoric animals, such as the woolly mammoth and the bison. Wherever the animals roamed, the hunting parties, probably made up of extended family groups, followed. All along the
way, some groups stopped wandering and stayed in places that seemed hospitable. It is important to remember that this movement of people occurred over thousands of years. As the ice disappeared, so did the prehistoric animals that the hunters relied on for their food, clothing, and shelter. Big game may have died out because of the change in temperatures or because the hunters killed too many animals. The lack of big game may be one reason that groups moved on. They were looking for the ever-scarcer big animals to hunt.

To make up for the lack of big game, hunters turned to smaller game, such as deer and rabbits, for their food. People also began to pick wild plants, nuts, seeds, and berries and to dig up roots to eat. It is probable that people were gathering wild foods as early as 15,000 BCE. Even when people hunted, it is also likely that they gathered other types of food, depending on local availability.

Early peoples in the Americas, like peoples in the Middle East in ancient times, noticed while foraging for food that some plants grew better than others. Some people reasoned that if they planted the seeds of these plants, they could get more food and get it more easily than by wandering over miles of land looking for berries and plants to pick. This process of planting and harvesting the sturdiest or most productive wild plants in a changing environment is called domestication.

With the domestication of plants came farming. Once people could feed themselves by planting and harvesting plants, they no longer had to wander in search of food. They could settle in one place—at least for periods of time, since some people remained seminomadic hunters and farmers. The earliest domesticated plants in the Americas—peppers and squash—have been found by archaeologists in northeast Mexico and date from about 7500 BCE to 5500 BCE.

The development of Native American cultures in what is now the United States was somewhat different from what occurred in what is now Mexico and Central and South America. While some groups—such as the Ancestral Pueblo in what is today the southwestern United States, the Mississippian culture of the Southeast, and the Northeast Woodlands peoples—both hunted and farmed, many indigenous peoples in this part of North America remained mainly hunters. Some also participated in widespread trading networks.

In the Americas, as in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, the development of farming ensured a steady food supply for those cultures that adopted it. The most obvious benefit of a steady source of food was that people no longer had to search for food. They did not have to walk for miles following animal tracks, nor risk eating poisonous berries or plants when they could not find familiar foods.

Because farming required staying in one place, settlements of a few families grew in size as the population grew. With a steady diet and better food, people were living longer and having more children. Once a number of people were gathered in one place, some form of authority was needed to organize them for the public good and to keep order, and the looser societal structure of the hunter-gatherers began to evolve into more traditional government.

Because people spent less time producing food, they had time to develop crafts, such as creating pottery, making blankets, and weaving baskets. There was also more reason to acquire goods like pots and extra blankets because people no longer had to carry them around. Specialization of labor resulted as some people began to earn their living by making crafts rather than by farming. One village or town could not use everything that even a few artisans or craftspeople could make, so people began to trade goods between settlements. Some trade networks reached from what is now central Mexico to as far north as what is today the southwestern and southeastern United States. Trade also meant an increase in wealth. Social classes based on wealth and power began to develop.
The early indigenous cultures in what are today the United States and Canada did not necessarily evolve from small settlements into large ones and then into empires. Some groups continued to hunt in bands for game and occasionally to trade, while others settled in small communities to farm, hunt locally, and trade. Some early indigenous peoples in what are now Mexico and Central and South America, however, developed a succession of cultures that were based on large population centers and monumental buildings.

Students in Core Knowledge schools will study the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations in detail in Grade 5. This unit is only an introduction to these civilizations. Though it is historically accurate to note the warrior cultures of the Maya and Aztec civilizations, it is recommended that mention of human sacrifice be delayed until Grade 5.

Note to Teachers: Sometimes you will see the word Mayan used as an adjective and Mayas used as a plural noun. In Early Civilizations of the Americas, we use Maya, in keeping with the preference of many scholars, as the adjective, the singular noun, and the plural noun.

Teacher Components

Early Civilizations of the Americas Teacher Guide—This Teacher Guide includes a general unit introduction, followed by specific instructional guidance. Primary focus objectives, geographical and/or historical background information for teachers, Core Vocabulary, a lesson introduction, and the Student Book text to be read aloud—in the form of actual replicated Student Book pages—are included for each chapter. The Read Aloud sections of the Student Book are divided into segments so that the teacher can pause and discuss each part of the Read Aloud with students. It is important to discuss the images that accompany the text with the students too.

The instructional guidance for each chapter also includes a Check for Understanding and, when appropriate, Additional Activities, such as virtual field trips, short film clips, and art activities, that may be used to reinforce students’ understanding of the content. These Additional Activities are intended to provide choices for teachers and should be used selectively.

A Culminating Activity, Unit Assessment, Performance Task Assessment, Student Activity Pages, and instructions for My Passport for each student are included at the end of this Teacher Guide in Teacher Resources, beginning on page 68. The Activity Pages are numbered to correspond with the chapter for recommended use and also indicate the recommended order for use. For example, AP 1.1 is a letter to parents designed to be used at the start of the unit.

» The Culminating Activity is a multistep activity that provides students an opportunity to review unit content knowledge prior to the Unit or Performance Task Assessments. Students will have a chance to play a unit-related game, learn and sing a song about the unit, or create a collaborative classroom mural and/or museum of craft projects they have made to represent artifacts from the time period and culture studied. At the end of the Culminating Activity, students will also assemble and discuss a mini-book version of the Student Book that they can take home to share with family members.
The Unit Assessment tests knowledge of the entire unit, using a standard testing format. The teacher reads aloud multiple-choice questions or fill-in-the-blank statements, and students are then asked to answer these questions by circling a picture representing the correct response on the Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet.

The Performance Task Assessment allows students to apply and demonstrate the knowledge learned during the unit by drawing and talking about images representing key content.

My Passport is a tangible reminder and souvenir of the various events and places that students using the CKHG units at their grade level will have visited and learned about over the course of the school year. Note that prior to reading Chapter 1 of each unit aloud, you will be prompted to ask your students to pretend that they are boarding an airplane in real time to travel to a particular place in the world; this approach will be used in units that focus on modern-day cultures, including geography. For units that focus on historical events, you will be prompted to ask students to pretend they are boarding a “time machine” to travel “back in time” with you to visit each historical period and culture studied. Guidance will be provided at the end of every unit, directing teachers how to assist students in creating and updating their passport. The passport template can be downloaded from www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources. Teachers will need to make sufficient copies for each student before conducting the passport activity.

The Activity Pages are designed to reinforce and extend content taught in specific chapters. The Teacher Guide lessons provide clear direction as to when to use specific Activity Pages. Teachers will need to make sufficient copies of the Activity Pages they choose to use for all students in their class.

**Student Component**

The *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Book includes seven chapters, intended to be read aloud by the teacher as the students look at images on each page.

As you will note when you examine the Student Book, minimal text is included on each page. Instead, colorful photos and engaging illustrations dominate the Student Book pages. The design of the Student Book in this way is intentional because students in Kindergarten–Grade 2 are just learning to read. At these grade levels, students are learning how to decode written words, so the complexity and amount of text that these young students can actually read is quite limited.

While some advanced students may be able to read words on a given page of the Student Book, as a general rule, students should not be expected or asked to read aloud the text on the Student Book pages. The text in the Student Book is there so that teachers and parents can read it when sharing the Student Book with students.

The intent of the Grades K–2 CKHG lessons is to build students’ understanding and knowledge of specific historical time periods, people, and events, as well as of associated geographical concepts and skills. It is for this very reason that in Grades K–2 CKHG, the historical and geographical knowledge of each lesson is delivered to students using a teacher Read Aloud, accompanied by detailed images. Cognitive science research has clearly documented the fact that students’ listening comprehension far surpasses their reading comprehension well into the late elementary and early middle school grades. Said another way, students are able to understand and grasp far more complex ideas and text that they
hear read aloud than they would ever be able to read or comprehend when they read to themselves. For a more thorough discussion of listening and reading comprehension and the underlying cognitive science research, teachers may want to refer to Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, noting in particular the Speaking and Listening section of the appendix.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to this appendix can be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

**Using the Teacher Guide**

**Pacing**

The *Early Civilizations of the Americas* unit is one of nine world and American history and geography units in the Grade 1 CKHG series that we encourage teachers to use over the course of the school year. We have intentionally left the pacing and timing needed to teach the content presented in the Teacher Guide and Student Book very flexible. Teachers can choose how much they read aloud and discuss in a single instructional period, as well as how often each week they use the CKHG materials.

In many instances, it is likely that the teacher will be able to read aloud and discuss a complete chapter from the Student Book in a single instructional period. At other times, teachers may choose to spread the Read Aloud and discussion of a longer chapter over two instructional periods.

At the end of this unit introduction, you will find a blank Pacing Guide on pages 11–12 that you may use to plan how you might pace reading aloud and discussing each chapter, as well as when to use the various other resources in this unit. We strongly recommend that you preview this entire unit and create your pacing guide before teaching the first lesson. As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that you spend no more than fifteen to twenty days teaching the *Early Civilizations of the Americas* unit so that you have sufficient time to teach the other units in the Grade 1 CKHG series.

**Reading Aloud**

Within each Read Aloud, the text to be read aloud to students is in roman text in the Teacher Guide (like this); instructions intended only for the teacher are in boldface (*like this*). Core Vocabulary words appear in boldface color (*like this*). You may sometimes wish to preview one or two of these vocabulary words before a segment of the Read Aloud. In most instances, however, it may be more effective to pause and explain the meaning of the words as they are encountered when reading aloud.

It is important to note that students at this grade level are not expected to give definitions of the Core Vocabulary words. Rather, the intent is for the teacher to model the use of Core Vocabulary in the Read Aloud and in discussions about the Read Aloud to expose students to challenging, domain-specific vocabulary. If students hear these words used in context by the teacher over the entire unit, they will gain an increasingly nuanced understanding of these words. With support and encouragement by the teacher, students may even begin to use these same words in their own oral discussions of the unit.
Interspersed throughout the Read Aloud, you will note instances in which instructional guidance is included. This guidance may call the teacher’s attention to Core Vocabulary and idiomatic or figurative language that may be confusing and therefore require explanation. In other instances, Supports may direct the teacher to call attention to specific aspects of an image—as shown on a page in the Student Book. And, in some instances, a Challenge, usually a more demanding task or question, may be included for teachers’ optional use.

You will also notice within the Read Aloud segments that the Teacher Guide directs you to pause occasionally to ask questions about what students have just heard. By using this carefully scaffolded approach to reading aloud and discussing a portion of the content a bit at a time, you will be able to observe and ensure that all students understand what they have heard before you proceed to the next section of the Read Aloud.

**Turn and Talk**

Specific instances in the Read Aloud portion of the lesson are designated as Turn and Talk opportunities. During these times, teachers should direct students to turn and talk to a partner to discuss specific questions. These types of discussion opportunities will allow students to more fully engage with the content and will bring to life the topics and events being discussed.

**Big Questions and Core Vocabulary**

At the beginning of each Read Aloud segment in the Teacher Guide, you will find a Big Question. The answer to each Big Question is included as part of the text read aloud in each chapter of the Student Book. At the end of each Read Aloud segment, you will be prompted to formally reask the Big Question for students to discuss during the Check for Understanding. Key vocabulary, phrases, and idioms are also identified in each lesson of the Teacher Guide.

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<td>Chapter 2: From Hunting to Farming</td>
<td>How did the development of farming help people settle, or stay in one place?</td>
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<td>Chapter 3: The Marvelous Maya</td>
<td>How did the Maya create their calendar, and what did they use it for?</td>
<td>worship, earthquakes, religious ceremonies, astronomers, “changing of the seasons,” tools, instruments, calendar, recorded, harvest, goods, symbols</td>
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<td>How would you describe the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán?</td>
<td>empire, shore, mainland, religious practices, marketplaces, traded, warriors, conquered, emperor, astronomy, craftsmen</td>
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<td>Chapter 5: The Incredible Inca</td>
<td>How was the Royal Road used by the Inca?</td>
<td>messengers, thunderbolt</td>
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Early Civilizations of the Americas

Chapter 6: A Story from the Americas
What happens in the Maya story about how the Earth was created, or made?
Core Vocabulary: religions, mystery, creation, storytellers, generation, plains, jaguars, pumas, honor

Chapter 7: The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Today
How do the Maya, Aztec, and Inca people of today follow their ancestors’ traditions?
Core Vocabulary: ancestors, weave, descendants, culture, llamas

Activity Pages

The following activity pages can be found in Teacher Resources, pages 101–104. They are to be used with the lesson specified for additional class work or in some instances may be sent home to be make parents aware of what students are studying. Be sure to make sufficient copies for your students before conducting the activities.

- Chapter 1—Letter to Family (AP 1.1)
- Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5—World Map (AP 1.2)
- Chapters 3, 4, 5—Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1)
- Chapter 3—Maya Math (AP 3.2)

Additional Activities and Website Links

An Additional Activities section, related to material the students are studying, may be found at the end of most chapters in this Teacher Guide. Even though there are multiple suggested activities, it is advised that you choose activities based on your students’ interests and needs, as well as on the instructional time available. Many of the activities include website links, and you should check the links before using them in class.

Books

Green, J., F. Macdonald, P. Steele, and M. Stotter. The Encyclopedia of the Ancient Americas: The Everyday Life of America’s Native Peoples. Lanham, MD: Southwater, 2018
Note to Teacher: *Early Civilizations of the Americas* is intended to be taught as the fifth unit of Grade 1 CKHG.

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# Early Civilizations of the Americas Pacing Guide

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**Week 4**

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*Early Civilizations of the Americas*
CHAPTER 1

Hunters and Gatherers

Primary Focus Objectives

✓ Trace the route from Asia to North America taken by some of the Americas’ first peoples. (RI.1.6)

✓ Learn alternative theories about how early people migrated. (SL.1.2)

✓ Describe the everyday life of the nomadic hunters and gatherers who crossed the Bering Strait land bridge. (SL.1.4)

✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: hunting, gathering, coastlines, herds, woolly mammoths, and tusks. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

Materials Needed

- individual student copies of Early Civilizations of the Americas Student Book
- globe
- a single copy each of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt Student Books
- individual student copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1)
- teacher and individual student copies of World Map (AP 1.2)

What Teachers Need to Know

For many years, the dominant migration theory was that early humans entered North America by way of the Bering Strait land bridge. Recently, however, scientists have begun to question this route, indicating that they believe that the earliest Americans who arrived followed a much warmer route along the now submerged coastal plains. Still others may have arrived in small boats by water; the peopling of the Americas continues to be a hotly debated topic.

The first peoples to cross into North America probably did not make the journey on purpose. They were likely hunting prehistoric animals, such as the woolly mammoth and the bison. Wherever the animals roamed, the hunting parties, probably made up of extended family groups, followed. All along the way, some groups stopped wandering and stayed in places that seemed hospitable. It is important to remember that this movement of people occurred over thousands of years. As the ice disappeared, so did the prehistoric animals that the hunters relied on for their food, clothing, and shelter.

To make up for the lack of big game, hunters turned to smaller game, such as deer and rabbits, for their food. People also began to pick wild plants, nuts, seeds, and berries and to dig up roots to eat. It is probable that people were gathering wild foods as early as 15,000 BCE. Even when people hunted, it is also likely they gathered other types of food, depending on local availability.
Introduce Early Civilizations of the Americas and Chapter 1: “Hunters and Gatherers”

Show students the covers of the Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt Student Books, and remind them that earlier this year, they studied the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Using the globe, point to the continents and areas in which each of these civilizations developed: the civilization of Mesopotamia developed in Asia, along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, near the modern-day countries of the Arabian Peninsula, the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, Iran, and Iraq; and the civilization of ancient Egypt developed in Africa along the Nile River.

Then ask students if they remember what a civilization is, that is, what the characteristics of a civilization are. If students do not respond, show images from each book to prompt discussion. Guide students in recalling that at first, ancient people in Mesopotamia and Egypt moved frequently from place to place to hunt animals or gather wild plants and berries for food. In each of these cultures, however, once people learned to farm as a way to grow their own food, they moved less frequently and began to settle and live in one place.

Encourage students to discuss the following characteristics of the ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations. People within each civilization:

- spoke the same language;
- had similar beliefs about the world and nature—about how the world started, why certain things happen, etc.;
- lived near one another, often in towns or perhaps in cities, and had the same way of living;
- agreed to live by certain rules or laws; and
- had a form of writing.

Using the globe and the World Map (AP 1.2), review the locations of each of the seven continents.

Tell students that in this unit they will learn about civilizations that developed in another part of the world, on the continents of North and South America.

Point out that North and South America are surrounded by water: the Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans. Tell students that in this lesson, they will learn that many scientists believe that the first peoples to come to North and South America may have come from Asia.
Distribute copies of the Student Book to the class, and tell students that the title of this book is *Early Civilizations of the Americas*. Ask students to look at the cover and describe what they see.

**SUPPORT**—Point out to students that the word *Americas* is plural, meaning that there is more than one. Explain that the plural form is used because the book is about early civilizations in both North America and South America.

Tell students that you are going to pretend that you have a special time machine so that you can all travel back in time to visit the Americas of long, long ago.

Ask students to close their eyes and make sure that they are “buckled in,” so that they can travel back in time. Count backward, saying, “3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . Back to the early Americas!” and then ask students to open their eyes.

**Big Question**

What did hunters and gatherers do?

**Core Vocabulary**

hunting  gathering  coastlines  herds  woolly mammoths  tusks
Ask students to turn to page 2 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell them that the title of this chapter is “Hunters and Gatherers.”

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **hunting** is what people do to search for, catch, and kill wild animals for food.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **gathering** is what people do to search for and collect food, such as plants, nuts, berries, and seeds to eat.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **coastlines** are the parts of land that are next to oceans.

Direct students to the map on the bottom right. Remind them that the map shows the continent of North America. Explain that the arrows show the different ways the first peoples may have traveled to North America. Have students trace the different paths of the arrows with their fingers.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—Long, long ago, how did people get food to eat?

» Long, long ago, people got food to eat by hunting and gathering, moving from place to place in order to follow animals to hunt and to gather local plants, nuts, and berries.
LITERAL—What kinds of food did people from long, long ago eat?

» People from long, long ago ate animals, plants, nuts, and berries.

LITERAL—How did people travel to different places in search of food?

» People traveled in search of food by walking great distances or by traveling along the coastlines in small boats until they found a place to hunt and gather.

Now ask students to look at the images on page 3 as you read aloud.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that herds are large groups of animals that travel together.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that woolly mammoths were large mammals that looked like elephants but with longer tusks and hair. They all died out and are now extinct.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that tusks are long teeth that come out of both sides of an animal’s mouth. They can be seen on elephants, walruses, and wild boars. They usually come in pairs, and animals that have them use them to protect themselves.
SUPPORT—To support student understanding of tusks, point out the tusks in the images on page 3—on the woolly mammoths in the top image and forming the doorway in the bottom image.

Ask students the following questions:

INFERENTIAL—Why did some people first come to North America?
» Some people first came to North America by following herds of large animals known as woolly mammoths.

LITERAL—Why did people hunt woolly mammoths?
» People hunted woolly mammoths because they provided food as well as fur, skin, and bones that could be used to make clothing, tools, and simple, warm homes.

Ask students to look at the images on page 4 as you read aloud.
Ask students the following question:

**LITERAL**—What else did the people who came to North America eat as food?

» The people who came to North America ate fruits, berries, plants, and a sweet syrup from trees in the forests and woodlands. They also ate fish from streams, rivers, and oceans.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION**

**TURN AND TALK**—What did hunters and gatherers do?

» Hunters and gatherers moved from place to place, following animals to hunt for food and gathering plants, nuts, and berries to eat.

**Note to Teacher:** Distribute copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1) for students to take home.

**Additional Activities**

**Using Maps (RI.1.6)**

**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of World Map (AP 1.2), crayons in five different colors

Distribute copies of World Map (AP 1.2).

Review the cardinal directions with students using the compass rose. Have students identify where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans are, as well as the name of each continent and where it is.

Show students where the Arctic Ocean is, and have them color it in blue.

Show students where the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central America are, and have them color each section in a different color.

**CHALLENGE**—Ask students to mark the various routes that people may have used to come to North America using lines and arrows. Refer them to the map on page 2 of the Student Book.

Point to the American continents on the map. Ask students:

• How do you think early peoples would have migrated here from other parts of the world?
  » Answers may vary, but students may suggest that early peoples walked over land or ice or sailed by boat.
Early peoples in different regions of the Americas developed agriculture independently. In each case, the agricultural system that developed was unique to the region’s environment, with some areas using slash-and-burn systems and others using terrace farming. Villages developed in the Americas after the domestication of corn. Extended families were a cornerstone of village life and the source of farming labor.

Archaeological finds in modern-day Mexico suggest that people there domesticated crops, such as squash. Corn is also prominent in the Mesoamerican archaeological record.

In South America, the potato was an early domesticated crop, with beans becoming important as well. In fact, the world’s oldest domesticated lima beans come from what is now Peru. Squash and peanuts also appear in the archaeological record. Domesticated corn seems to have traveled to South America from what is now Mexico.
**The Core Lesson**

**Introduce “From Hunting to Farming”**

Ask students to refer to the World Map (AP 1.2) as you display your copy and locate each of the continents, followed by the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans as you name them. Next, ask students to point to the following locations on the map: the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central America.

Finally, distribute copies of the *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Book, and ask students to refer to the images on pages 2–4 to summarize what they learned in Chapter 1 about the first peoples who came to North America.

Prompt students as needed in recalling the following key points:

- Long ago, people got food to eat by hunting and gathering.
- Ancient people hunted animals to eat and gathered plants, seeds, nuts, and berries.
- People traveled to different places in search for food by walking great distances or by sailing small boats that followed the coastlines.
- People hunted woolly mammoths because they provided food as well as fur, skin, and bones to make clothing, tools, and simple homes.

**Big Question**

How did the development of farming help people settle, or stay in one place?

**Core Vocabulary**

experimenting
Ask students to turn to page 5 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is “From Hunting to Farming.”

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that experiment means trying out new ideas. The people who experimented with the wild plants tried planting different kernels or seeds to see which would grow best. The very first corn plants were very small, but after many years of experimenting with different ways to plant and care for the corn, the corn plants grew larger, like the corn plants that farmers grow today.

SUPPORT—Show students the ear of corn, pointing to the kernels. Explain that the kernels are the seeds of the corn. These seeds can be planted in order to grow more corn plants.

Ask students to look at both images on page 5, and talk about the care that plants need to help them grow. Point out the tools that were used. Ask what would happen to such crops if people went away and no one took care of them. Would birds and wild animals come and eat them? Would they dry up? Explain that it was the need to care for and pick their crops that got these early people to stay in one place.
Ask students the following question:

**LITERAL**—What was one of the first crops grown by the people who came to North, Central, and South America?

» Corn was one of the first crops planted and grown by the people who came to North, Central, and South America.

Now ask students to look at the image on page 6 as you read aloud.

The development of farming created more food for people to eat. This meant that more people could live in one place. Some people continued to travel in search of food. But many settled and stayed in places where they could raise food crops and hunt on land near their farms.

Ask students the following questions:

**INFERENTIAL**—Why did people begin to settle down, or stay in one place?

» Farming created more food to eat, so people did not have to travel to find food. They also needed to take care of the crops they had planted.

**EVALUATIVE**—How do you think life changed once people started farming?

» Answers may vary, but students should note that life probably changed for people once they started farming because they had more food to eat, and more people began to stay in one place.
TURN AND TALK—How did the development of farming help people settle, or stay in one place?

» The development of farming helped people settle, or stay in one place, by creating a lot more food for people to eat. This meant that more people could live in one place rather than travel in search of food.

Additional Activities

Growing Crops

Materials Needed: lids from widemouthed jars (at least one per student); scissors for each student; paper towels; seeds from packages of corn, tomatoes, pumpkins, or beans; sponges or a small watering can; water

Note to Teacher: Tomatoes, pumpkins, and beans were other early crops grown in the Americas, in addition to corn.

Give students lids from widemouthed jars and a few seeds from packages of corn, tomatoes, pumpkins, or beans.

Then have students cut out two paper towel circles to fit their lids. Tell them to put the seeds between the two circles. Then have students moisten the sponges with warm water to squeeze onto the lid or use a watering can to moisten the paper towels. Place the lids on a warm shelf or windowsill.

Tell students to moisten the paper towels in their lids with warm water daily. In a few days, tiny roots should appear.

Discuss with students how some early people must have seen seeds like these growing plants and then made the connection that a plant grows from a seed. Explain that this was one of the most important scientific discoveries ever made.
The Maya developed a series of centers in the rainforest of the Yucatán Peninsula in what are now Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala, as well as in parts of El Salvador and Honduras. These centers were large areas with temples in the form of pyramids, as well as ball courts, marketplaces, and terraces, but no houses. Archaeologists believe that the centers were used for religious worship and as markets but that people did not live in them. Most people were farmers who lived in villages near their fields, while the priest-nobles who oversaw the religious observances lived closer to the centers. A chief and a class of priest-nobles ruled the centers.

The Maya developed advanced systems of astronomy and mathematics. They worked out a calendar of 365 days and could accurately predict eclipses. Their hieroglyphics for writing and keeping records made up a complex system of glyphs—symbols representing ideas—that archaeologists are still trying to figure out. Maya buildings, especially temple pyramids, were massive structures built of limestone blocks.

When the Spanish arrived in the 1500s, many Maya centers were in ruins. In about 900 CE, the Maya seem to have abandoned many of their centers. Experts speculate that an epidemic struck and killed much of the population, or perhaps a drought occurred, or the Maya had exhausted the soil and moved on. If the farmers could no longer support a center’s population, it is possible that the people simply moved away. No one knows for sure.
Several centuries later, the Toltec, a neighboring people, launched a series of attacks and subjugated the weakened Maya in the northern Yucatán and in what is now Guatemala. The Maya eventually overthrew the Toltec, but fighting among themselves severely weakened the Maya. By the time the Spanish arrived, the Maya had ceased to be a force in the region. Today, some two million Maya still live in and near the Yucatán.

**Introduce “The Marvelous Maya”**

Remind students that when people grow their own crops and stop moving around to find food, they have time to create what we call “civilization.” Encourage students to recall the following characteristics of the ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations. People within each civilization:

- spoke the same language;
- had similar beliefs about the world and nature—about how the world started, why certain things happen, etc.;
- lived near one another, often in towns or perhaps cities, and had the same way of living;
- agreed to live by certain rules or laws; and
- had a form of writing.

On the World Map (AP 1.2) and then on the Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1), have students locate Mexico and Central America. Then point out Mexico’s “thumb,” known as the Yucatán Peninsula. Explain that ancient people called the Maya lived in the rainforest there about one thousand years ago. Tell students that in this chapter, they will learn about the Maya civilization and many of its amazing accomplishments.

**Big Question**

How did the Maya create their calendar, and what did they use it for?

**Core Vocabulary**

- worship
- earthquakes
- religious ceremonies
- astronomers
- “changing of the seasons”
- tools
- instruments
- calendar
- recorded
- harvest
- goods
- symbols
Chapter 3: “The Marvelous Maya”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 7 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is “The Marvelous Maya.”

The Marvelous Maya

The Maya were one of several groups of people who lived and farmed in the Americas. The Maya became expert farmers. They made canals, or channels dug into the earth, to carry water to areas of farmland that were dry. They farmed on mountainsides and in the forests. They hunted and fished too.

Successful farming led to the growth of a great Maya civilization. The Maya built great cities. The cities and their surrounding lands were ruled by kings and queens. Farmers grew the crops that fed the increasing Maya population.

SUPPORT—Ask students to look at the image of different foods next to the chapter title. Explain that these foods are some of the crops that the Maya grew. Ask students to identify whatever crops, or foods, they can in the image. (Students will likely be able to identify the pumpkins and the corn.) Then identify whichever foods they do not know. (different types of peppers, sweet potato, different types of squash, and different kinds of beans) Challenge students to look for these foods the next time they are in a grocery store.

SUPPORT—Draw students’ attention to the middle image of Maya farmers on page 7. Point out the tools the Maya used for farming. Ask students to make the connection between the crops the Maya farmers grew and how the farmers fed city populations.

SUPPORT—Ask students to look at the bottom image on page 7. Point out the pyramid, and ask if they remember another civilization that built pyramids. (ancient Egypt) Have students describe what the city looks like.
Call students’ attention to the map on page 7. Have students take out their Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1). Ask students to locate the area where the Maya lived on the map and color that area green.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—Where did the Maya live?
» The Maya lived in the Americas.

INFERENTIAL—What made the Maya expert farmers?
» Answers may vary, but students should include that they made canals to carry water to areas of farmland that were dry and farmed on mountainsides and in forests.

EVALUATIVE—How did farming help the Maya civilization grow?
» Farming helped the Maya civilization grow by providing crops that fed the increasing Maya population in the cities and surrounding lands.

Now ask students to look at the images on page 8 as you read aloud.

The Maya built pyramids that were used to worship their gods. They believed their gods controlled the world. For example, the Maya believed in a god of mountains and earthquakes, a god of thunder, and a god of the sky. Maya priests were in charge of the many religious ceremonies that were part of everyday life.
Have students point to the pyramid on the page. (The pyramid is the large structure in the bottom image.)

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that to *worship* means to respect and honor a god or goddess. Worshipping usually includes praying and other special practices.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *earthquakes* happen when the ground shakes suddenly as a result of movements within the earth.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *religious ceremonies* are formal or official events that honor a god or goddess.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What did the Maya build to worship their gods?

» The Maya built great pyramids that they used to worship their gods.

**LITERAL**—What different kinds of gods did the Maya believe in?

» The Maya believed in a god of mountains and earthquakes, a god of thunder, and a god of the sky.

**Ask students to look at the images on page 9 as you read aloud.**

*Maya priests were also doctors and astronomers. The astronomer priests carefully watched the movements of the stars. They learned about the movement of the sun and the changing of the seasons. The Maya did this without any tools or instruments, just with the naked eye.*

*By studying the night sky, the Maya priests were able to create a calendar that recorded the change of the seasons, and the number of days in a year. The Maya came up with 365 days too! Maya farmers used the calendar to tell them when to plant and harvest their crops. They also planned their celebrations around this calendar!*
**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *astronomers* study the sun, stars, moon, and planets in the sky.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that the phrase “changing of the seasons” means moving from one season to another. The changing of the seasons occurs when spring becomes summer, when summer becomes fall, when fall becomes winter, and when winter becomes spring.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *tools* are objects that are used to complete a specific task. For example, a pencil is a tool for writing.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *instruments* are special tools that are used to measure things or do other careful work. Telescopes are instruments that are used to study the night sky. They make things that are far away appear larger and closer so that they are easier to see.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a *calendar* shows the days, weeks, and months in a year.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *recorded* means kept track of.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that to *harvest* is to gather or collect. Crops are harvested when they finish growing at the end of the season and are ready to be eaten.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What did Maya priests do?

» Maya priests were in charge of ceremonies to worship the gods, but they were also doctors and astronomers. They watched the movements of the stars, learned about the movement of the sun and the changing of the seasons, and created a calendar.

**EVALUATIVE**—Why would it be difficult to study astronomy without tools or instruments?

» Answers may vary, but students should suggest that using the naked eye to study objects like the stars and the moon is very difficult because they are so far away.

**LITERAL**—What did the Maya use the calendar for?

» The Maya used the calendar to know when to plant and harvest crops, as well as when to plan holidays and celebrations.
Ask students to look at the images on page 10 as you read aloud.

The Maya developed a number system made up of lines, circles, dots, and ovals. Numbers were used to record information about such things as crops and goods.

The Maya also had a system of writing made up of symbols called glyphs. The sons and some daughters of important people learned to read and write. When they were older, some became scribes and wrote down important information on paper made from tree bark. They also carved messages on stone walls and on buildings.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *goods* are things that people might want to buy or trade.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *symbols* are objects that represent something else. For example, a heart is a symbol of love. An American flag is a symbol of the United States.

**SUPPORT**—Emphasize the word *glyphs* in the second paragraph on page 10. Remind students that the ancient Egyptians wrote in hieroglyphs. Explain that like the ancient Egyptians, the Maya used a type of picture writing—but with different pictures from those used by the ancient Egyptians. Ask students to look at the image on the bottom right, and tell them that this is an example of Maya writing.

Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—How did the Maya’s number system help them?

» The Maya’s number system helped them keep track of crops and goods.

**LITERAL**—What did scribes do?

» Scribes wrote down important information on paper made from tree bark and carved messages on stone walls and on buildings.
**EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ask students to look at the image on page 11 as you read aloud.**

The Maya played a popular ball game. The game had a different name depending on where it was played. Almost every Maya city had a ball court as big as a modern football field. The ball used in this game was a heavy, rubber ball. Players had to keep the ball in the air using only their knees, hips, shoulders, and forearms. Players scored points by passing the ball through stone hoops. The team with the most points won.

**SUPPORT—Direct students to the image on page 11.** Ask students if anything in the image looks familiar. (*Students might say that the stone hoop reminds them of a basketball hoop.*) Reread the description of how the Maya ball game was played. Does it sound like any game the students play? Students might notice a similarity to basketball (passing the ball through a hoop) or to soccer (being allowed to use only a few body parts to move the ball). Ask volunteers to demonstrate the rules of the Maya ball game with a basketball, soccer ball, or pretend ball.

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL—**What were the rules of the Maya’s popular ball game?

» The rules of the Maya ball game were to use a heavy rubber ball and to keep it in the air using only a player’s knees, hips, shoulders, and forearms. Players scored points by passing the ball through stone hoops.
**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION**

**TURN AND TALK—** How did the Maya create their calendar, and what did they use it for?

- The Maya created their calendar by studying the night sky. The calendar recorded the change of seasons and the number of days in a year. They used the calendar to tell them when to plant and harvest crops and when to plan holidays and celebrations.

**Additional Activities**

**Maya Math**

**Materials Needed:** Maya Math (AP 3.2), blank sheets of paper, pencils

Distribute Maya Math (AP 3.2). Remind students that they saw these symbols in their Student Book on page 10.

Organize students into pairs. Give each pair a blank sheet of paper and a pencil.

Tell students that you are going to read a series of questions. The answer to each question is a number. Students are to work with a partner to write that number using Maya math.

Read the following example to students, and ask them for the answer to the question:

> How many days are in a week?

The answer to the question is seven. Model finding the number seven on the Maya Math Activity Page, and then draw the symbol for seven on the board or chart paper.

Once students understand the activity, read the following questions, and have students work with their partner to find and draw the symbol for each answer.

- How many fingers do you have? (ten)
- How many ears do you have? (two)
- How many tails does a dog have? (one)
- How many toes do you have on one foot? (five)
- How many b’s are in the word cat? (zero)
- What is your age? (will vary, but likely six or seven)

**CHALLENGE—** Ask students to use Maya Math to represent the number of children in the class. This may require some addition or combining of Maya symbols if the class size is greater than nineteen.
Make a Model of a Maya Pyramid

**Materials Needed:** modeling compound, such as clay or Play-Doh®, a thick, firm piece of cardboard to use as a base; plastic knives to use for sculpting; copies of the *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Book

Have students use clay to fashion a replica of one of the pyramids, referring to the illustrations in Chapter 3 of the Student Book. This can be a whole class or small group activity.

Make a Maya Face Mask

**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of one or both Maya face masks, colored markers or crayons, paper plates, scissors, glue sticks

**Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to three Maya face masks may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Maya face masks were used for many occasions, such as for weddings and other festivals, but their origins were as face protection during battle. Most masks had symbols on them that represented a god.

Distribute the Maya face masks to students. You may choose to have each student complete all three masks or to have each student complete a single mask, distributing copies of the three designs equally among your students.

Have students color the masks.

Model how to carefully cut the masks and glue them to paper plates to be worn. Provide assistance as needed as students cut and glue their own masks.

Allow students to demonstrate their masks in a class parade or for show and tell.
By 1325 CE, the Aztec (who called themselves the Mexica) had moved south to Lake Texcoco (/tesh*ko*ko/) in the Valley of Mexico. They were a nomadic group of some ten thousand people. A warrior culture, they were able to dominate their neighbors and establish an empire that in time encompassed southern and central Mexico. They did not directly govern other groups but established a tribute system in which the conquered states had to send goods to the conqueror. In order to maintain some level of independence, the subjugated peoples paid taxes and labor to the Aztec. The Aztec Empire was similar to a union of city-states. The tribute system and the military alliances forged by the Aztec gave their rulers much power in the region, though that power was hard to maintain.

The Aztec were governed by a ruler whom they called the chief of men and who, over time, was considered divine. When the Spanish arrived, the ruler was Moctezuma II (also spelled Montezuma). The ruler was assisted by a council of advisers. Then came a class of nobles—priests and wealthy merchants, as well as war chiefs. Most Aztec were farmers, but there were also traders and craftsmen. At the bottom of the social structure were captives taken in battle.

**Tenochtitlán**

The center of the Aztec Empire was Tenochtitlán (/tay*nawch*tee*tlahn/), built on an island in Lake Texcoco. Four causeways, or raised roads, connected the Aztec capital to the mainland, and canals enabled people in canoes to move their goods easily around the city. According to legend, the Mexica,
ancestors of the Aztec, were told by their sun god to wander until they found an eagle perched on a
actus with a serpent in its beak. Their god told them that when they found such a thing, they were
to settle in that place. When the Mexica finally saw this eagle on an island in Lake Texcoco, the legend
continues, they built their city there.

By 1519, Tenochtitlán was eight square miles in size and had a population of at least 200,000–300,000
and possibly as many as 350,000. This was one of the largest cities in the world at the time. The heart
of the city was a large square featuring palaces and whitewashed pyramids with temples atop them.
Around this central core were smaller palaces, brick houses, markets, and gardens.

THE CORE LESSON

Introduce “The Amazing Aztec”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Guide students in reviewing what they learned about the Maya
civilization in the previous chapter. Allow students to refer to the images in Chapter 3. Prompt students
to discuss any evidence included in Chapter 3 about the Maya in that relates to the characteristics of a
civilization:

• The Maya were expert farmers. They farmed on mountainsides and in forests.
• The Maya built cities. The cities and surrounding land were ruled by kings and queens.
• The Maya built pyramids to worship their gods.
• The Maya created a calendar and a number system.
• The Maya developed a writing system that used symbols called glyphs.
• The Maya played a ball game.

Tell students that they will learn about another early civilization in the Americas, the
Aztec, in today’s Chapter. On the World Map (AP 1.2) and then on the Map of Maya,
Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1), have students locate Mexico and Central America.
Then have students find Mexico’s “thumb,” known as the Yucatán Peninsula. Remind
students that this is where the Maya lived. From the Yucatán Peninsula, follow the
coastline along the Gulf of Mexico, stopping just past the base of the coastline’s U
shape. Explain that the Aztec civilization existed in this part of Mexico. In this chapter,
students will learn about the Aztec and many of their accomplishments.

Big Question

How would you describe the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán?

Core Vocabulary

empire shore mainland religious practices marketplaces traded
warriors conquered emperor astronomy craftsmen

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS
Chapter 4: “The Amazing Aztec”

Ask students to turn to page 12 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell them that the title of this chapter is “The Amazing Aztec.”

Direct students to the map on page 12. Note the territory of the Aztec Empire. Have students take out their Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1), and help them find the Aztec territory on their maps. Have them color the Aztec territory red on their maps.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that an empire is a group of countries or territories under the control of one government or ruler.

Ask students the following question:

LITERAL—According to the Aztec, how would they know where to make their home?

» The Aztec believed that their sun god had told them to look for an eagle eating a snake while sitting on a prickly pear cactus. When they found such a thing, they were to settle in that place.
Now ask students to look at the images on page 13 as you read aloud.

According to the story, they found an island in the middle of a beautiful lake in central Mexico. And on the island they spotted an eagle perched on a cactus—and yes, it was eating a snake! It was on that island that the Aztec built the most amazing city called Tenochtitlán, which means “the place of the prickly pear.” The island and the city are now modern-day Mexico City.

This is the modern flag of Mexico. On it you can see the eagle, the snake, and the cactus. This Aztec story is an important part of Mexican culture.

Note to Teacher: Tenochtitlán is pronounced (/tay*nawch*tee*tlahn/).

**SUPPORT**—Direct students’ attention to the image of the eagle and snake at the top of the page. Explain that the type of green plant that the eagle is sitting on is a cactus. A cactus is a type of plant that grows in dry, hot places. Most cactus plants are covered with thin, very sharp spines, or points. If you touch any of the spines, it hurts and feels like a pin pricking your finger. A “prickly pear” is a particular kind of cactus.

**SUPPORT**—Ask students to look at the image of the Mexican flag at the bottom of the page. Point out the image of the eagle with the snake, and remind students of the importance of that image in Aztec civilization. Explain that the Aztec were originally known as the Mexica people. That is how modern Mexico got its name.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Where did the Aztec settle?

» The Aztec settled on an island in the middle of a lake in central Mexico.
LITERAL—What does the name Tenochtitlán mean? What does it refer to?

» The name Tenochtitlán means “the place of the prickly pear,” and it refers to an Aztec legend: the Aztec believed that they would settle in a place where they found an eagle eating a snake on top of a prickly pear cactus.

LITERAL—What Aztec symbols are on the Mexican flag?

» The symbols of the eagle, snake, and cactus are on the Mexican flag.

Ask students to look at the images on page 14 as you read aloud.

The Aztec built bridges from their island city to the shore of the lake. Because the lake contained salt water, the Aztec used clay pipes to bring in fresh water from the mainland nearby. The water was used for drinking and cooking.

They built canals, or waterways, and moved about the city in canoes. They farmed on the island too by creating gardens on raised beds. The Aztec did this by digging up mud from the bottom of the lake and piling it up. Then they shaped the piles into long, narrow gardens and planted such crops as maize, beans, and squash. They also grew flowers.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a shore is land at the edge of water. Use the image at the top of page 14 to point out the lakeshore.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a mainland is the main land area of a country.

SUPPORT—When reading the list of crops at the bottom of page 14, explain that maize is another name for corn.
Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—How did the Aztec use clay pipes?
» The Aztec used clay pipes to bring in fresh water from the mainland for drinking and cooking, because the lake contained salt water.

**LITERAL**—How did the Aztec farm on an island?
» The Aztec farmed on an island by creating gardens on raised beds made from mud they dug up from the bottom of the lake.

**LITERAL**—What kinds of crops did the Aztec grow?
» The Aztec grew crops such as maize (corn), beans, and squash.

Now ask students to look at the image on page 15 as you read aloud.

Tenochtitlán also had streets and tall buildings. At the very center of the city was the Great Temple. The Aztec emperor, or ruler, and the priests who were in charge of all religious practices lived in grand palaces in the city. The Aztec believed in many gods, but the sun god and the rain god were among the most important. The Great Temple was used for the worship of Aztec gods.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that *religious practices* are what people say and do to honor and respect gods and goddesses. Prayer is a religious practice, and so are big religious ceremonies.
SUPPORT—Direct students to look at the image on the page. Explain that the Aztec’s Great Temple was a large pyramid. Have students find the Great Temple in the image. (The Great Temple is the pyramid in the center of the image.) Ask students if the Great Temple looks more like an ancient Egyptian pyramid or a Maya pyramid. (a Maya pyramid)

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What was at the very center of Tenochtitlán? What was it used for?

» The Great Temple was at the very center of Tenochtitlán. It was used for the worship of Aztec gods.

LITERAL—Who were the most important Aztec gods?

» The most important Aztec gods were the sun god and the rain god.

CHALLENGE—Why do you think the sun god and the rain god were the most important Aztec gods?

» The sun god and the rain god were the most important Aztec gods because the Aztec were farmers, and they needed the sun and rain in order to grow crops.

Ask students to look at the images on page 16 as you read aloud.

More than two hundred thousand people lived in the city of Tenochtitlán. It was one of the biggest cities in the world at the time. The city had busy marketplaces where many people traded goods. Farmers brought their food crops to the city from the gardens and fields nearby. They traded food crops for things they needed. People also traded gold and silver jewelry, tools, clay pots, clothing, feathers, and seashells.
CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that **marketplaces** are areas of a city where people go to buy, sell, and trade goods.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **traded** means exchanged for something else. The people of Tenochtitlán traded food that they had for other things that they needed.

Direct students to look at both images on the page. Ask students to describe what they observe in the images, and ask if they can identify any of the items being traded. Challenge them to identify the large building in the image at the top of the page. *(the Great Temple)*

Ask students the following questions:

**INFERENTIAL**—Did a small number of people or a large number of people live in Tenochtitlán?

« A large number of people—more than two hundred thousand—lived in Tenochtitlán. It was one of the biggest cities in the world at the time.

**LITERAL**—What kinds of crops and goods did people trade in the marketplaces?

« In the marketplaces, people traded food crops and goods, such as gold and silver jewelry, tools, clay pots, clothing, feathers, and seashells.

Now ask students to look at the images on page 17 as you read aloud.

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The Aztec were strong and skillful warriors. They conquered other people and took their land. They created an empire. The Aztec emperor was the most powerful person in the empire. One of the greatest Aztec emperors was Moctezuma I. He was so powerful, when he entered a room, people threw themselves on the floor.

Some Aztec boys learned to read and write. The priests were their teachers. Some were also taught medicine and astronomy. Others learned to be craftsmen or farmers. All boys trained from an early age to be warriors. Girls learned other skills, including pottery and weaving.
**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **warriors** are soldiers or fighters.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **conquered** means took control of a place or people by use of force.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **emperor** is the ruler of an empire, like a king.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **astronomy** is the study of the sun, stars, moon, and planets.

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that they learned the word **astronomers** when they studied the Maya. Ask students to recall what astronomers do. (*They study the sun, stars, moon, and planets.*) Explain that astronomy is what astronomers study.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **craftsmen** are people who make things by hand. People who make handmade tables and chairs, for example, are craftsmen.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Who was Moctezuma II? How did people treat him?

» Moctezuma II was one of the greatest Aztec emperors. He was so powerful that people would throw themselves on the floor when he entered a room.

**LITERAL**—What did Aztec boys and girls learn to do?

» Some Aztec boys learned to read and write. Some learned to practice medicine or astronomy. Others learned to be craftsmen or farmers, and all boys learned how to be warriors. Girls learned other skills, including pottery and weaving.

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**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: Big Question**

**TURN AND TALK**—How would you describe the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán?

» Tenochtitlán was a very large city, built on an island in the middle of a lake. The Aztec built raised roads to connect the island with the mainland. They also built canals in order to be able to move through the city in canoes, and they farmed on the island by creating gardens on raised beds. At the center of the city was the Great Temple, where they worshipped Aztec gods. The city had busy marketplaces where people traded crops and goods.

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**Additional Activities**

**The Aztec Legend**

**Materials Needed:** *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Books, drawing paper, colored markers or pencils

Reinforce the legend of the Aztec (in which the sun god had told them to settle where they found an eagle perched on a cactus, eating a snake) by having students draw the key elements (snake, eagle, cactus, island, lake, sun, god). Prompt students to “retell” the story by reconstructing the legend with these pictures.
Direct students to the image of the flag of Mexico on page 13 of the Student Book. Point out the center of the present-day Mexican flag. It shows an Aztec eagle eating a snake, and it helps Mexicans remember Mexico’s past.

Make an Aztec Face Mask

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of one or both Aztec face masks, paper plates, crayons or colored markers, scissors, glue sticks

Background for Teachers: Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to two Aztec face masks may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Aztec face masks were mostly used for religious and social festivals in Aztec society. Religion was of central importance to the Aztec, and they created a variety of rituals and festivals around it. Aztec masks were created in a number of ways and were also just used for display.

Distribute the face masks to the class. You may wish to give every student copies of both masks, or you may wish to have students work on a single mask, distributing copies of the two designs equally among your students.

Have students color their masks.

Model how to carefully cut the masks and glue them to paper plates to be worn.

Allow students to demonstrate their masks in a class parade or for show and tell.

The History of Chocolate

Materials Needed: ingredients and tools specified in selected hot chocolate recipe, small paper or plastic cups (one for each student), insulated thermos (optional)

Background for Teachers: Choose one of the two hot chocolate recipes provided, and assemble the ingredients and tools needed for that recipe. One of the recipes is attributed to the Maya and the other to the Aztec. If your classroom is not equipped for making hot chocolate, make it at home or in the school kitchen and bring it to class in an insulated thermos.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to two hot chocolate recipes may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Note to Teachers: Before beginning this activity, please take time to determine if any students are allergic to chocolate. Students with chocolate allergies should be excused from the activity, or you may choose to skip this Additional Activity.

Ask students if they know where chocolate comes from. Explain that it comes from the beans of the cacao plant and that cacao was very important to the Maya and the Aztec. In fact, the drink we know as cocoa or hot chocolate traces its history all the way back to the Maya and the Aztec. The Aztec believed that cacao seeds were a gift from the god of wisdom, Quetzalcoatl. The seeds were considered so valuable that they were used as a form of currency, or money.
Tell students that you are going to make hot chocolate like the kind the Maya and Aztec drank. Show students the ingredients that you are going to use, and then read the directions aloud, step by step, as you follow them. Encourage students to notice the smell, color, and consistency of what you are making.

When the hot chocolate is ready, pour a little into each of the small cups for students to taste, making sure that it is not too hot to drink. Ask students if they can describe how this chocolate tastes different from the type of hot chocolate they are accustomed to drinking. (*The Maya and Aztec chocolate may taste spicier and/or not as sweet as the hot chocolate they are used to drinking.*) Take a class poll to find out how many students like the taste of the Maya or Aztec chocolate and how many do not.
EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS

CHAPTER 5

The Incredible Inca

Primary Focus Objectives

✓ Describe how the Inca built their cities up in the mountains. (SL.1.4)
✓ Using a map, locate where the Inca lived. (RI.1.6)
✓ Describe the achievements of the Inca. (SL.1.4)
✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: messengers and thunderbolt. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

Materials Needed

- individual student copies of Early Civilizations of the Americas Student Book
- teacher and individual student copies of World Map (AP 1.2)
- teacher and individual student copies of Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1)
- purple crayons for each student

What Teachers Need to Know

By 1525, the Inca had created a vast empire that stretched from what is today northern Ecuador through Peru and into parts of Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile. Their capital was at Cuzco, Peru, the original homeland of the Inca in the Andes Mountains.

The Inca began their conquests around 1438. Like the Aztec, the Inca did not directly rule conquered peoples but created a tribute system. The Inca did, however, resettle conquered peoples closer to Cuzco among loyal subjects, to ensure obedience, if not loyalty.

The leader of the empire was called “the Inca” and was considered a god. Below the royal family came the noble class, which was made up of priests, military leaders, and the men who ran the government. Most people were farmers, although there were merchants and artisans.

The ability of the Inca to communicate throughout their empire was an important factor in keeping the empire together. The empire had more than ten thousand miles of roads. Where the roads had to pass over river gorges and ravines, suspension bridges made of woven fiber were built. Messengers, called chasquis or runners, ran in relays over these roads carrying light items, laws, and news of the empire to distant parts. Rest houses were built one day apart on the roads, and people in nearby villages provided food for the messengers and new runners to take up the messages. Other travelers on the roads were farmers going to market, merchants, and Inca soldiers. The army used the roads to march quickly from one area to another to quiet unrest among the Inca’s subjects.

The main economic activity of the Inca was farming, especially growing potatoes. The Inca built terraces on the sides of mountains and used irrigation systems to cultivate more land.
Introduce “The Incredible Inca”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Guide students in reviewing what they learned about the Aztec civilization in the previous chapter. Allow students to refer to the images in Chapter 4. Prompt students to discuss any evidence included in Chapter 4 about the Aztec that relates to the characteristics of a civilization:

- The Aztec built an empire in Mexico. Aztec warriors conquered other peoples and took their land.
- The Aztec built a large city on an island. They used clay pipes to bring drinking water to the island. They built canals, streets, tall buildings, and raised gardens.
- The Aztec used the Great Temple to worship their gods.
- The Aztec traded food and other goods in the marketplaces of their big city.
- The Aztec were governed by an emperor.

On the World Map (AP 1.2) and then on the Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1), have students locate South America. Tell students that today, they will learn about a civilization of people called the Inca, who lived in South America. The Inca built cities on mountains of South America that are so high up, most people would have trouble just breathing there!

Big Question

How was the Royal Road used by the Inca?

Core Vocabulary

messengers   thunderbolt
The Incredible Inca

The Aztec created a great empire, but the Inca built an even bigger one that stretched all along the western coast of South America. Today that empire would include large parts of the modern-day countries of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. At the head of this amazing empire, the man in charge of millions of people, was the all-powerful Sapa Inca.

Direct students’ attention to the map on page 18. Note the territory of the Inca Empire. Have students take out their Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1), and ask them to find the Inca territory on their maps. Have them color the Inca Empire purple on their maps.

Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Where did the Inca build their empire?

» The Inca built their empire all along the western coast of South America.

**LITERAL**—Who was the ruler of the Inca empire?

» The ruler of the Inca empire was the Sapa Inca.
The Inca were expert road builders. They built a road called the Royal Road, which stretched for two thousand miles. For a time it was the longest road in the world. Inca soldiers could move quickly along the road if they were needed. And farmers could easily move from place to place to trade their crops, which included cocoa and many different kinds of potatoes.

Direct students’ attention to the images on the page. Invite volunteers to briefly describe what is happening in each image and how it relates to the Royal Road. (Top left image: the Inca built the Royal Road; top right image: Inca soldiers could move quickly along the road; bottom image: farmers could carry their crops for trade along the road.)

Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What were the Inca experts at?

» The Inca were experts at building roads.

**LITERAL**—How long was the Royal Road?

» The Royal Road was two thousand miles long.

**LITERAL**—What did the Inca use the Royal Road for?

» The Inca soldiers used the Royal Road to move quickly, and farmers used it to move from place to place to trade crops.
Ask students to look at the images on page 20 as you read aloud.

The Inca also used a chain of speedy messengers who ran along the Royal Road taking important news from place to place. The Inca did not have a written language, so each runner had to remember their message so they could tell it to the next runner.

However, the Inca did have their own way of counting and recording information. They used a quipu. A quipu was a group of different colored strings with knots tied in a certain way. The strings and knots might show numbers of soldiers or give information about farmers' crops.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **messengers** are people who deliver information from one place to another.

**SUPPORT**—To give students an idea of what Inca messengers did, play a game by dividing students into separate sections of the room. Assign one messenger from the first group to run to the next group to repeat a message. Have new students run from group to group relay-style until a messenger makes it to the final group and then repeats the message out loud to check if it is correct.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How did Inca messengers deliver messages to different places?

» Inca messengers ran along the Royal Road to take important news from place to place. They had to remember their messages and tell them to the next runner, because the Inca did not have a written language, unlike some other ancient peoples.

**LITERAL**—What was a quipu?

» The Inca used a quipu to count and record information. It was made of different colored strings with knots tied in a certain way, and it showed numbers or provided information.
Now ask students to look at the image on page 21 as you read aloud.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a thunderbolt is a zigzag lightning strike that can be seen in the sky during a thunder and lightning storm. To aid student understanding, point out the thunderbolts in the image on page 21.

Ask students the following questions:

INFERENTIAL—How were the Inca like the Maya and the Aztec?

» The Inca were like the Maya and the Aztec because they worshipped different gods.

LITERAL—Why was the sun god so important to the Inca?

» The sun god was so important to the Inca because they believed he had the power to bring rain to the farmers’ crops.
Ask students to look at the image on page 22 as you read aloud.

The Inca also built great cities with temples and palaces. Perhaps one of the most remarkable cities ever built is the Inca city of Machu Picchu, which sits high up in the Andes Mountains of modern-day Peru. The stones used to build the city were so carefully cut that they fit together like jigsaw pieces. The city was built for a powerful Inca king.

**SUPPORT**—Machu Picchu is pronounced (/mah*choo/pee*choo/). Explain that what students see in this photo are the ruins, or what is left, of Machu Picchu. Tell students that many people today come from around the world to visit and see the ruins of Machu Picchu.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What is Machu Picchu?

» Machu Picchu is an ancient Inca city high up in the Andes Mountains of Peru.

**LITERAL**—What is special about Machu Picchu?

» Machu Picchu was built for a powerful Inca king. The stones used to build it fit together like jigsaw puzzle pieces.
TURN AND TALK—How was the Royal Road used by the Inca?

» The Royal Road was used by the Inca to move soldiers from place to place quickly. It was also used by farmers to trade their crops. The Inca also had speedy messengers who used the Royal Road to take important news from place to place.
Thousands of years ago, people all around the world began telling stories to help explain how and why things happen. Some things, like the rising and setting of the sun, are predictable. Others, like floods and earthquakes, are often unpredictable. People created stories to make sense of both predictable and unpredictable events. Storytellers passed these symbolic stories, or myths, along from one generation to the next.

The *Popol Vuh*, which means “book of the community,” tells the Maya creation story. Members of the royal K’iche lineage, who had once ruled in what are the modern-day highlands of Guatemala, recorded the story in the 1500s. Their goal was to preserve it because the colonial rule of the Spanish was spreading. The Maya who occupied the lowland Yucatán area of Mexico had their own *Books of Chilam Balam* that detailed the same creation myth.
**THE CORE LESSON**

**Introduce “A Story from the Americas”**

**Distribute copies of the Student Book.** Guide students in reviewing what they have already learned about the Maya civilization. Allow students to refer to the images in Chapter 3 of their Student Book.

Next, prompt students to discuss what they know about myths from the different civilizations they have learned about:

- A myth is a story a civilization tells itself about its origins and beliefs.
- A myth is a story that was once considered to be a true explanation of the natural world and how it came to be.
- Characters in myths are often nonhuman and are typically gods or goddesses.
- The setting of a myth usually takes place before a time when written records were kept.

Tell students that in this chapter, they will hear the Maya myth about how the world was created.

**Big Question**

What happens in the Maya story about how the Earth was created, or made?

**Core Vocabulary**

- religions
- mystery
- creation
- storytellers
- generation
- plains
- jaguars
- pumas
- honor
Chapter 6: “A Story from the Americas”

Ask students to turn to page 23 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud. Tell them that the title of this chapter is “A Story from the Americas.”

A Story from the Americas

The people of these early civilizations often wondered how the world was created, or made. Their religions helped them to make sense of this mystery and, for some, provided answers. The Maya had their own story about the creation of Earth. Maya storytellers passed this story from one generation to the next—all the way down to today. This is the Maya story of how Earth and its people came to be.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that religions are different beliefs that teach people how to live. Some religions involve the worship of one or more gods; some do not.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a mystery is something that is difficult or impossible to understand or explain.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that creation is the making of something. A story about the creation of the earth tells how the earth started and was made.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that storytellers are people who tell or write stories. In cultures that do not have a written language, it is the job of the storytellers to teach the culture’s myths and history.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that a generation is all the people who are about the same age. For example, all first graders are part of the same generation because they’re all about the same age.
Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—How did religions help people of early civilizations?

» Religions helped people of early civilizations make sense of the mystery of how the world was made.

LITERAL—How was the Maya creation story passed down from one generation to the next?

» The Maya creation story was passed down by storytellers, told by people sharing the story with other people.

Now ask students to look at the images on page 24 as you read aloud.

Note to Teacher: The Maya names Tepew and Q’uk’umatz are pronounced (/teh*peh/) and (/k*uhk*uh*mahtz/).

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that plains are large, flat areas of land. They typically do not have many trees.

SUPPORT—Ask students to first point to the mountains in the image. Then ask them to point to the plains.

In the beginning there was no Earth. There was only darkness. But then the gods created a place between the sea and the sky. This happened when two of the gods, Tepew and Q’uk’umatz, shouted out the name “Earth.” Suddenly Earth appeared. Mountains rose up, and plains appeared. Trees and plants grew across the land.
Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—According to the Maya myth, what did the gods create?
» They created a place between the sea and the sky.

**LITERAL**—What appeared first on Earth?
» Mountains, plains, trees, and plants appeared on Earth first.

Ask students to look at the images on page 25 as you read aloud.

However, Earth was silent until the gods filled it with animals of every kind. Suddenly there were jaguars, pumas, snakes, deer, and antelope on the land. The gods filled the oceans with animals too.

But soon the gods realized that they needed people. They began by making clay people. The clay people looked good, but they could not move. They could not walk about. And when the sun shone bright, they began to melt!

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **jaguars** are large American wildcats with yellow-brown fur and black spots. They look similar to, or like, leopards. Point out the jaguar in the image at the top of page 25.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **pumas** are large American wildcats with plain tan fur. They are sometimes called cougars or mountain lions. Point out the puma walking over the log in the image at the top of page 25.

**SUPPORT**—Point out the deer (with pronged antlers) and the antelope (with straighter, smoother antlers) in the image at the top of page 25. Then challenge students to find the snake in the image. (curled around the tree branch in the top left of the image)
Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What kinds of animals did the gods fill Earth with first?

» The gods filled Earth first with jaguars, pumas, snakes, deer, antelope, and animals in the oceans.

**LITERAL**—What did the gods make people out of first? Why didn’t this idea work?

» The gods made people out of clay first, but the people couldn’t move or walk, and they began to melt in the sun.

Now ask students to look at the image on page 26 as you read aloud.

The gods knew they must start again. So they decided to make wooden people. The wooden people were stronger. They did not melt in the warm sun. But the wooden people were not quite right. For one thing, they could not think for themselves.

Ask students the following question:

**LITERAL**—What did the gods make people out of next? How were they better than the clay people? Why didn’t this idea work?

» The gods made people out of wood next. They were stronger than the clay people and they did not melt, but they were still not quite right because they couldn’t think for themselves.
Now ask students to look at the images on page 27 as you read aloud.

The gods tried one last time to create the people they wanted to live on Earth. They asked the animals to help them. The animals showed the gods a perfect place for people to live. In this place grew yellow and white corn. The gods created humans from that corn.

The first humans could hear, see, and think. The humans thanked the gods and built great temples in their honor. These humans were exactly what the gods had hoped for, and they were happy.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that honor means a show of respect or admiration.

Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What did the animals show the gods? What did the gods finally use to make humans out of?

» The animals showed the gods a perfect place for humans to live, where yellow and white corn grew. The gods then created humans from the corn.

LITERAL—What did the humans do for the gods?

» The humans thanked the gods and build great temples in their honor.
TURN AND TALK—What happens in the Maya story about how the Earth was created, or made?

In the beginning, there was no Earth until the gods created a place between the sea and the sky by shouting the name “Earth.” Then mountains, plains, trees, and plants appeared, and the gods filled Earth with animals. Finally, the gods tried to create humans, but their first two attempts failed, since they tried to use clay and then wood. The animals showed the gods the perfect place for humans to live: where yellow and white corn grew. The gods created humans from that corn, and the humans thanked them by building great temples in their honor.
The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Today

Primary Focus Objectives

✓ Describe how the Maya people of today still follow their ancestors’ traditions. (SL.1.4)

✓ Describe how the Aztec people of today still follow their ancestors’ traditions. (SL.1.4)

✓ Describe how the Inca people of today still follow their ancestors’ traditions. (SL.1.4)

✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: ancestors, weave, descendants, culture, and llamas. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

Materials Needed

• individual student copies of Early Civilizations of the Americas Student Book

What Teachers Need to Know

Today, more than six million Maya live in their original homeland. There are hundreds of restored ancient cities with temples, pyramids, and palaces that are available for tourists to visit and for archaeologists to study, and many modern Maya people live and work near these places. Their language, traditions, and myths continue to influence their worldview as they work to preserve their culture.

The Aztec culture has had a lasting influence on modern society. The Aztec were among the first cultures to see time as linear and to define it through the past, present, and future. Many ancient Aztec motifs from their art remain popular in art, fashion, and design, and they are considered to be highly artistic people. Mexico’s coat of arms is inspired by Aztec mythology and imagery.

The Inca were conquered by the Spanish in 1532, but their mountain cities, mummies, and colorful weavings continue to be an influence and inspiration today. UNESCO recognized the Inca textile tradition in 2005 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, based on the fact that Inca descendants have continued the age-old weaving practices. Visitors can still tour Machu Picchu, the mountain citadel of the Inca, as well as other nearby ruins in the Sacred Valley. Between three and four million descendants still speak the Quechua language, with many words having made their way into common usage in English, such as: condor, jerky, llama, poncho, puma, and quinoa.
Introduce “The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Today”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Guide students in reviewing what they learned about the Inca civilization in Chapter 5, telling them to refer back to its images. Prompt students to discuss any evidence included in Chapter 5 about the Inca that relates to the characteristics of a civilization:

- The Inca built an empire in South America that was bigger than the Aztec empire.
- The Inca were ruled by a king called the Sapa Inca.
- The Inca were expert road builders. They used the Royal Road to move soldiers, trade goods, and bring news to people.
- The Inca did not have a written language, but they did have a method of counting and recording information, using a quipu.
- The Inca worshipped many gods, but the sun god was most important to them.
- The Inca built cities such as Machu Picchu with temples and palaces.

Tell students that in today’s chapter they will learn about the people who live in North, Central, and South America today who are related to the Maya, Aztec, and Inca from long ago.

Big Question

How do the Maya, Aztec, and Inca people of today follow their ancestors’ traditions?

Core Vocabulary

ancestors    weave    descendants    culture    llamas
Chapter 7: “The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Today”

Ask students to turn to page 28 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell them that the title of this chapter is “The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Today.”

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **ancestors** are family members who lived long, long ago.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that to **weave** means to make cloth by twisting long threads together.

Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Do just a few or do many Maya still live in Central America?

» Many Maya still live in Central America, at least six million.

**EVALUATIVE**—What do the modern Maya still do that is like what their ancestors did? What do they do that is modern?

» Many modern Maya still speak the languages of their ancestors, follow their traditions, listen to their stories, weave cloth, grow crops, and eat the same food. Unlike their ancestors, they also do modern things, such as go to school, watch TV, and play games.
Now ask students to look at the images on page 29 as you read aloud.

In Mexico, descendants of the Aztec enjoy celebrating their culture. Many people speak Nahuatl, the language of the people who made their home on the island in the lake. They perform Aztec dances and wear traditional dress. And just as their ancestors did, the Aztec people of today love flowers, which are a big part of their holidays and celebrations.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that descendants are people who have family members who lived in the past.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that culture refers to the language and way of life, including the beliefs and practices, of a specific group of people. Culture also includes the holidays celebrated by this group of people, as well as the way they dress and the art they create.

Note to Teacher: Nahuatl is pronounced (/na*hwa*tuhl/).

SUPPORT—Explain that traditional dress means the clothing and jewelry that is unique to a culture and tied to the culture’s past. Point out the woman in Aztec traditional dress in the top image on page 29, and explain that she is wearing traditional dress—for example, the headdress of feathers that she is wearing on her head is tied to Mexico’s Aztec past.
Ask students the following questions:

LITERAL—What do descendants of the Aztec do to celebrate their culture?

> Many descendants of the Aztec speak their ancestors’ Nahuatl language, perform Aztec dances, and wear traditional dress.

LITERAL—How do the Aztec today use flowers?

> The Aztec today use flowers in their holidays and celebrations.

Ask students to look at the images on page 30 as you read aloud.

If you were to travel up into the Andes Mountains of Peru, you would meet the descendants of the Inca. You would meet people in brightly colored clothing walking on mountain paths with llamas at their side. You would hear Quechua, the language of the people who built Machu Picchu. You would most likely be invited to taste the different kinds of potatoes that the Inca people love to eat. And you would be able to watch the sun set over the beautiful Andes Mountains.

CORE VOCABULARY—Explain that llamas are soft woolly animals found in the Andes Mountains. They help people carry goods, and their wool is used to make clothing. Point out the llamas in the top left image on page 30.

Note to Teacher: Quechua is pronounced (/keh*choo*ah/).
Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL—**Where can the descendants of the Inca be found?

» The descendants of the Inca can be found in the Andes Mountains.

**LITERAL—**What are the descendants of the Inca like now?

» The descendants of the Inca still wear brightly colored clothing and speak Quechua, the language of the people who built Machu Picchu. They still grow and eat many different kinds of potatoes.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION**

**TURN AND TALK—**How do the Maya, Aztec, and Inca people of today follow their ancestors’ traditions?

» Many Maya still speak the language of their ancestors, follow their traditions, weave cloth, grow the same crops, and eat the same food. Many Aztec today still speak the Nahuatl language, perform Aztec dances, and wear traditional dress. Many Inca people of today still wear brightly colored clothing, speak Quechua, and grow many kinds of potatoes.
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Looking for more teaching ideas using CKHG or to connect with other teachers? Check out the Core Knowledge Community at https://www.coreknowledge.org/community/ You will find a Teacher Workroom with ideas for different activities, chat rooms where you can communicate with other Core Knowledge teachers, and a map of the United States, so you can see who else may be using Core Knowledge near you!
Culminating Activity: Early Civilizations of the Americas

Let’s Go on a Field Trip

Materials Needed: internet access, capability to display the internet in the classroom, individual copies of Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations (AP 3.1)

Background for Teachers: This virtual field trip allows students to tour the ancient Maya pyramid at Chichén Itzá, watch the ancient sport of poc tu poc, visit the Inca site of Machu Picchu, and tour the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán. Have students refer to their Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations to mark the route and stops on their field trip.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the field trip activities may be found:
www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Tell students that they will be taking a virtual field trip to visit all the ancient sites they have learned about in this unit. Ask students to watch carefully to see if they recognize places, people, or things that they have been learning about in this unit.

Play the video Mexico: Are We There Yet?, starting at time stamp 0:51.

After the video, ask students:

• How many days are there in a year?
  » There are 365 days in a year.

• How many steps are there on the pyramid?
  » There are 365 steps on the pyramid.

• What can you see from the top of the pyramid?
  » You can see other buildings that were part of Chichén Itzá, an ancient Maya city.

• How did the Maya tell stories?
  » The Maya told stories using pictures.

Play the video Peru: Are We There Yet?

After the video, ask students:

• Where is Machu Picchu?
  » Machu Picchu is in the mountains of Peru.

• What are ruins?
  » Ruins are places that people moved from a long, long time ago and where the houses are no longer lived in. The city of Machu Picchu is a ruin. Machu Picchu is still considered a religious place. It is visited by many people every year.
• What does Machu Picchu mean?
  » Machu Picchu means “old mountain.”

• How old is Machu Picchu?
  » Machu Picchu is five hundred years old.

• Who built Machu Picchu?
  » The Inca built Machu Picchu.

• What is a quarry?
  » A quarry is a place where rocks are cut for building. The Inca got rock from the quarry to build the city.

Play the video The Time Compass: The Aztec Empire, starting at time stamp 1:58 and stopping at 3:00.

After the video, ask students:

• How many different states did the Aztec Empire have?
  » The empire had thirty-eight different states at the height of its power.

• What was the capital of the Aztec Empire?
  » The capital of the Aztec Empire was Tenochtitlán.

• What kind of “streets” did Tenochtitlán have?
  » The “streets” were actually canals. People could ride boats on the canals to go to places.

After concluding the field trip, ask students to share their observations and highlights.

Classroom Mural

Materials Needed: Maya, Aztec, and Inca coloring pages; crayons or colored markers; butcher block paper; tape, glue, or stapler; student Maya and Aztec face masks (optional)

Background for Teachers: Print out coloring pages about the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the links to the pages may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

Organize the class into pairs or small groups. Distribute the coloring pages evenly across the groups. Have each group color its assigned page(s).

Hang a piece of butcher block paper on the wall. Work with students to affix their colored pages to the butcher block paper to create a collage. You may also wish to add the Maya and Aztec face masks that students completed earlier in the unit.

Once the collage is completed, invite each group of students to tell the rest of the class about the images they colored. What do the images represent?

You may wish to schedule the presentations for a separate day and invite parents or other grade-level students.
Materials Needed: sufficient copies of My Book About Early Civilizations of the Americas (see pages 74–89), crayons for each student, stapler

Note to Teacher: To save instructional time, you may want to preassemble and staple a book for each student prior to class.

Distribute a copy of My Book About Early Civilizations of the Americas and crayons to each student. Explain that this is a mini-book version of the Student Book that they have been using in class.

Tell students that they will have a chance to personalize the cover of the book by writing their name and drawing a picture on the cover. Ask students to think about the different things that they have learned about early civilizations of the Americas that they might draw on the cover. Prompt students (if needed) to consider drawing any of the following images:

- hunters and gatherers
- an Aztec warrior
- a great temple
- a woolly mammoth
- a Maya face mask
- the Mexican flag
- an Inca messenger

Allow students approximately ten to fifteen minutes to draw their cover.

Then divide students into seven groups. Assign one chapter to each group of students, telling students that with the members of their group, they should look at just their chapter images and quietly talk about what is depicted, as well as any information they heard read aloud.

Tell students that they will have about five minutes to talk to one another in a small group and then you will call the entire class back together, asking one member from each group to explain their chapter to the rest of the class. All students should follow along in their own book as the images and pages for each chapter are discussed.

Prompt and elaborate what students say about each chapter to make sure the following points are made:

Chapter 1

- Long ago, people found food by hunting and gathering.
- The first people came to North America by land and on boats by sea.
- People followed herds of animals, like the woolly mammoth, to get food and to make clothing, tools, and homes from the animals’ fur, skin, and bones.
Chapter 2

- People experimented with planting wild plants and developed corn as a crop.
- Farming created more food for people, so they could stop moving around and live in one place.

Chapter 3

- The Maya were expert farmers. They grew corn, beans, squash, peppers, and pumpkins.
- The Maya built cities and pyramids.
- Maya priests studied the skies and learned about the movement of the sun and the changing of the seasons.
- Maya priests created a calendar that recorded the changing of the seasons and told farmers when to plant and harvest their crops.
- The Maya were good at math and made up a system of numbers that used lines, circles, dots, and ovals.
- The Maya wrote with pictures called glyphs. Scribes wrote down important information.
- The Maya played a ball game. They had to use certain body parts to put a ball through a hoop.

Chapter 4

- The Aztec lived in what is now Mexico.
- In Aztec legend, when the Aztec saw an eagle perched on a cactus, eating a snake, they knew where to build their city, called Tenochtitlán.
- The Aztec built bridges to connect their island city to the mainland, canals to use as roads in their city, and raised gardens to grow food.
- The Great Temple was in the middle of Tenochtitlán. The Aztec gods were worshipped there.
- People traded food and other goods in the marketplaces of Tenochtitlán.
- Aztec warriors conquered other people and created an empire.
- Moctezuma II was one of the Aztec’s greatest emperors.
- Aztec boys learned to read and write and to be warriors. Girls learned skills including pottery and weaving.

Chapter 5

- The Inca lived along the western coast of South America.
- The Inca were ruled by the Sapa Inca.
- The Inca built the Royal Road so soldiers could move quickly and farmers could move easily to trade their crops.
- Inca messengers carried news from place to place using the Royal Road.
- The Inca used a group of knotted, colored strings, called a quipu, to count and record information.
- The Inca worshipped many gods, but the sun god was of special importance.
- The Inca built great cities, such as Machu Picchu in the Andes Mountains of Peru.
Chapter 6

- Religions helped early people understand the mysteries of the world.
- Maya storytellers passed on Maya myths from one generation to the next.
- The Maya creation myth said that the gods created the earth first and then the animals. Then the gods tried to create people. Clay people and wooden people didn’t work. But people made of corn did. The corn people built temples to honor the gods who made them.

Chapter 7

- Many Maya still live in Central America. They speak the languages of their ancestors, eat the same food, and follow the same traditions.
- Descendants of the Aztec live in Mexico. Many still speak the Aztec language of Nahuatl, perform Aztec dances, and wear Aztec-style dress.
- Descendants of the Inca live in the Andes Mountains. They speak the Inca language of Quechua and grow and eat potatoes like their Inca ancestors. They trek through the mountains with llamas.

Tell students that they may take their book home. Encourage students to talk about the book at home with their family in the same way that they have in class.
Chapter 1

Hunters and Gatherers

Long, long ago people all over the world found food by hunting and gathering. This meant they moved from place to place as they followed animals and gathered plants, nuts, and berries. Some people walked great distances hunting and gathering as they went. Others traveled in small boats, following the coastlines until they found a place to hunt and gather.

Some of the people who had found themselves in North America followed herds of large animals known as woolly mammoths. Woolly mammoths looked like African elephants, though their ears were smaller and their tusks were longer.

Animals such as woolly mammoths not only provided these people with food, they also gave them fur, skin, and bones that were used to make clothing, tools, and simple, warm homes.
At certain times of the year across North America, people were able to gather fruits, berries, and plants. They used these foods during the winter months.

They even gathered a sweet syrup from the trees in the forests and woodlands. And they fished in the oceans, rivers, and streams too!

From Hunting to Farming

Over many years people kept on moving across North America. This movement of people also happened in Central and South America. Then there came a time when some people became quite good at farming.

They took wild plants that they had eaten for hundreds of years, and by experimenting with these plants, they developed a new crop called corn.
The development of farming created more food for people to eat. This meant that more people could live in one place. Some people continued to travel in search of food. But many settled and stayed in places where they could raise food crops and hunt on land near their farms.

Chapter 3

The Marvelous Maya

The Maya were one of several groups of people who lived and farmed in the Americas. The Maya became expert farmers. They made canals, or channels dug into the earth, to carry water to areas of farmland that were dry. They farmed on mountainsides and in the forests. They hunted and fished too.

Successful farming led to the growth of a great Maya civilization. The Maya built great cities. The cities and their surrounding lands were ruled by kings and queens. Farmers grew the crops that fed the increasing Maya population.
The Maya built pyramids that were used to worship their gods. They believed their gods controlled the world. For example, the Maya believed in a god of mountains and earthquakes, a god of thunder, and a god of the sky. Maya priests were in charge of the many religious ceremonies that were part of everyday life.

Maya priests were also doctors and astronomers. The astronomer priests carefully watched the movements of the stars. They learned about the movement of the sun and the changing of the seasons. The Maya did this without any tools or instruments, just with the naked eye!

By studying the night sky, the Maya priests were able to create a calendar that recorded the change of the seasons, and the number of days in a year. The Maya came up with 365 days too! Maya farmers used the calendar to tell them when to plant and harvest their crops. They also planned their celebrations around this calendar!
The Maya developed a number system made up of lines, circles, dots, and ovals. Numbers were used to record information about such things as crops and goods.

The Maya also had a system of writing made up of symbols called glyphs. The sons and some daughters of important people learned to read and write. When they were older, some became scribes and wrote down important information on paper made from tree bark. They also carved messages on stone walls and on buildings.

The Maya played a popular ball game. The game had a different name depending on where it was played. Almost every Maya city had a ball court as big as a modern football field. The ball used in this game was a heavy, rubber ball. Players had to keep the ball in the air using only their knees, hips, shoulders, and forearms. Players scored points by passing the ball through stone hoops. The team with the most points won.
The Amazing Aztec

Hundreds of years ago, in the Americas, a group of people set off in search of a home. These people became the creators of the Aztec Empire. As the story goes, the Aztec believed that their sun god had told them to search for an eagle eating a snake, while sitting on a prickly pear cactus. When they found such a thing, they were to settle in that place.

According to the story, they found an island in the middle of a beautiful lake in central Mexico. And on the island they spotted an eagle perched on a cactus—and yes, it was eating a snake! It was on that island that the Aztec built the most amazing city called Tenochtitlán, which means “the place of the prickly pear.” The island and the city are now modern-day Mexico City.

This is the modern flag of Mexico. On it you can see the eagle, the snake, and the cactus. This Aztec story is an important part of Mexican culture.
The Aztec built bridges from their island city to the shore of the lake. Because the lake contained salt water, the Aztec used clay pipes to bring in fresh water from the mainland nearby. The water was used for drinking and cooking.

They built canals, or waterways, and moved about the city in canoes. They farmed on the island too by creating gardens on raised beds. The Aztec did this by digging up mud from the bottom of the lake and piling it up. Then they shaped the piles into long, narrow gardens and planted such crops as maize, beans, and squash. They also grew flowers.

Tenochtitlán also had streets and tall buildings. At the very center of the city was the Great Temple. The Aztec emperor, or ruler, and the priests who were in charge of all religious practices lived in grand palaces in the city. The Aztec believed in many gods, but the sun god and the rain god were among the most important. The Great Temple was used for the worship of Aztec gods.
More than two hundred thousand people lived in the city of Tenochtitlan. It was one of the biggest cities in the world at the time. The city had busy marketplaces where many people traded goods. Farmers brought their food crops to the city from the gardens and fields nearby. They traded food crops for things they needed. People also traded gold and silver jewelry, tools, clay pots, clothing, feathers, and seashells.

The Aztec were strong and skillful warriors. They conquered other people and took their land. They created an empire. The Aztec emperor was the most powerful person in the empire. One of the greatest Aztec emperors was Moctezuma II. He was so powerful, when he entered a room, people threw themselves on the floor.

Some Aztec boys learned to read and write. The priests were their teachers. Some were also taught medicine and astronomy. Others learned to be craftsmen or farmers. All boys trained from an early age to be warriors. Girls learned other skills, including pottery and weaving.
The Incas were expert road builders. They built a road called the Royal Road, which stretched for two thousand miles. For a time it was the longest road in the world. Inca soldiers could move quickly along the road if they were needed. And farmers could easily move from place to place to trade their crops, which included cocoa and many different kinds of potatoes.

The Incredible Inca

The Aztec created a great empire, but the Incas built an even bigger one that stretched all along the western coast of South America. Today that empire would include large parts of the modern-day countries of Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. At the head of this amazing empire, the man in charge of millions of people, was the all-powerful Sapa Inca.
The Inca also used a chain of speedy messengers who ran along the Royal Road taking important news from place to place. The Inca did not have a written language, so each runner had to remember their message so they could tell it to the next runner.

However, the Inca did have their own way of counting and recording information. They used a quipu. A quipu was a group of different colored strings with knots tied in a certain way. The strings and knots might show numbers of soldiers, or give information about farmers' crops.

Like the Maya and the Aztec, the Inca worshipped different gods. Of special importance to them was the sun god. Here, the Inca sun god is shown wearing the sun as his crown. He is also shown crying precious raindrops, which is a sign that he has the power to bring rain to the farmers' crops. The sun god holds a thunderbolt in his hand to show his strength and power!
The Incas also built great cities with temples and palaces. Perhaps one of the most remarkable cities ever built is the Inca city of Machu Picchu, which sits high up in the Andes Mountains of modern-day Peru. The stones used to build the city were so carefully cut that they fit together like jigsaw pieces. The city was built for a powerful Inca king.

A Story from the Americas

The people of these early civilizations often wondered how the world was created, or made. Their religions helped them to make sense of this mystery and, for some, provided answers. The Maya had their own story about the creation of Earth. Maya storytellers passed this story from one generation to the next—all the way down to today. This is the Maya story of how Earth and its people came to be.
In the beginning there was no Earth. There was only darkness. But then the gods created a place between the sea and the sky. This happened when two of the gods, Tepew and Q'uk'umatz, shouted out the name “Earth.” Suddenly Earth appeared. Mountains rose up, and plains appeared. Trees and plants grew across the land.

However, Earth was silent until the gods filled it with animals of every kind. Suddenly there were jaguars, pumas, snakes, deer, and antelope on the land. The gods filled the oceans with animals too.

But soon the gods realized that they needed people. They began by making clay people. The clay people looked good, but they could not move. They could not walk about. And when the sun shone bright, they began to melt!
The gods knew they must start again. So they decided to make wooden people. The wooden people were stronger. They did not melt in the warm sun. But the wooden people were not quite right. For one thing, they could not think for themselves.

The gods tried one last time to create the people they wanted to live on Earth. They asked the animals to help them. The animals showed the gods a perfect place for people to live. In this place grew yellow and white corn. The gods created humans from that corn.

The first humans could hear, see, and think. The humans thanked the gods and built great temples in their honor. These humans were exactly what the gods had hoped for, and they were happy.
The Maya, Aztec, and Inca Today

At least six million Maya still live in Central America. Many speak the languages of their ancestors, follow their traditions, and, as you have heard, listen to their stories. They weave cloth, grow the same crops, and eat the same food. But they also go to school, watch TV, and play games just like you do.
If you were to travel up into the Andes Mountains of Peru, you would meet the descendants of the Inca. You would meet people in brightly colored clothing walking on mountain paths with llamas at their side. You would hear Quechua, the language of the people who built Machu Picchu. You would most likely be invited to taste the different kinds of potatoes that the Inca people love to eat. And you would be able to watch the sun set over the beautiful Andes Mountains.
Unit Assessment Questions: Early Civilizations of the Americas

Make sufficient copies of the Student Answer Sheet for each student; see pages 92–95 of this Teacher Guide. Read each sentence or question aloud with the answer choices. Instruct students to point to each picture on the answer sheet as you read the choice aloud. Reread the question or sentence and answer choices aloud a second time, and tell students to circle the picture that shows the correct answer.

1. The Maya used their knowledge of the stars to __________.
   - a) build pyramids
   - b) create a calendar
   - c) write in glyphs

2. Early peoples, in North America and in Central and South America, stopped wandering and settled down when they began to __________.
   - a) hunt
   - b) farm
   - c) gather

3. The Maya played __________.
   - a) a ball game
   - b) with a calendar
   - c) in a race

4. Inca soldiers, farmers, and messengers traveled along __________.
   - a) Aztec canals
   - b) the Royal Road
   - c) narrow mountain paths

5. The Aztec built their city where they found __________.
   - a) an eagle eating a snake
   - b) a great pyramid
   - c) a god holding a thunderbolt

6. Early hunter-gatherers in North America followed herds of __________ to get food.
   - a) jaguars and pumas
   - b) woolly mammoths
   - c) wild antelope

7. What new crop did early civilizations develop and begin to farm?
   - a) corn
   - b) berries
   - c) broccoli
8. How did the Aztec move throughout the city of Tenochtitlán?
   a) on bridges  
   b) on roads  
   c) on canals

9. The Inca built a mountain city called ____________.
   a) Machu Picchu  
   b) Tenochtitlán  
   c) Sapa Inca

10. In the Maya creation myth, the first people that the gods created were ____________.
    a) corn people  
    b) wood people  
    c) clay people
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Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: Early Civilizations of the Americas

4. a. 
   b. 
   c. 

5. a. 
   b. 
   c. 

6. a. 
   b. 
   c.
Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: Early Civilizations of the Americas

7. a. [Image of corn]
   b. [Image of canoe]
   c. [Image of maize]

8. a. [Image of Inca textiles]
   b. [Image of Inca ruins]
   c. [Image of Inca city]

9. a. [Image of ancient Inca roads]
Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: Early Civilizations of the Americas

10. a. 
   ![Image A]
   b. 
   ![Image B]
   c. 
   ![Image C]
Performance Task: Early Civilizations of the Americas

Materials Needed: four blank 5” x 8” index cards per student, pencils, assorted thin-tipped colored markers, individual student copies of the Early Civilizations of the Americas Student Book

Teacher Directions: In this unit, students learned about early civilizations of the Americas—how ancient peoples migrated, hunted, gathered, farmed, and created empires. They learned about the ancient cultures of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca peoples. They also learned about how the traditions of these cultures are still in use by their descendants today.

Have students reflect back on what they learned during this unit by flipping through the pages of the Student Book. Tell students to imagine they are traveling back in time to visit early civilizations of the Americas. They will share the sights, sounds, and smells of this ancient, foreign land with their friends and family back home by creating four different postcards on 5” x 8” index cards. Remind students that postcards are like condensed versions of large travel posters. The postcards should show the most important or most interesting details about early civilizations of the Americas. Students should identify in their postcards the most important aspects of early civilizations of the Americas that they have learned about that make it an exciting place to visit and think about.

Have students draw images of early civilizations of the Americas on one side of each card and dictate a brief message about early civilizations of the Americas for the other side.

Note to Teacher: We suggest that you allocate two instructional periods for the completion of this performance-based assessment. Students will work at different paces. The teacher should circulate throughout the room and be available to discuss each card and take dictation as individual students finish each postcard.

Prompt each student to talk about his or her drawing by saying, “Tell me about what you drew and what it tells about life in early civilizations of the Americas.” It is not necessary for the teacher to write verbatim what the student says but rather to capture bullet points that can later be used with the Performance Assessment Rubric that follows.
### Performance Task Scoring Rubric

**Note to Teacher:** Students should be evaluated on the basis of their postcard drawings, along with what they say that they have drawn and why, using the rubric.

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<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Rubric Description</th>
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| **Above Average** | Response is accurate and detailed. Student demonstrates strong understanding of early civilizations of the Americas, identifying four of the following details in drawing and/or dictation:  
  - Hunters and gatherers followed animals and collected plants, nuts, and berries.  
  - Early peoples started to grow corn by experimenting with wild plants.  
  - The development of farming allowed people to stay in one place.  
  - The Maya were expert farmers.  
  - The Maya built great cities that had pyramids for worshipping the gods.  
  - The Maya developed a calendar, a number system, and writing glyphs.  
  - The Maya played a ball game.  
  - The Aztec built their great city on an island, where—according to legend—they saw an eagle eating a snake on a prickly pear cactus.  
  - The Aztec city was connected to the mainland by bridges. The Aztec used canals to move throughout the city and built raised gardens to grow food.  
  - Aztec warriors conquered an empire.  
  - The Inca lived in the mountains of South America. They were ruled by the Sapa Inca and built a city called Machu Picchu.  
  - The Inca built the Royal Road so that soldiers, farmers, and messengers could travel from place to place.  
  - The Inca used quipu to count and record information.  
  - The Maya creation myth says that the gods created the Earth, then the animals, and then people. First, the gods made clay people. Then they tried making wooden people. Finally, they made corn people. The corn people built temples to honor the gods.  
  - Many descendants of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca still speak the languages of their ancestors, eat the same foods as their ancestors, and practice some of the same traditions as their ancestors. |
| **Average** | Response is mostly accurate and somewhat detailed. Student demonstrates solid understanding of early civilizations of the Americas, noting three of the details listed above. |
| **Adequate** | Response is mostly accurate but lacks detail. Student demonstrates a very basic understanding of early civilizations of the Americas, noting two of the details listed above. |
| **Inadequate** | Response is incomplete and demonstrates a minimal understanding of the content in the unit, noting only one of the details listed above. |
Directions for Making My Passport

If this is the first Grade 1 CKHG unit you have completed with your students, please download and print the Grade 1 My Passport. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the passport PDF may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

To save instructional time, prepare a passport for each student in advance: Download and print the Passport PDF pages. Photocopy the pages back to back, according to the specifications on your printer. Staple pages together.
Introducing My Passport to Students

Materials Needed: sufficient folded copies of Grade 1 My Passport, pencils, glue sticks, thin-tipped markers*, an actual passport if available

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the Grade 1 My Passport may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

*If you prefer, you may take a photograph of each student and print a small copy to distribute to each student instead of having them use the markers to draw a picture of themselves.

Tell students that when people travel, especially to countries outside of the United States, they bring a little booklet with them that is called a passport.

Show students an actual passport, if available, as you continue to explain that a passport has many pages inside. On the first page, there is usually a photograph of the person to whom the passport belongs, as well as personal identification information, such as when the person was born and where the person lives. Explain that as people visit each new place/country, they show the page with their identification information to an official as they visit each place and then receive a stamp in their passport to show that they have visited that place.

Explain to students that today they are going to make a pretend passport that they will use as they “travel” to different places and times in history this year using CKHG. Distribute materials to each student. Examine and discuss the cover of the passport.

Have students turn to the first page inside, and tell them that this page has space for their own personal identification information. Explain each portion of this page, guiding students in personalizing their passport by either drawing a picture of themselves or gluing a photograph in the designated space. Guide students in completing the remaining information, such as their name, date of birth, and remaining information.

SUPPORT—Provide prompts for students as needed by writing examples of their correct date of birth and how to spell the name of their town, state, country, and continent.

Next, have students examine the remaining passport pages as you read the titles at the top of each page. Explain that each page lists the name of one of the places they will “visit” as they use the Grade 1 CKHG materials this year. Tell students that once they finish each unit, they will have a chance to place small pictures of the place they visited in their passport as a reminder or souvenir of each place they have visited.

Collect all passports, and keep them in a safe place until you are ready to have students complete the passport page for Early Civilizations of the Americas.
My Passport Activity for Early Civilizations of the Americas

Materials Needed: personalized copies of Grade 1 My Passport for each student, sufficient copies of the Early Civilizations of the Americas Passport Images, pencils, and glue sticks for each student

Note to Teacher: Please download and print the Early Civilizations of the Americas Passport Images. Use this link to download and print the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the Early Civilizations of the Americas Passport Images may be found:

www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources

You will need to print sufficient copies of each page and then cut the images apart on the dotted lines prior to class.

Tell students that today they will each complete the page in their passport that is about Early Civilizations of the Americas. Ask students to turn to page 10 of their passport.

Show students the individual Early Civilizations of the Americas Passport Images, and ask students to name or describe each image. Explain that you will give each student a copy of every image. Direct students to use their glue sticks to carefully glue each image onto the Early Civilizations of the Americas page of the passport in whatever order they would like.

As students finish, encourage them to share their passport with a partner, showing and describing the images on the Early Civilizations of the Americas page and what they represent. Suggest students talk to one another about what they saw and what they liked best about their time travel to early civilizations of the Americas.

If time permits, encourage partners to look back at the images on the passport pages for previous units to discuss similarities and differences between those places and early civilizations of the Americas.
Letter to Family

Family Member,

Today, your child began to learn about early civilizations of the Americas. During the next several days, your child will learn more about the history and customs of these ancient peoples, including how they migrated and survived by hunting, gathering, and farming. Important stories and myths of three ancient civilizations will be the subjects of our study during this time—the Maya, Inca, and Aztec peoples. Read Alouds will teach about some key myths of these civilizations, as well as how they formed their societies and built cities and empires in various places in modern-day North and South America.

They will also learn about the different gods that these ancient civilizations worshipped and the great temples and pyramids the people built to worship them in. In order to fully understand why the temples were built, students will also learn about these ancient civilizations’ belief in different gods, who they believed controlled the sky and the earth in order to aid them in growing crops. They will also learn about the creation myths of some of these civilizations, based on the stories of these gods.

These beliefs and myths are presented as historical and cultural information in an age-appropriate way rather than in a manner that suggests the correctness of any particular set of religious beliefs. The goal is to build knowledge about life in early civilizations in the Americas and to foster understanding and respect for practices, creation myths, and beliefs that may be different from those with which students are familiar.

Sometimes students have questions regarding how the beliefs or myths they are learning about relate to themselves and to their own experiences. In such instances, we will encourage each student to discuss such topics with their families. We recognize that the best place to find answers to those types of questions is with the adults in their home.

Please let us know if you have any questions.
Map of Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations
Answer Key: Early Civilizations of the Americas

Unit Assessment
(pages 90–91)

1. b  2. b  3. a  4. b  5. a  6. b  7. a  8. c  9. a  10. c
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