MAKING CONNECTIONS

What can ruins teach us about civilization?

The sacred city of Chichén Itzá is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Maya and Toltec cultures. El Caracol, the observatory shown in the photo, was used by the Maya and the Toltec to measure the movement of the moon, stars, and planets. It exhibits the advanced engineering and astronomy skills of its builders. In this chapter you will learn about the early civilizations of the Americas.

• Why do you think the Maya and the Toltec went to such efforts to understand the movement of the moon, stars, and planets?
• Why do archaeologists study ancient ruins today?

THE AMERICAS

- c. 3000 B.C. People move into North America from Asia
- c. 250 B.C. City of Teotihuacán established

THE WORLD

- A.D. 100 Christianity becomes established in the Roman Empire
- c. A.D. 300 Maya civilization begins to flourish
- c. A.D. 400

The Americas 400–1500

Section 1 The Peoples of North America
Section 2 Early Civilizations in Mesoamerica
Section 3 Early Civilizations in South America
C. A.D. 700
Hopewell people shift to full-time farming

A.D. 825
Al-Khowarizmi advances use of Hindu numbers and algebra in Arab world

A.D. 950
Organizing
Create a Layered-Look Book to organize facts about the Inca. Read the related text and conduct research to learn more about the political structure, social structure, and buildings and culture of the Inca.

Inca leader Pachacuti launches campaign of conquest

A.D. 1440
1500

Panoramic Images/Getty Images, Collection of the New York Historical Society/Bridgeman Art Library

History
ONLINE
Chapter Overview—Visit glencoe.com to preview Chapter 11.
During the last Ice Age, a natural land bridge connected the Asian and North American continents. Early hunters used this land bridge when they followed herds of bison and caribou into North America. These hunters became the first people to live in North America.

The First North Americans

Early hunters and gatherers moved across the Bering Strait into North America, later forming distinct cultures.

HISTORY & YOU
Who lived in your region thousands of years ago? Read to learn about some early peoples of North America, including the Iroquois, the Hopewell, and the Anasazi.

The Americas make up an enormous land area, stretching about 9,000 miles (more than 14,000 km) from the Arctic Ocean in the north to Cape Horn at the tip of South America. The North American continent is large and has varying climates and geographical features. It has ice-covered lands and hot, dry deserts. Dense forests cover some areas, and fertile river valleys are ideal for hunting and farming. Many years ago, these different geographical areas became home to various peoples, who created their own distinctive ways of living.

Between 15,000 and 20,000 years ago, the last Ice Age caused sea levels to drop. Low sea levels in turn created a land bridge connecting the Asian and North American continents. Many scholars believe that people from Asia used this land bridge to cross the Bering Strait into North America. Most likely, these first Americans were hunters, pursuing herds of bison and caribou. They lived in small, nomadic communities. To survive, they needed to remain close to the source of their food supply.

Arctic and Northwest: The Inuit

About 3000 B.C., the Inuit moved into North America from Asia. They had to learn very specific skills to survive in such a cold and harsh environment. Most Inuit settled along the coasts of the tundra region, the treeless land south of the Arctic.

Using harpoons and spears made from antler or narwhal tusk, the Inuit were skilled hunters. Seal, caribou, and fish provided both food and clothing. In winter, the Inuit built homes of stones and turf. The traditional igloo, made out of cut blocks of hard-packed snow, was only a temporary shelter used during traveling.
Eastern Woodlands: Mound Builders and Iroquois

Around 1000 B.C., farming villages appeared in the Eastern Woodlands, the land in eastern North America from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Although people in the Eastern Woodlands region grew crops, they also continued to gather wild plants for food.

One Eastern Woodlands group was the Hopewell peoples in the Ohio River valley. They extended their culture along the Mississippi River. The Hopewell people, known as the Mound Builders, built large, elaborate earth mounds that were used as tombs or for ceremonies. Some were built in the shape of animals.

The shift to full-time farming about A.D. 700 led to a prosperous culture in the Mississippi River valley. This Mississippian culture grew corn, squash, and beans together to provide plants with nutrients, support, and shade.
Cities began to appear, some of them containing 10,000 people or more. At the site of Cahokia (kuh-HOH-kee-uh), near the modern city of East St. Louis, Illinois, archaeologists found a burial mound over 98 feet (30 m) high. It had a base larger than that of the Great Pyramid in Egypt. Between A.D. 850 and 1150, Cahokia flourished and served as the seat of government. For reasons unknown, Cahokia collapsed during the 1200s.

To the northeast of the Mississippian culture were people known as the Iroquois (IHR•uh•kwoy). The Iroquois lived in villages that consisted of longhouses surrounded by wooden fences for protection. Each longhouse, built of wooden poles covered with sheets of bark, was 150 to 200 feet (46 to 61 m) in length and housed about a dozen families.

Iroquois men hunted deer, bear, caribou, and small animals like rabbits and beaver. They were also warriors who protected the community. Women owned the dwellings, gathered wild plants, and grew crops. The most important crops were the “three sisters”—corn, beans, and squash. In addition, women cooked, made baskets, and took care of the children.

Wars were common, especially among groups of Iroquois who lived in much of present-day Pennsylvania, New York, and parts of southern Canada. Legend holds that sometime during the 1500s, the Iroquois peoples were nearly torn apart by warfare. Deganawida, an elder of one Iroquois group, appeared and preached the need for peace.

One who listened was Hiawatha, a member of the Onondaga (AH•nuhn•DAW•guh) group. From the combined efforts of Deganawida and Hiawatha came the Great Peace, which created an alliance of five groups called the Iroquois League.

A council of representatives, a group of 50 Iroquois leaders, known as the Grand Council met regularly to settle differences. Representatives were chosen in a special way. Each Iroquois group was made up of clans, groups of related families. The

According to Iroquois legend, the five nations of the Iroquois League came together sometime during the 1500s after a period of warfare. The members of the Iroquois League referred to their union by a word which means “people building a longhouse.” In other words, they saw the Iroquois League as an enormous longhouse that stretched across the five nations and sheltered its members.

League members were joined together by common laws. The Iroquois Constitution includes guidelines on religious tolerance, impeachment, succession, illness of a leader, treason, dissolution, declaration of war, emigration, asylum, and rights of foreign nations. In 1754 Benjamin Franklin used the Iroquois League as a model for a Plan of Union for the British colonies. Thomas Jefferson later referred to these similarities when he called the United States Constitution a “tree of peace,” the symbol of the Iroquois League.
women of each clan singled out a well-respected woman as the clan mother. The clan mothers, in turn, chose the male members of the Grand Council. Much was expected of these men—patience and firmness, but also a tenderness for their people and calm deliberation. The Grand Council, an experiment in democracy, brought the Iroquois a new way to deal with their problems.

**Peoples of the Great Plains**

West of the Mississippi River basin, the Plains Indians cultivated beans, corn, and squash along the river valleys of the eastern Great Plains. Every summer, the men left their villages to hunt buffalo, a very important animal to the Plains culture. Hunters would work together to frighten a herd of buffalo, causing them to stampede over a cliff.

The buffalo served many uses for Plains peoples. They ate the meat, used the skins for clothing, and made tools from the bones. By stretching buffalo skins over wooden poles, they made circular tents called tepees. Tepees provided excellent shelter; they were warm in winter and cool in summer.

**Peoples of the Southwest: The Anasazi**

The Southwest covers the territory of present-day New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. Conditions are dry, but there is sufficient rain in some areas for farming. The Anasazi peoples established an extensive farming society there.

Between A.D. 500 and 1200, the Anasazi used canals and earthen dams to turn parts of the desert into fertile gardens. They were skilled at making baskets and beautifully crafted pottery. They used stone and adobe (sun-dried brick) to build pueblos, multistoried structures that housed many people.

At Chaco Canyon in northwestern New Mexico, they built an elaborate center for their civilization. At the heart of Chaco Canyon was Pueblo Bonito. This was a large complex that contained some 800 rooms housing more than 1,000 people. The Pueblo Bonito complex included communal rooms where people assembled to perform religious rituals. This flourishing center could not survive a series of droughts that occurred over a 50-year period. Finally the Anasazi had to abandon the center.

The Anasazi culture itself did not die. To the north in southern Colorado, a large community had formed at Mesa Verde. Today, this is a national park in the United States. Groups of Anasazi there built a remarkable series of buildings in the recesses of the cliff walls. However, the Anasazi abandoned the settlement in the late 1200s because of a prolonged drought.

**Reading Check**

Explaining What may have led hunters to cross the land bridge to North America?
Early Civilizations in Mesoamerica

GUIDE TO READING

The BIG Idea
Ideas, Beliefs, and Values Early Mesoamerican civilizations flourished with fully developed political, religious, and social structures.

Content Vocabulary
- hieroglyph (p. 375)
- tribute (p. 378)

Academic Vocabulary
- estimate (p. 374)
- accurate (p. 374)

People and Places
- Mesoamerica (p. 372)
- Olmec (p. 372)
- Teotihuacán (p. 373)
- Yucatán Peninsula (p. 374)
- Maya (p. 374)
- Tikal (p. 375)
- Toltec (p. 376)
- Chichén Itzá (p. 377)
- Aztec (p. 377)
- Tenochtitlán (p. 377)
- Lake Texcoco (p. 377)

Reading Strategy
Summarizing Information As you read, create a separate chart, like the one shown here, for each of the cultures discussed in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Year/Reason Declined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Interactive Graphic Organizer

Archaeology tells us about the ancient societies that once existed in Mesoamerica. First came the Olmec, whose culture influenced those that followed. Later, the Maya became one of the most sophisticated cultures of the early Americas. The civilizations that followed, the Toltec and the Aztec, incorporated Maya traditions into their cultures.

The Olmec

The Olmec, the first Mesoamerican civilization, appeared around 1200 B.C., and the city of Teotihuacán thrived until A.D. 800.

HISTORY & YOU Do you use an electronic calendar to keep you organized? Read about the Olmec calendar and numerical system.

Not until the late 1800s did archaeologists begin excavating ancient ruins found in Mesoamerica. This is a name used for areas of Mexico and Central America where ancient empires flourished. Detailed excavations revealed that the Maya once lived there. Later excavations told of an even older society, the Olmec.

Olmec Culture

Archaeologists first discovered the Olmec society in the 1940s. They called these people the Olmec, or “rubber people,” because of the rubber trees that grew in the area where they lived. The Olmec, the first-known civilization in Mesoamerica, appeared around 1200 B.C. They farmed along riverbanks in the hot, swampy lowlands along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico south of Veracruz. They traded with other peoples of Mesoamerica for jade and obsidian to make their tools, jewelry, and monuments. Olmec objects have been found in central Mexico.

The Olmec had large cities that were centers for their religious rituals. The oldest city was San Lorenzo, which contained pyramids and other stone monuments. In La Venta a 30-foot-high (9-m high) pyramid towered above the city. Olmec skilled artisans also carved a series of colossal stone heads, probably to represent their gods or rulers. These huge heads, 10 feet (3 m) high and weighing 20 tons (18 t), are especially remarkable because the Olmec had no metal tools. Carving them with instruments of stone must have taken a great deal of time.

Around 400 B.C., for reasons not yet fully understood, the Olmec civilization declined and eventually collapsed. However, some aspects of their tradition influenced later Mesoamerican societies. The Olmec played a ceremonial game on a stone ball court, a ritual
Giant heads are the most famous stone carvings of the Olmec civilization, which flourished from 1200 B.C. to 400 B.C. in what we know today as Mexico. The massive heads were carved of basalt, a rock that the workers floated to the current location by river raft from as far as 50 to 60 miles away. The heads depict different faces with full lips, slanted eyes, and broad noses. Every head wears what resembles a helmet, though each helmet has a different symbol or decoration.

The Olmec also carved smaller sculptures from jade, obsidian, and other stone—including creatures with bat wings, realistic human ears, religious figures, and fish. Even the tools that the Olmec used for carving were themselves made of stone.

The stone-carving skill of the Olmec artisans went beyond sculpture and tool making. The Olmec created the first drainage system in Mesoamerica. The carvers hollowed out long stones, giving them U-shape channels. Then they put these channels end-to-end and put rounded stone covers on them to make pipes. These stone channels show great skill in engineering. Even 3,000 years later, parts of the ancient drainage system still work today when it rains.

The Olmec Stone Carvings

**An Olmec stone head in the Parque Museo de La Venta museum in Mexico**

that the Maya people would later practice. The Maya also continued the Olmec fascination with a jaguar-like god and adopted the Olmec calendar and numerical system.

**The City of Teotihuacán**

The first major city in Mesoamerica was **Teotihuacán** (tay•oh•TEE•wuh•KAHN), or “Place of the Gods.” This city was the capital of an early kingdom that arose around 250 B.C. and collapsed around A.D. 800. Located about 30 miles (48 km) northeast of Mexico City in a fertile valley, Teotihuacán occupied an area of 8 square miles (21 sq. km). It had as many as 200,000 inhabitants at its height. Along its main thoroughfare, known as the “Avenue of the Dead,” were temples and palaces. All of them, however, were dominated by a massive Pyramid of the Sun. This monument rose in four tiers to a height of over 200 feet (60 m).

Most of the people of Teotihuacán were farmers. Fertile soil made their valley one of the richest farming areas in Mesoamerica.
Teotihuacán was also a busy center for trade. In scores of workshops throughout the city, skilled artisans made tools, weapons, pottery, and jewelry. Especially famous were their obsidian tools. Obsidian, a volcanic glass, was prized in Mesoamerica. It was used in tools, mirrors, and the knives with razor-sharp blades used in human and animal sacrifices. Archaeologists estimate that there were 400 obsidian workshops in the city.

The goods made in Teotihuacán were shipped to Central America, Mexico, and even southwestern North America. In return, the city’s inhabitants received luxury items and the raw materials, such as shells and bird feathers, used in their crafts.

Sometime during the eighth century, for reasons yet unknown, the city’s power declined. Eventually the ruling class left the city and around A.D. 800, the city was destroyed and abandoned.

**Reading Check**

**Explaining** Where was Mesoamerica, and who were some its first inhabitants?

**The Maya and the Toltec**

**Main Idea** The Maya and the Toltec ruled Mesoamerica for nearly nine centuries.

**HISTORY & YOU** How would dividing each year into 18 months affect you? Read to learn about the Maya calendar.

Far to the east of Teotihuacán, on the Yucatán Peninsula, another major civilization had arisen. This was the civilization of the Maya, which flourished between A.D. 300 and 900. It was one of the most sophisticated civilizations in the Americas.

The Maya built splendid temples and pyramids and developed a complicated calendar as accurate as any in existence in the world at that time. The Maya were a farming people who cleared the dense rain forests, developed farming, and centered their culture in city-states. Maya civilization included much of Central America and southern Mexico.

Sometime around 800, the Maya civilization in the central Yucatán Peninsula began
to decline. Why did this happen? Explanations include invasion, internal revolt, or a volcanic eruption. A more recent theory is that overuse of the land led to reduced crop yields.

Whatever the case, cities like Tikal and Palenque were abandoned and covered by dense jungle growth. They were not rediscovered until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Political and Social Structures**

Maya cities were built around a central pyramid topped by a shrine to the gods. Nearby were other temples, palaces, and a sacred ball court. Some scholars believe that over 100,000 inhabitants may have lived in urban centers such as Tikal in present-day Guatemala.

Maya civilization was composed of city-states, each governed by a hereditary ruling class. These Maya city-states were often at war with each other. Ordinary soldiers who were captured in battle became slaves. Captured nobles and war leaders were used for human sacrifice.

Rulers of the Maya city-states claimed to be descended from the gods. The Maya rulers were helped by nobles and a class of scribes who may also have been priests. In addition, Maya society contained peasants and townspeople who worked as skilled artisans, officials, and merchants.

Most of the Maya people were peasant farmers. They lived on tiny plots or on terraced hills in the highlands. Houses were built of adobe and thatch. There was a fairly clear-cut division of labor. Men did the fighting and hunting; women, the homemaking and raising of children. Women also made cornmeal, the basic food of much of the population. The Maya also cultivated cacao trees, which were the source of chocolate. Chocolate was used as a beverage by the upper classes. Cocoa beans, the fruit of the cacao tree, were used as money in markets throughout the region.

Crucial to Maya civilization was its spiritual perspective. For the Maya, all of life was in the hands of divine powers. The name of their supreme god was Itzamna (eet•SAWM•nuh) or “Lizard House.”

Gods were ranked in order of importance. Some, like the jaguar god of night, were evil rather than good.

Like other ancient civilizations in Mesoamerica, the Maya practiced human sacrifice as a way to appease the gods. Human sacrifices were also used for special ceremonial occasions. When a male heir was presented to the throne, war captives were tortured and then beheaded. In A.D. 790, one Maya ruler took his troops into battle to gain prisoners for a celebration honoring his son.

**Writings and Calendar**

The Maya created a sophisticated writing system based on hieroglyphs or pictures. Unfortunately, the Spanish conquerors of the sixteenth century had little respect for the Mayan language and made no effort to decipher it. Instead, the Spaniards assumed the writings were evil or of no value. As one Spanish bishop wrote:

**Primary Source**

“We found a large number of books in these characters and, as they contained nothing in which there were not to be seen superstition and lies of the devil, we burned them all, which they regretted to an amazing degree, and which caused them much affliction.”

—Bishop Diego de Landa, sixteenth century

When the Spanish colonized the Americas, they repeated this behavior over and over. They would apply their own religious views to the native civilizations with which they came in contact. The Spaniards’ subsequent destruction of religious objects, and sometimes entire cities, helped bring an end to these civilizations.

The Maya wrote on bark, folding it like an accordion, then covering the outside with thin plaster. Four of these books have survived. Maya writing was also carved onto clay, jade, bone, shells, and stone monuments.

Mayan hieroglyphs remained a mystery for centuries. Then, scholars discovered that many passages contained symbols that recorded dates in the Maya calendar.
The Pyramid of Kukulcan

This calendar, known as the Long Count, was based on a belief in cycles of creation and destruction. According to Maya belief, our present world was created in 3114 B.C. and is scheduled to complete its downward cycle on December 23, A.D. 2012.

The Maya used two different systems for measuring time. One was based on a solar calendar of 365 days, divided into 18 months of 20 days each, with an extra 5 days at the end. The other system was based on a sacred calendar of 260 days divided into 13 weeks of 20 days. Only trained priests could read and use this calendar to foretell the future and know the omens associated with each day.

Many Mayan hieroglyphs record important events in Maya history, especially events in the lives of Maya rulers. One of the most important collections of Mayan hieroglyphs is located at a city called Palenque (puh•LEHNG•kay). There, archaeologists discovered a royal tomb covered with hieroglyphs that record the accomplishments of a ruler named Pacal, whose body was buried in the tomb.

The Toltec

After the collapse of Teotihuacán, new peoples rose to prominence in central Mexico. Most significant were the Toltec. The Toltec Empire reached its high point between A.D. 950 and 1150. The center of the empire was at Tula, built on a high ridge about 30 miles (48 km) northwest of present-day Mexico City. The Aztec later plundered Tula and destroyed much historical evidence. Therefore, much of what is known about the Toltec comes from legends that later cultures told of them.

The Toltec irrigated their fields with water from the Tula River and grew a number of crops, including beans, maize, and peppers. This flourishing agriculture enabled Tula to support a population of between 40,000 to 60,000 people. Another 60,000 people lived in the surrounding
The city itself was between 5 and 6 square miles (13 to 16 sq. km).

The Toltec were a warlike people. Their empire included much of northern and central Mexico. They also extended their conquests into the Maya lands of Guatemala and the northern Yucatán. The Toltec controlled the upper Yucatán Peninsula from Chichén Itzá for centuries.

The Toltec were also builders who constructed pyramids and palaces. They brought metal-working to Mesoamerica and were the first people in the region to work in gold, silver, and copper.

Important to Toltec religion were two major gods. Quetzalcoatl (ket•suhl•KWAH•tul), the god of learning and culture, took on different forms. In one form, he was the god of wind. In another form, he was the feathered serpent. In the Aztec language, which might be related to the language of the Toltec, quetzal is the name of a green-feathered bird, while coatl means serpent. Representations of Quetzalcoatl—the Feathered Serpent—have also been found in Teotihuacán and the later Aztec Empire.

The Toltec thought of their leaders as having a connection to deities. The greatest leader was Topiltzin, who was also a high priest of Quetzalcoatl. According to legend, Topiltzin and his followers went into exile as a result of a struggle with other religious groups. Topiltzin vowed to return to Tula from the east in one of his sacred years and to reclaim his throne. A later Mesoamerican empire, the Aztec, knew the legend of Topiltzin-Quetzalcoatl well. Indeed, it may have influenced their response when European explorers arrived in the Americas.

The Toltec Empire began to decline around A.D. 1125 as a result of fighting among different groups in Tula. Around 1170, the city was sacked and much of it burned. There was no single ruling group for nearly 200 years. The Aztec Empire then gained control and carried on many Toltec traditions.

✓ Reading Check  Describing  How did the Maya measure time?

The Aztec

MAIN IDEA  The Aztec ruled Mesoamerica until the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s.

HISTORY & YOU  Have you seen pictures of present-day Mexico City? Read to learn about the city’s ancient beginnings as Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital.

The origins of the Aztec are uncertain. Sometime during the twelfth century A.D., they began a long migration that brought them to the Valley of Mexico. They eventually established a capital at Tenochtitlán (tay•NAWCH•tAH teet•LAHN), now Mexico City. There they would rule until the Spanish conquest.

Rise of the Aztec

According to their legends, when the Aztec arrived in the Valley of Mexico, other peoples drove them into a snake-infested region. The Aztec survived, however, strengthened by their belief in a sign that would come from their god of war and of the sun, Huitzilopochtli (wee•tsee•loh•POHKT•lee). The god had told them that when they saw an eagle perched on a cactus growing out of a rock, their journey would end.

In 1325, under attack by another people, they were driven into the swamps and islands of Lake Texcoco (tehs•KOH•koh). On one island, they saw an eagle standing on a prickly pear cactus on a rock. There they built Tenochtitlán (or “place of the prickly pear cactus”): “Now we have found the land promised to us. We have found peace for our weary people. Now we want for nothing.”

For the next 100 years, the Aztec constructed temples, other public buildings, and houses. They built roadways of stone across Lake Texcoco to the north, south, and west, linking the islands to the mainland.
The Aztec consolidated their rule over much of what is modern Mexico. The new kingdom was not a centralized state but a collection of semi-independent territories that local lords governed. The Aztec ruler supported these rulers in return for tribute, goods or money paid by conquered peoples to their conquerors.

**Political and Social Structures**

By 1500, as many as four million Aztec lived in the Valley of Mexico and the surrounding valleys of central Mexico. Like all great empires in ancient times, the Aztec state was authoritarian. The monarch, who claimed lineage with the gods, held all power. A council of lords and government officials assisted the Aztec ruler.

The nobility, the elite of society, held positions in the government. Male children in noble families were sent to temple schools, which stressed military training. Once adults, males would select a career in the military service, the government bureaucracy, or the priesthood. As a reward for their services, nobles received large estates from the government.

The rest of the population consisted of commoners, indentured workers, and slaves. Indentured workers were landless laborers who contracted to work on the nobles’ estates. Slaves worked in the households of the wealthy. Male and female slaves were sold in the markets.

Most people were commoners, and many commoners were farmers. Farmers built chinampas, swampy islands crisscrossed by canals that provided water for their crops. The canals also provided easy travel to local markets. Aztec merchants were also active traders. Merchants exported and traded goods made by Aztec craftspeople from imported raw materials. In exchange for their goods, the traders obtained tropical feathers, cacao beans, animal skins, and gold.

From the beginnings of their lives, boys and girls in Aztec society had very different roles. The midwife who attended the birth of a male infant said, “You must...
Understand that your home is not here where you have been born, for you are a warrior.” To a female infant, the midwife said, “As the heart stays in the body, so you must stay in the house.”

Though not equal to men, Aztec women could own and inherit property and enter into contracts, something not often allowed in other world cultures at the time. Women were expected to work in the home, weave textiles, and raise children. However, some were also trained to become priestesses.

**Religion and Culture**

Like other peoples in Central America and around the world, the Aztec believed in many gods. There was a supreme god, called Ometeotl, who represented the all-powerful forces of the heavens. Huitzilopochtli, the god of the sun and of war, was particularly important to Aztec warriors as they expanded control over neighboring peoples.

Another important god was Quetzalcoatl, who had a more direct impact on the lives of the people. According to Aztec tradition, Quetzalcoatl had left his homeland in the Valley of Mexico in the tenth century, promising to return in triumph. When the Aztec first saw Spanish explorers in the 1500s, they believed that representatives of Quetzalcoatl had returned.

Aztec religion was based on a belief in an unending struggle between the forces of good and evil throughout the universe. This struggle had created and destroyed four worlds, or suns. People believed they were now living in the time of the fifth sun. This world, too, was destined to end with the destruction of Earth by earthquakes. To postpone the day of reckoning, the Aztec practiced human sacrifice. They believed they could delay the final destruction of their world by appeasing the sun god Huitzilopochtli with sacrifices.

Aztec religion had a significant influence on their art and architecture. For example, a chief feature of Aztec culture was its monumental architecture. At the center of Tenochtitlán was the sacred district, dominated by a massive pyramid dedicated to Huitzilopochtli. At the top was a platform containing shrines to the gods and an altar for performing human sacrifices.

**A Strong Empire**

With the help of two other city-states, Tenochtitlán formed a Triple Alliance. This alliance enabled the Aztec to dominate an empire that included much of today’s Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and as far south as the Guatemalan border.
The Home of the Gods

Teotihuacán was the first major city in Mesoamerica. Although there is evidence this city emerged around 250 B.C., its “classic” period (when it was at its height) began around A.D. 200. During this time, monumental architecture projects were undertaken, and religious art was created. Little is know about the people who built the city because there are no written records. The name “Teotihuacán” comes from the Aztec centuries later, who called it “the home of the gods.”

The Pyramid of the Sun is the third largest pyramid in the world and the largest structure in the city. Under the pyramid there is a large cave that is believed to have been used for religious rituals.

The Pyramid of the Moon dominates the northern end of the Avenue of the Dead. To consecrate the temple, human and animal sacrifices were buried beneath the temple.

City Planning

Archaeologists have discovered that Teotihuacán was laid out on two axes. These two roads, running North-South and East-West, divided the city into four parts. This number could have religious significance since the figure 4 was sacred in Mesoamerica. The North-South road, or the “Avenue of the Dead,” contained many of the city’s public and cultural buildings. Teotihuacán’s inhabitants lived on narrow roads in the city and out in the suburbs. In direct opposition to the city’s organization, the suburbs looked more like a labyrinth.
SHROUDED IN MYSTERY

Although little is known about life in Teotihuacán, there is evidence of an early irrigation system surrounding the city, meaning that many in the city were farmers. The city was also heavily involved in trading finished goods. Artifacts from Teotihuacán have been discovered throughout Mesoamerica. After A.D. 600 the city began to decline in size, and around 800 was destroyed completely. Archaeologists have been unable to determine the cause of the city’s destruction.

The Citadel was made up of administrative buildings and housed the ruling class. 100,000 people could fit into the central plaza without crowding, making it likely that public rituals were performed here.

The Pyramid of the Feathered Serpent could not be seen from outside the Citadel. Its intricate carvings are well-preserved.

Believing that some of the buildings lining the wide street were tombs, the Aztecs referred to it as the Avenue of the Dead.

1. **Concluding**  How does the evidence of city planning support the presence of a civilization?

2. **Considering**  What might the placement of the pyramids at Teotihuacán indicate about the role of religion in this society?
Early Civilizations in South America

The Chavin, Nazca, and Moche cultures, which existed in South America before the Inca, built stone buildings and sophisticated irrigation systems. Later, the Inca became a spectacular, well-organized empire. The Inca Empire was still flourishing when the Spanish arrived in the sixteenth century.

Early Civilizations

The Chavin, Nazca, and Moche cultures existed in South America before the Inca came to power.

HISTORY & YOU

What objects might provide future archaeologists with information about twenty-first-century America? Read to learn what archaeologists have learned about the Chavin, Nazca, and Moche peoples.

As in Mesoamerica, great civilizations flourished in early South America. The people of the Chavin, Nazca, and Moche cultures lived before the Inca gained power in South America. The cities, buildings, and artifacts these peoples left behind provide clues about their cultures.

The Chavin and Nazca Cultures

In the Supe River valley of Peru, Caral is the oldest major city in the Americas. It is believed to be 1,000 years older than the cities previously known in the Western Hemisphere. The city has stone buildings for officials, apartment buildings, and grand residences. The inhabitants of Caral also developed a sophisticated system of irrigation. Caral was abandoned between 2000 and 1500 B.C.

Around 900 B.C., the Chavin people in the coastal regions of modern-day Peru and Ecuador built a temple with stones gathered from nearby hills. Part of a larger ceremonial complex, the temple was surrounded by stone figures depicting different gods and two pyramids. For unknown reasons, the Chavin declined around 200 B.C.

Around the same time, the Nazca culture appeared in Peru. The Nazca prospered from around 200 B.C. to A.D. 600. Nazca culture preserved some aspects of Chavin culture, especially its style of pottery. However, the Nazca culture built no great temples. They may have practiced their religion out of doors, as suggested by ancient formations known as the Nazca Lines. These are grooves etched into the rocky soil of southern Peru in the image of animals, especially birds, as well as humans and other geometric shapes. The images are so large, however, that their shapes can only be seen from the air.
The Moche

Around A.D. 300, another civilization developed near the Pacific coast not far south of the border of Ecuador. At Moche (MOH•cheh), a major urban center arose amid irrigated fields in the valley of the Moche River. This river flows from the foothills of the Andes into the Pacific Ocean. Farmers in the area grew enough maize (corn), peanuts, potatoes, and cotton to supply much of the region.

Moche was the capital of a powerful state. The authority of the Moche rulers may have extended as far as 400 miles (644 km) along the coast. The people of Moche had no written language, but we are able to understand something about their warlike culture from their arts and crafts. Moche paintings and pottery frequently portray warriors, prisoners, and sacrificial victims.

✓ Reading Check  Identifying What is the oldest major city in the Americas?
The Inca

The Inca developed a well-organized, militaristic empire with a highly structured society.

HISTORY & YOU
How do you keep track of your school records? Read to learn about the Inca’s record-keeping system.

After the collapse of the Moche civilization in the eighth century A.D., a period of decline set in until the rise of a new power about 300 years later. The kingdom of Chimor dominated the area for nearly four centuries until the Inca destroyed it and created a spectacular empire.

In the late 1300s, the Inca (IHNG•kuh) were only a small community in the area of Cuzco (KOOS•koh), a city located at 11,000 feet (3,353 m) in the mountains of southern Peru. In the 1440s, however, under the leadership of the ruler Pachacuti, the Inca launched a campaign of conquest. Eventually the entire region was under Inca control.

Political Structures

Pachacuti and his immediate successors, Topa Inca and Huayna Inca—Inca means “ruler”—extended the boundaries of the Inca Empire as far as Ecuador, central Chile, and the edge of the Amazon basin. The empire included perhaps 12 million people. The Inca state was built on war, so all young men were required to serve in the Inca army. With some 200,000 members, the army was the largest and best armed in the region. Because the Inca, like other people in the early Americas, did not make use of the wheel, supplies were carried on the backs of llamas.

Once an area was under Inca control, the local inhabitants were instructed in the Quechua (KECH•uh•wuh) language. Control of new territories was carefully regulated. A noble of high rank was sent out to govern the new region. Local leaders could keep their posts as long as they were loyal to the Inca ruler.

To create a well-organized empire, Pachacuti divided it into four quarters, with each ruled by a governor. In turn, the quarters were divided into provinces, each also ruled by a governor. Each province was supposed to contain about 10,000 residents. At the top of the entire system was the emperor, who was believed to be descended from Inti, the sun god.

Forced labor was another important feature of the state. All Inca subjects were responsible for labor service, usually for several weeks each year. Laborers, often with their entire communities, were moved according to need from one part of the country to another to take part in building projects. One such project was a system of some 24,800 miles (around 40,000 km) of roads extending from the border of modern-day Colombia to a point south of modern-day Santiago, Chile. Two major roadways extended in a north-south direction, one through the Andes and the other along the coast, with connecting routes between them.

Rest houses and storage depots were placed along the roads. Various types of bridges, including some fine, pre-modern examples of suspension bridges, were built over ravines and waterways.
Social Structures

Inca society was highly regimented. So, too, were marriage and the lives of women. Men and women were required to select a marriage partner from within their own social groups. After marriage, women were expected to care for the children and to weave cloth. For women, there was only one alternative to a life of working in the home. Some young girls were chosen to serve as priestesses in temples.

In rural areas, the people lived chiefly by farming. In the mountains, they used terraced farms, watered by irrigation systems that carried precise amounts of water into the fields. These were planted with corn, potatoes, and other crops. The farmers’ houses, built of stone or adobe with thatched roofs, were located near the fields.

Building and Culture

The Inca were great builders, the best engineers among Native American peoples. They built roadways over mountains and tunnels through them, as well as bridges and aqueducts. The buildings and monuments of the capital city of Cuzco were the wonder of early European visitors. These structures were built of close-fitting stones without mortar—the better to withstand the frequent earthquakes in the area.

Nothing shows the architectural genius of the Inca more than the ruins of the abandoned city of Machu Picchu (mah•choo PEE•choo). Machu Picchu, elevation 8,000 feet (2,400 m), was built on a lofty hilltop surrounded by mountain peaks far above the Urubamba River. Machu Picchu was hardly a city, containing only about 200 buildings.

In one part of Machu Picchu, a long stairway leads to an elegant stone known to the Inca as the “hitching post of the sun.” Carved from the mountain, this “hitching post” may have been used as a solar observatory. During the sun festivals held in June and December, the people of Machu Picchu gathered here to chant and say prayers to Inti, the sun god.

The Inca had no writing system. Instead, they kept records using a system of knotted strings called the quipu. The lack of a fully developed writing system, however, did not prevent the Inca from attaining a high level of cultural achievement.

The Inca had a well-developed tradition of court theater, consisting of both tragic and comic works. Plays often involved the recounting of valiant deeds and other historical events. Actors were not professionals but rather members of the nobility or senior officials who memorized their parts. Poetry was also recited, often accompanied by music played on reed instruments.

✓ Reading Check  Describing What technology helped the Inca to farm in the mountains?
What was the Role of Religion in Aztec Society?

How did the Aztec worship their gods? Religion was an important feature of Aztec life. Prayers, legends, and ceremonies at great temples were all part of Aztec religious practice.

How did outsiders view Aztec religion? After their arrival in Mexico in 1519, the Spanish were shocked by the Aztec religious rituals. The Spaniards immediately worked to convert the Aztec to Christianity.

The Aztec and the Spanish had extremely different viewpoints about Aztec religion. Read the passages and study the illustration to learn more about the role religion played in Aztec society.

**SOURCE 1**

The Aztec king Ahuizotl, who ruled from 1486 to 1502, offered the following prayer to the god Huitzilopochtli while celebrating a successful military campaign.

O almighty, powerful lord of All Created Things,
You who give us life, and whose vassals and slaves we are,
Lord of the Day and of the Night, of the Wind and the Water,
Whose strength keeps us alive! I give you infinite thanks
For having brought me back to your city of Mexico
With the victory which you granted me.
I have returned. . . .
Since you did not frown upon my extreme youth
Or my lack of strength or the weakness of my chest,
You have subjected those remote and barbarous nations
To my power. You did all of these things!
All is yours!
All was won to give you honor and praise!
Therefore, O powerful and heroic Huitzilopochtli,
You have brought us back to this place which was only water
Before, which was enclosed by our ancestors, And where they built our city.

**SOURCE 2**

Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés wrote the following description of a temple in the Aztec capital in a 1520 letter to the Spanish king, Charles V.

Three halls are in this grand temple, which contain the principal idols; these are of wonderful extent and height, and admirable workmanship, adorned with figures sculptured in stone and wood; leading from the halls are chapels with very small doors . . . In these chapels are the images of idols, although, as I have before said, many of them are also found on the outside; the principal ones, in which the people have greatest faith and confidence, I precipitated from their pedestals, and cast them down the steps of the temple, purifying the chapels in which they had stood, as they were all polluted with human blood, shed ill the sacrifices. In the place of these I put images of Our Lady and the Saints, which excited not a little feeling in Moctezuma and the inhabitants, who at first remonstrated, declaring that if my proceedings were known throughout the country, the people would rise against me; for they believed that their idols bestowed on them all temporal good, and if they permitted them to be ill-treated, they would be angry and without their gifts, and by this means the people would be deprived of the fruits of the earth and perish with famine. . . .

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1 vassals: people in a subordinate position
2 precipitated: threw down
3 Moctezuma: the Aztec king in 1520
4 remonstrated: vocally protested
Human sacrifice was a central part of Aztec religion. The Aztec believed their deities, such as the war god Huitzilopochtli, demanded a steady supply of human sacrifices. At the dedication of the great pyramid of Tenochtitlán, for example, Aztec priests sacrificed more than 20,000 people. Most of the Aztec’s sacrifice victims were prisoners captured from enemy tribes. For this purpose, Aztec warriors were trained to capture, rather than kill, their enemies in battle.

The above image is an Aztec drawing of a sacrifice ritual. During these ceremonies, priests cut out the victim’s heart and held it up to the sun as an offering. As shown in the image, the victim’s body was then thrown down the steps of the pyramid temple.

5 *temporal:* relating to earthly life
Visual Summary

The Peoples of NORTH AMERICA

- During the last Ice Age, hunters and gatherers from Asia may have crossed the land bridge in the Bering Strait to North America.
- In North America these first Americans formed distinct cultures, including Inuit, Mound Builders, Iroquois, Plains Indians, and Anasazi.

The Peoples of Mesoamerica

- The Olmec (c. 1200–400 B.C.) carved huge stone heads, possibly to represent their gods.
- Teotihuacán (c. 250 B.C.–A.D. 800) was Mesoamerica’s first major city.
- The Maya (c. A.D. 300–900) built temples and pyramids and developed a calendar.
- The Toltec (c. A.D. 900–1200) introduced metal-working to Mesoamerica.
- The Aztec flourished from the twelfth century A.D. until the Spanish conquest in the 1500s.

The Peoples of South America

- Caral, the oldest-known major city in the Americas, was abandoned by 1500 B.C.
- The Chavin, Nazca, and Moche cultures existed in South America before the Inca.
- The Inca conquered a large area under their leader Pachacuti and his successors.
- The Inca created a highly structured society with an extensive road system linking its four quarters.
STANDARDIZED TEST PRACTICE

TEST-TAKING TIP

Some answer choices are better than others. Be sure you have read all the choices carefully before you pick your answer.

Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence.

1. The Mayan writing system was based on ________, or pictures.
   A alphanumerics
   B hieroglyphs
   C chinampas
   D knotted strings

2. ________ is also known as corn.
   A Hominy
   B Cuzco
   C Succotash
   D Maize

3. Each Iroquois group was made up of ________, groups of related families.
   A matriarchs
   B pueblos
   C clans
   D patriarchs

4. Goods or money paid by conquered peoples to their conquerors is known as a ________.
   A tribute
   B penance
   C tithe
   D sacrifice

Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

Section 1 (pp. 368–371)

5. Who were the first peoples to cross the Bering Strait from Asia into North America?
   A The Hopewell
   B Hunters and gatherers
   C Farmers
   D The Anasazi

6. Which early American crops were called the “three sisters”?  
   A Beans, corn, potatoes
   B Corn, beans, mustard
   C Beans, squash, potatoes
   D Corn, beans, squash

7. How did the Iroquois settle their differences after the Iroquois League was formed?
   A By engaging in athletic competition
   B By making peace offerings to their enemies
   C By the deliberation of the Grand Council
   D By moving farther away from their enemies

Section 2 (pp. 372–379)

8. What was the first major city in Mesoamerica?
   A Teotihuacán
   B Tikal
   C Chichén Itzá
   D Tenochtitlán

Need Extra Help?

If You Missed Questions . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
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CHAPTER 11 The Americas 389
9. How did the Maya appease their gods?
   A. Parades
   B. Penance
   C. Fasting
   D. Human sacrifice

10. How did the Toltec irrigate their fields of beans, maize, and peppers?
    A. With water from aqueducts
    B. With water from the Tula River
    C. With water from the Gulf of Mexico
    D. With water from the Yucatán River

11. Which of the following is true of the Aztec?
    A. They never engaged in war.
    B. Their culture did not have myths or legends.
    C. They built monumental architecture.
    D. They trained women to be warriors.

Section 3 (pp. 382–385)
12. About what time did the Moche civilization appear?
    A. A.D. 300
    B. 200 B.C.
    C. 50 B.C.
    D. A.D. 500

13. How did the Inca ruler Pachacuti create a well-organized empire?
    A. He remained in sole charge of all the empire.
    B. He made a female his coruler.
    C. He divided empire into four quarters, each ruled by a governor.
    D. He divided spoils of war among the nobles.

14. What do you notice about the roads leading out of Cuzco?
    A. They lead out to the east only.
    B. They lead out in all directions.
    C. They lead out to the west only.
    D. They do not intersect at any point.

15. Why was the Iroquois League so important?
    A. It made the Iroquois people very wealthy.
    B. It protected the Aztec from Hernán Cortés.
    C. It established the Maya calendar.
    D. It was an early American experiment in democracy.
16. When did agriculture arise in the Americas?
   A When the Olmec began farming along the riverbanks of the Gulf of Mexico
   B When the Maya established farming villages
   C When the Inuit moved to North America from Asia
   D When the Aztec came into power in Mesoamerica

17. Why do historians not know more about the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica?
   A Because the ancient civilizations had no writing systems
   B Because the ancient civilizations left no artifacts behind
   C Because the conquering peoples destroyed many religious artifacts and leveled cities
   D Because excavations did not begin until quite recently

18. What information can historians gain from this image?
   A The Inca lived in North America.
   B The Inca played a domino-like game.
   C The Inca kept extensive records of their past.
   D The Inca had a complicated written language.

19. Which early civilization built the city of Tenochtitlán?
20. Why were the Spanish so “astonished” by what they saw?

21. Throughout time people have had to adapt to their environment in order to survive. What was the relationship between the early peoples of the Americas and their environment?

Document-Based Questions

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the short answer questions that follow the document. Base your answers on the document and on your knowledge of world history.

Bernal Díaz, who accompanied Hernán Cortés on a Spanish expedition to Mexico in 1519, wrote:

“When we beheld so many cities and towns on the water, and other large settlements built on firm ground, and that broad causeway running so straight and perfectly level to the city of Tenochtitlán, we were astonished because of the great stone towers and temples and buildings that rose up out of the water.”

—Bernal Díaz, as quoted in The Conquest of New Spain, John M. Cohen, trans., 1975

19. Which early civilization built the city of Tenochtitlán?
20. Why were the Spanish so “astonished” by what they saw?

This Peruvian print from 1609 shows an Inca man using the quipu. Base your answer on the print and on your knowledge of world history.

History ONLINE

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 11 at glencoe.com.
Ibn Battuta: The Ultimate Road Trip

Ibn Battuta makes Marco Polo seem like a couch potato. The Arab explorer has journeyed just about everywhere in the world, covering nearly 70,000 miles over 30 years.

Battuta’s first trip was a pilgrimage to Makkah from his home-town of Tangier, Morocco, in 1325. From there, he just kept going and going. First stop was Mesopotamia, and then he continued along the Silk Road in central Asia. Next was a voyage along the coast of East Africa, where he visited Ethiopia and Zanzibar. After a quick trip home to refresh himself, Battuta left to explore Constantinople, headed into Afghanistan and India, and later made the trek to China. He also explored Europe, North Africa, and finally, the kingdom of Mali.

In his journeys, Battuta didn’t always travel first class. He was attacked by pirates and thieves, nearly drowned in storms at sea, kidnapped, and avoided the Black Death like, well, the plague. Battuta promises to write down the story of his epic adventures. No doubt it will be a very thick book.

They loot. They pillage. And occasionally they loot and pillage. That’s the impression most people have about Vikings. But Europe’s bad boys do have their good points. Although Viking is the name given to those Norse who go on raids, most Norse are farmers and herders. The Norse have composed epic poems, play chess, make iron tools, and craft jewelry. They also build the greatest ships in the world. Of course, complaints about the Vikings’ rude behavior are justified. After all, they have been stealing stuff from the coasts of England and Ireland for a couple of hundred years. With the Norse, it seems that you have to take the bad with the good.
Getting sick in medieval Europe is no picnic. Here are some standard medical treatments—along with a fake one. Can you find it?

1. Herbal treatments are recommended for anything from the Black Death to insomnia. Ingredients may include urine, ground-up worms, and roasted snake skin.
2. Want relief from smallpox? Hang colored cloth around your bed.
3. Diseases, say experts, are caused by a buildup of bodily fluids (called “humors”), such as blood. Having a barber open a vein to rid you of some blood should balance the humors and bring good health.
4. Many doctors diagnose problems by a patient’s astrological sign. For example, a person with a certain sign might be prone to colds or sadness.
5. To treat a cough and other lung problems, patients should set moldy chestnuts on fire and breathe in the smoke.
6. Some physicians believe physical sickness is caused by sin. Their prescription? Go on a pilgrimage and/or pray.
7. Here’s an effective way to clean your teeth: Simply rub them with powder made from crushed seashells.

Annals of Medicine

Milestones

PUBLISHED. THE TALE OF GENJI in the year 1000, by Murasaki Shikibu, a Japanese noblewoman. It is the story of the son of the emperor and his romantic adventures in the royal court. Because of its length and insight into the characters, many scholars are claiming that this is the world’s first novel.

BUILT. A major urban project called MACHU PICCHU, by Inca architects for the emperor Pachacuti, completed around 1470. Located 8,000 feet high in the Andes, it consists of about 200 buildings. About 1,200 people are expected to move into this city in the sky, many of them members of the royal family. Most impressive are the spectacular views. Location, as they say, is everything.

SUCCEEDED. SUNNI ALI by his son Sunni Baru, as emperor of the kingdom of Songhai. Through military might, Sunni Ali managed to turn that backwater nation into a vast empire. After taking power in 1464, Sunni Ali built up a powerful army and navy. When he died in 1492, he controlled much of the territory belonging to the Mali Empire. Pundits believe that Askia Muhammad Toure already has designs on Baru’s office.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Identifying Points of View What does the writer think about the Vikings? Explain the reasons for your answer.

2. Speculating Why do you think Ibn Battuta traveled so widely and for so many years?