

# People and Empires in the Americas, 900–1500

## Connect History *and* Geography

Several great civilizations flourished in the Americas between the 9th and 16th centuries. The most powerful civilizations were the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, but many other cultures also thrived. Examine the map at the right and use it to help you answer the questions below.

1. What cultures are shown in North America?
2. Where was Mesoamerica?
3. Which culture would have had more influence on the Aztecs: the Maya, Anasazi, or Inca? Why?

For more information about empires in the Americas . . .



This Eagle Knight shows how important warriors were to the Aztec society. It was found in the Eagle Knight House near the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan. The fierce-looking knight belonged to the Aztec nobility and dedicated himself to the service of the god Sol. The Aztecs ruled a large empire between 1200 and 1521.



Chac, a rain god of the Maya, 300–900, reclines in front of the Temple of the Warriors. He holds a stone bowl, which was a receptacle for sacrifices, such as human hearts, made to the gods.

500s

Teotihuacan reaches population peak in central Mexico.

800

Anasazi culture develops in the Southwest.

500

**1438 Peru**  
Pachacuti becomes ruler of Incas

**1500s Peru**  
Inca Empire at height

**1502 Mexico**  
Montezuma becomes Aztec ruler

**1455 Germany**  
Gutenberg Bible produced on printing press

**1508 Italy**  
Michelangelo begins painting Sistine Chapel

**1601 England**  
William Shakespeare writes *Hamlet*

**1497 Italy**  
Leonardo da Vinci paints *The Last Supper*

**1517 Germany**  
Martin Luther begins Reformation

**1603 England**  
Queen Elizabeth I dies, ending Tudor rule

**1534 England**  
Henry VIII breaks from Church

**1453 Europe**  
Ottomans conquer Constantinople

**1501 Persia**  
Safavid Isma'il conquers Persia

**1631 India** Shah Jahan builds Taj Mahal

**1498 Portugal**  
Vasco da Gama sails to India

**1526 India**  
Babur founds Mughal Empire

**1658 India**  
Aurangzeb rules Mughal Empire

**1529 Anatolia**  
Suleiman the Magnificent rules Ottoman Empire

**1419 Portugal**  
Prince Henry starts navigation school

**1514 China**  
First Portuguese ships reach China

**1603 Japan**  
Tokugawa regime begins

**1721 Japan**  
Edo (Tokyo) becomes world's largest city

**1433 China** Last voyage of Zheng He

**1522 Spain**  
Magellan's crew sails around world

**1636 China**  
Manchus conquer Korea

**1793 China**  
British seek trade concessions with Chinese

**1494 Spain and Portugal** Treaty of Tordesillas splits "New World"

**1644 China**  
Manchus found Qing Dynasty

**1492 Americas**  
Columbus sails to Hispaniola

**1502 Africa**  
First slaves exported for work in the Americas

**1607 North America** English settle Jamestown

**1739 North America** South Carolina slaves lead Stono Rebellion

**1521 Mexico**  
Cortés conquers Aztecs

**1608 Canada**  
Champlain founds Quebec

**1754 North America** French and Indian War begins

**1533 Peru** Pizarro conquers Inca

**1675 North America** Colonists and Indians clash in King Philip's War

## Living History

### Unit 4 Portfolio Project

**THEME Cultural Interaction**

Your portfolio for Unit 4 will trace the ways cultures interact with one another and show the results of those influences. Types of interaction include conquest, trade, migration, and heritage. Results include the sharing of technology, religious concepts, political ideas, goods, crops, foods, diseases, and knowledge of all kinds.

#### Living History Project Choices

Each Chapter Assessment offers you choices of ways to show the cultural interaction in that chapter. Activities include the following:

- Chapter 15** dialogue, poster, article
- Chapter 17** magazine, letter, role-play, painting, interview
- Chapter 18** letter, political cartoon, inscription
- Chapter 19** letter, reply, editorial
- Chapter 20** description, collage, debate

▼ 1500s England



▼ 1675 North America





**900**  
Classic period of Mayan civilization ends.

**1100**  
Mississippian culture thrives at Cahokia.

**1325**  
Aztecs build Tenochtitlan.

**1438** Pachacuti becomes Inca emperor.

**1502** Montezuma II crowned Aztec emperor.

**1500**

# Interact *with* History

**A**s a historian studying a culture with no written language, you are forced to study the artifacts of that culture. In many ways you are like a detective. You look at the evidence and clues to draw conclusions about the culture. Imagine you have found the mask shown on this page. Study the clues and see how much you can learn about the Bella Coola.

These images are of ravens and a killer whale found in the Pacific Ocean.



Carved of red cedar and painted, the mask was moved by strings and mechanical devices across the rear house wall during a ceremony.

Legend says Ahlquntam used the sun as a canoe to cross the sky. He wore a cloak lined with salmon.

## *What does this mask reveal about the society?*

This mask, used by the Bella Coola during a ceremony, tells the legend of Ahlquntam, the chief god in the land of creation.

### EXAMINING *the* ISSUES

- What do the materials and images used reveal about the environment in which the Bella Coola lived?
- What do the images or figures tell you about what was important in the culture?
- Why might it be important to know by whom or when the mask might have been worn?
- How else might you find out information about this culture?

Discuss these questions with your classmates. Think about the kinds of information you have learned about other cultures that did not have a written language. You may recall ways historians learned about the very earliest cultures.

**As you read** this chapter, examine the masks made by different peoples of the Americas. Think about what those masks reveal about the various cultures.

# 1 Diverse Societies of North America

## TERMS & NAMES

- potlatch
- Anasazi
- pueblos
- Mississippian
- Iroquois
- totems

### MAIN IDEA

Complex North American societies were linked to each other through culture and economics.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Traditions and ideas from these cultures became part of the cultures of North America.

**SETTING THE STAGE** Between 40,000 and 12,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers migrated across the Bering Strait land bridge from Asia and began to populate the Americas. Migrating southward, those first Americans reached the southern tip of South America by somewhere between 12,000 and 7000 B.C. At the same time, they spread out across North America. Over the centuries, early North American peoples adapted to their environment, creating a diverse set of cultures.

## Complex Societies Build and Trade

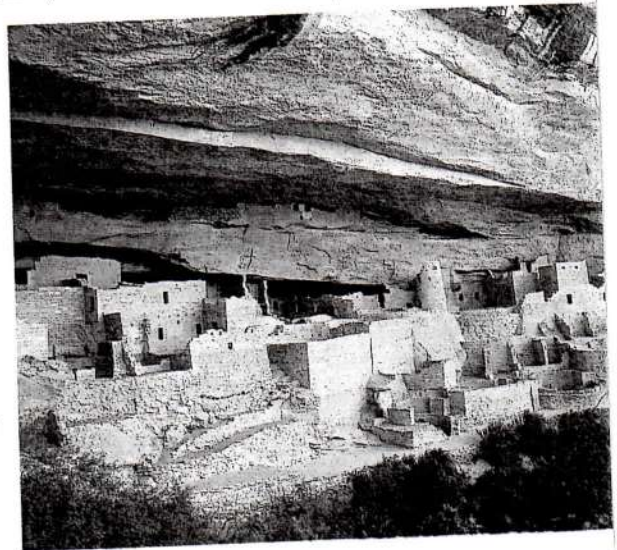
In some ways, the early cultures north of the Rio Grande River were less developed than those of South America and Mesoamerica. The North American groups created no great empires. They left few ruins as spectacular as those of ancient Mexico or Peru. Nevertheless, the first peoples of North America did create complex societies. These societies were able to conduct long-distance trade and construct magnificent buildings.

**Northwest Coast—Cultures of Abundance** The Pacific Northwest—from Oregon to Alaska—was rich in resources and supported a sizable population. To the Kwakiutl, Nootka, and Haida peoples, the most important resource was the sea. They hunted whales in canoes. Some canoes were large enough to carry at least 15 people. In addition to the many resources of the sea, the coastal forest provided plentiful food. In this abundant environment, the Northwest Coast tribes developed societies in which differences in wealth created social classes. Families displayed their rank and prosperity in an elaborate ceremony called the **potlatch** (PAHT-LACH). In this ceremony, they gave food, drink, and gifts to the community.

**Pueblo People Construct Complex Buildings** The dry, desert lands of the Southwest were a much harsher environment than the temperate Pacific coast. However, as early as 3000 B.C. the peoples of the Southwest were beginning to farm the land. Among the most successful of these early farmers were the Hohokam (huh-HOH-kuhm) of central Arizona. They used irrigation to produce harvests of corn, beans, and squash. Their use of pottery rather than baskets, and certain religious rituals, showed contact with Mesoamerican peoples to the south.

The Hohokam were also influenced by a people to the north: the **Anasazi** (AH-nuh-SAH-zee). They lived where the present-day states of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico meet. The Anasazi built impressive cliff dwellings, such as the ones at Mesa Verde, Colorado. These houses were built in shallow caves in the sheer walls of deep canyons. By the A.D. 900s, the Anasazi were living in **pueblos** (PWEHB-lohs), villages of large, apartment-style compounds made of stone and sun-baked clay.

Cliff Palace, located at Mesa Verde, Colorado, was an Anasazi pueblo. It had 200 rooms.



### Background

Around 300 B.C. Mesoamerican people migrated into the valleys of Arizona.



## North American Culture Areas about 1400



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- Region** Which culture group had the largest number of tribes?
- Human-Environment Interaction** In which culture areas would movement of trade goods be made easier by river and lake connections?

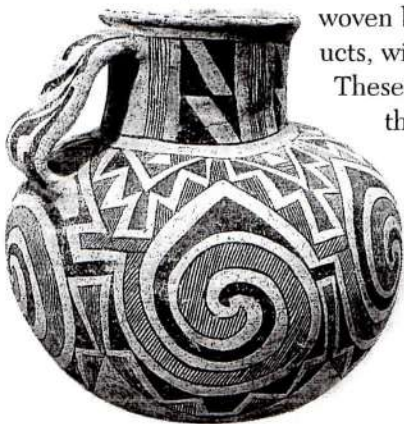
One of the largest pueblos, begun around A.D. 900, was Pueblo Bonito, a Spanish name meaning “beautiful village.” Its construction required a high degree of social organization and inventiveness. Like other people of the Americas, the Anasazi did not have horses, mules, or the wheel. Instead, they relied on human labor to quarry sandstone from the canyon walls and move it to the site. Skilled builders then used a mud-like mortar to construct walls up to five stories high. Windows were small to keep out the burning sun. When completed, Pueblo Bonito probably housed about 1,000 people and contained more than 600 rooms. In addition, a number of underground ceremonial chambers called kivas (KEE-vuhs) were used for a variety of religious practices.

Many Anasazi pueblos were abandoned around 1200. Their descendants, the Pueblo peoples, continued many Anasazi customs. Pueblo groups like the Hopi and Zuni used kivas for religious ceremonies. They also created beautiful pottery and woven blankets. They traded these, along with corn and other farm products, with Plains Indians to the east, who supplied bison meat and hides.

These nomadic Plains tribes eventually became known by such names as the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache.

**Mound Builders Forge Ties with Eastern Peoples** Beyond the Great Plains, in the wooded lands east of the Mississippi River, other ancient peoples—the Mound Builders—were creating their own unique traditions. Beginning around 800 B.C., two cultures, known as Adena and Hopewell, built large burial mounds and filled them with finely crafted copper and stone objects. Some mounds, such as Ohio’s Great Serpent Mound, had the shape of animals when seen from above.

This Anasazi pitcher dates from A.D. 1100. The black and white spirals form a traditional design.



#### Background

Tribes in the Plains are classified into groups based on one of six basic language families.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Cahokia Monk's Mound

In 1809, in southern Illinois, a group of French monks founded a monastery on top of an unusual mound. The mound was about 100 feet high and consisted of four terraces that covered about 15 acres.

Four years later, the monks abandoned the site. Later explorations would show that their settlement had been in the middle of one of the greatest pre-Columbian Native American cities.

The large mound eventually became known as Monk's Mound. It was located inside a stockade that enclosed about 40 acres of land. To an observer standing in the enclosure on the first day of spring, the sun would appear to rise directly over the mound itself.

The last Mound Builder culture, the **Mississippian**, lasted from A.D. 800 until the arrival of Europeans in the 1500s. These people built giant earthen pyramids such as the one at Cahokia (kuh-HOH-kee-uh), Illinois. They created thriving villages based on farming and trade. Between 1000 and 1200, as many as 10,000 people lived at Cahokia, the leading site of Mississippian culture. Cahokia was led by priest-rulers, who regulated farming activities. The priest-rulers may have been influenced by the cultures of Mesoamerica. The heart of the community was a 100-foot-high, flat-topped pyramid, which was crowned by a wooden temple.

These Mississippian lands were located in a crossroads region between east and west. They enjoyed easy transportation on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. They came into contact with many other peoples, including those of the Eastern Woodlands.

**Woodlands Tribes Build Alliances** The eastern tribes had much in common with the Mississippian peoples, including a similar environment. Despite the similar environment, woodlands groups developed a variety of cultures. They spoke distinct languages belonging to language families such as Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Muskogean. The woodlands peoples often clashed with each other over land. In some areas, tribes formed political alliances to ensure protection of tribal lands. The best example of a political alliance was the **Iroquois**

(IHR-uh-KWOY), a group of tribes speaking related languages living in the eastern Great Lakes region. In the late 1500s, five of these tribes in upper New York—the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca—formed the Iroquois League. According to legend, Chief Hiawatha created this league. His goal was to promote joint defense and cooperation among the tribes. The confederacy lasted for almost 200 years.

## Cultural Connections

The Iroquois alliance was a notable example of a political link between early North American peoples. For the most part, however, the connections between native North Americans were economic and cultural. They traded, had similar religious beliefs, and shared social patterns.

**Trading Networks Tie Tribes Together** Trade was a major factor linking the peoples of North America. Trade centers and traveling merchants were found throughout North America. Along the Columbia River in Oregon, the Chinook people established a lively marketplace that brought together trade goods from all over the West. The Mississippians were also active traders. Their trade network stretched from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic coast and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Sometimes goods traveled hundreds or even thousands of miles from their original source. This was especially true of exotic items such as colored feathers or copper jewelry.

**Religion Shapes Views of Life** Another practice early Americans shared was religion. Nearly all native North Americans believed that the world around them was filled with nature spirits. Most Native Americans recognized a number of sacred spirits. Some groups held up one supreme being, or Great Spirit, above all others. North American peoples believed that the spirits gave them rituals and customs to guide them in their lives and to satisfy their basic needs. If people practiced these rituals, they would live in peace and harmony.

Native American religious beliefs also included great respect for the land as the source of life. Native Americans used the land but tried to alter it as little as possible. The land was sacred, not something that could be bought and sold. Later, when

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### A. Drawing

**Conclusions** Of what value would a political alliance be to an individual tribe?

#### Background

The belief that natural objects have a spirit is called animism.

Europeans arrived in North America, the issue of ownership of land became a problem. A Native American expressed his view of this dilemma:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Some of our chiefs make the claim that the land belongs to us. It is not what the Great Spirit told me. He told me that the land belongs to Him, that no people own the land, and that I was not to forget to tell this to the white people.

KANNEKUK, Kickapoo prophet, quoted in *Through Indian Eyes*

Harmony with nature was an important part of Native American life, and so was harmony in relationships with people.

## Daily Life

### Iroquois Women: Holders of Political Power

The Iroquois society was matrilineal. This means that all Iroquois traced their descent through their female ancestors. Clans of the mother controlled property, held ceremonies, and determined official titles.

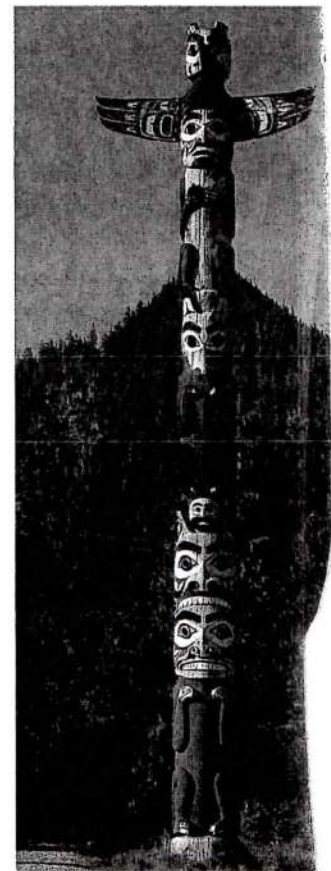
The ability to grant titles to men was handed down from mother to daughter. The most important title given to men was that of "Sachem," the peace, or civil, chief.

A council of Sachems met once a year to decide on war and peace and other important matters. Since Sachems could not go to war, they appointed warriors to lead a war party. Thus, in a way women controlled warfare in the Iroquois tribes.

**Shared Social Patterns** The family was the basis for social organization for Native Americans. Generally, the family unit was the extended family, including parents, children, grandparents, and other close relatives. Some tribes further organized families into clans: groups of families descended from a common ancestor. In some tribes, clan members lived together in large houses or groups of houses.

Common among American Indian clans was the use of **totems** (TOH-tuhmz). The term refers to a natural object that an individual, clan, or group identifies itself with. The totem was used as a symbol of the unity of a group or clan. It also helped define certain behaviors and the social relationships of a group. The term comes from an Ojibwa Indian language spoken in the Great Lakes area, but refers to a cultural practice found throughout the Americas. For example, Northwestern peoples displayed totem symbols on masks, boats, and huge poles set in front of their houses. Others used totem symbols in rituals or dances associated with important group events such as marriages, the naming of children, or the planting or harvesting of crops.

There were hundreds of different patterns of North American Indian life. Some societies were small and dealt with life in a limited region of the vast North American continent. Other groups were much larger, and were linked by trade and culture to other groups in North America and Mesoamerica. As you will learn in Section 2, peoples in Mesoamerica and South America also lived in societies that varied from simple to complex. Three of these cultures—the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca—would develop sophisticated ways of life like those of highly developed cultures in other parts of the globe.



Totem poles marked important events such as the naming of a chief.

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**B. Making Inferences** What artificial symbols are used by nations or organizations in a way similar to totems?

## Section 1 Assessment

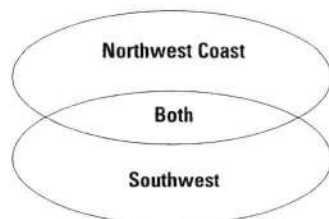
### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- potlatch
- Anasazi
- pueblos
- Mississippian
- Iroquois
- totems

### 2. TAKING NOTES

Draw a Venn diagram like the one below. Compare and contrast Native Americans of the Northwest Coast and the Southwest.



How did environment affect the development of these cultures?

### 3. COMPARING

In what ways did the peoples of North America share similar cultural patterns?

**THINK ABOUT**

- how the people viewed the environment
- the role of family in their lives
- religion

### 4. ANALYZING THEMES

**Cultural Interaction** What evidence is there that societies in North America interacted with each other?

**THINK ABOUT**

- how goods were obtained
- ways to defend against enemies
- what kinds of evidence historians find and consider valid



# 2 Mayan Kings and Cities

## TERMS & NAMES

- Tikal
- glyph
- codex
- *Popol Vuh*

### MAIN IDEA

The Maya developed a highly complex civilization based on city-states controlled by dynasties of kings.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Descendants of the Maya still occupy the same territory.

**SETTING THE STAGE** In the early centuries A.D., most North American peoples were beginning to develop complex societies. Further south, the peoples of Mexico and Central America were entering into the full flower of civilization. A prime example of this cultural flowering was the Maya, who built an extraordinary civilization in the heart of Mesoamerica.

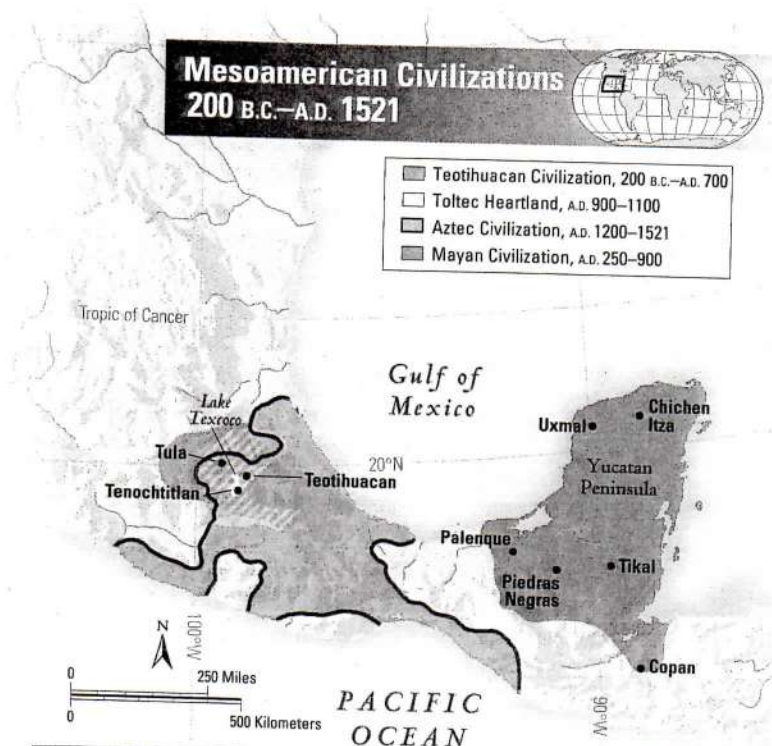
## Maya Create Urban Kingdoms

The homeland of the Maya stretched from southern Mexico into northern Central America. This area includes a highland region and a lowland region. The lowlands lie to the north. They include the dry scrub forest of the Yucatan (YOO-kuh-TAN) Peninsula and the dense, steamy jungles of southeastern Mexico and northern Guatemala. The highlands are further south—a range of cool, cloud-wreathed mountains that stretch from southern Mexico to El Salvador.

While the Olmec were building their civilization along the Gulf Coast in the period from 1200 B.C. to 400 B.C., the Maya were also evolving. They took on Olmec influences, blending these with local customs. By A.D. 250, Mayan culture had burst forth in a flourishing civilization.

**Urban Centers** The period from A.D. 250 to 900 is known as the Classic Period of Mayan civilization. During this time, the Maya built spectacular cities such as **Tikal** (tee-KAHL), a major center in northern Guatemala. Other important sites included Copan, Palenque, Uxmal, and Chichen Itza. Each of these was an independent city-state, ruled by a god-king and serving as a center for religious ceremonies and trade.

Mayan cities featured giant pyramids, temples, palaces, and elaborate stone carvings dedicated to the gods and to important rulers. Tens of thousands of people lived in residential areas surrounding the city center, which bustled with activity.



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

The map shows about 1,700 years of occupation of Mesoamerica. During this time cultures influenced each other through trade and the conquering of lands.

1. **Region** Which civilization occupied the Yucatan Peninsula?
2. **Region** What other civilization areas were eventually incorporated into the Aztec area?

Archaeologists have identified at least 50 major Mayan sites, all with monumental architecture. For example, Pyramid IV at Tikal stretched 212 feet into the jungle sky. In fact, the Tikal pyramids were the tallest structures in the Americas until 1903, when the Flatiron Building was built in New York City. In addition to temples and pyramids, each Mayan city featured a ball court. In this stone-sided playing field, the Maya played a game that had religious and political significance. The Maya believed the playing of this game would maintain the cycles of the sun and moon and bring life-giving rains.

**Agriculture and Trade Support Cities** Although the Mayan city-states were independent of each other, they were linked through alliances and trade. Cities exchanged the products of their local environment such as salt, flint, feathers, shells, and honey. Also traded were craft goods like cotton textiles and jade ornaments. While the Maya did not have a uniform currency, cacao (chocolate) beans sometimes served as one.

As in the rest of Mesoamerica, agriculture—particularly the growing of maize, beans, and squash—provided the basis for Mayan life. For years, experts assumed that the Maya practiced slash-and-burn agriculture. This method involves farmers clearing the land by burning existing vegetation and planting crops in the ashes. Evidence now shows, however, that the Maya also developed more sophisticated methods, including planting on raised beds above swamps and on hillside terraces. These methods allowed Mayan farmers to produce large amounts of food to be traded in the cities.

**Kingdoms Built on Dynasties** Successful farming methods led to the accumulation of wealth and the development of social classes. The noble class, which included priests and the leading warriors, occupied the top rung of Mayan society. Below them came merchants and those with specialized knowledge, such as master artisans. Finally, at the bottom, came the peasant majority.

The Mayan king sat at the top of this class structure. He was regarded as a holy figure and his position was hereditary. When he died, he passed the throne on to his eldest son. Other sons of the ruler might expect to join the priesthood.

## Religion Shapes Mayan Life

Religion influenced most aspects of Mayan life. The Maya believed in many gods, who inhabited 13 layers of the sky and the 9 layers of the underworld. There were gods of corn, of death, of rain, and of war. Gods could be good or evil, and sometimes both. Gods also were associated with the four directions and with different colors: white for north, black for west, yellow for south, red for east, and green in the center. The Maya believed that each day was a living god whose behavior could be predicted with the help of an intricate system of calendars.

**Religious Practices** The Maya worshiped their gods in various ways. They prayed and made offerings of food, flowers, and incense. They also pierced their bodies with sharp needles and offered their blood, believing that this would nourish the gods.

Sometimes the Maya even carried out human sacrifice, usually of captured enemies. At Chichen Itza (chee-CHEHN ee-TSAH), in the Yucatan, they threw captives into a deep sinkhole lake, called a *cenote* (say-NO-tay), along with gold, jade, and other offerings. The Maya believed that human sacrifice pleased the gods and kept the world in balance. Nevertheless, the Maya's use of sacrifice never reached the extremes of some other Mesoamerican peoples.

**Math Develops to Support Religion** Mayan religious beliefs also led to the development of the calendar, mathematics, and astronomy. Mayans believed that time was

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### A. Drawing

**Conclusions** What does the ability to construct complex buildings reveal about a society?

#### Background

Only the wealthy consumed chocolate as a drink. It was flavored with honey and vanilla.

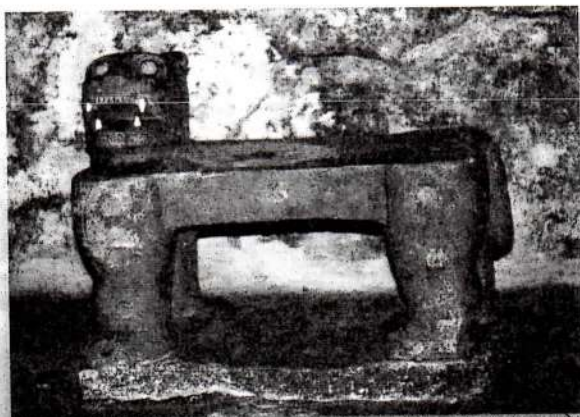
This is the death mask of a seventh-century ruler of Palenque, a Mayan city-state. The mask is a mosaic of jade with eyes of shell and obsidian.



# Chichen Itza

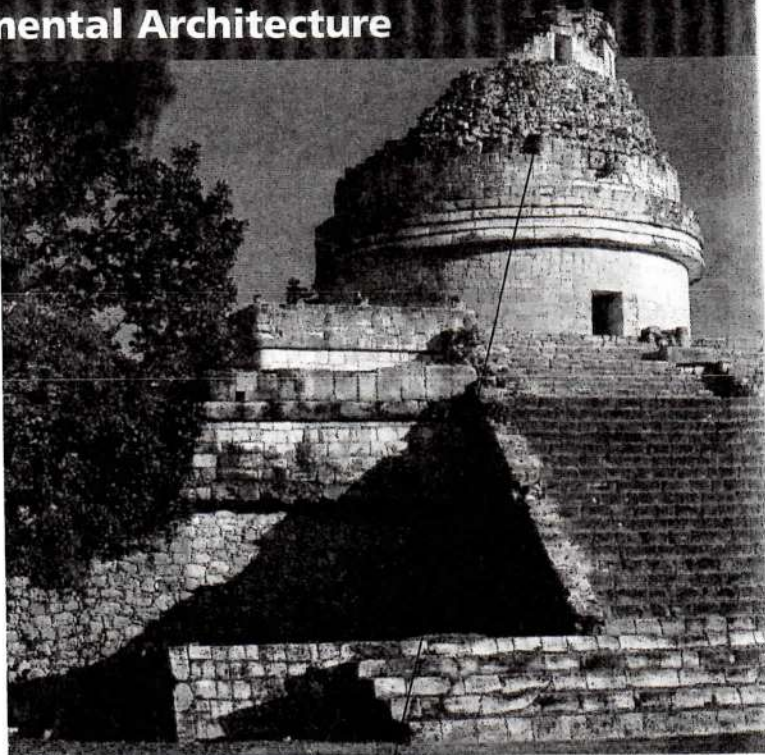
Mayan cities feature very large structures that seem to be designed for ceremonial or religious purposes. Inscriptions on the buildings, the buildings' contents, chambers, and even the locations of the buildings reveal important information about the culture. Chichen Itza, a Mayan city located on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, has huge buildings to honor rulers, warriors, and gods.

This carved stone throne takes the form of a roaring jaguar, painted red, with eyes and spots of jade and fangs of shell. It represents the jaguar god of the underworld. It sits inside a chamber of a four-sided pyramid. The chambers are parts of a pyramid that occupied the same site at an earlier time. El Castillo, the pyramid below, was constructed over it.



## El Castillo—"The Castle"

This temple, also called the Pyramid of Kukulcan, sat at the top of four spectacular stairways. It was dedicated to the worship of Kukulcan, the feathered serpent god. The stairs to the temple were constructed so that at certain times of the day it looked as if a writhing serpent was crawling up them.



## El Caracol—"The Snail"

Resembling a modern observatory, El Caracol shows the Mayans' knowledge of astronomy. Window-like openings in the tower align with the sunset during both spring and autumn equinoxes. The Maya studied the movements of the sun, moon, and stars because these movements related to the activities of the gods.

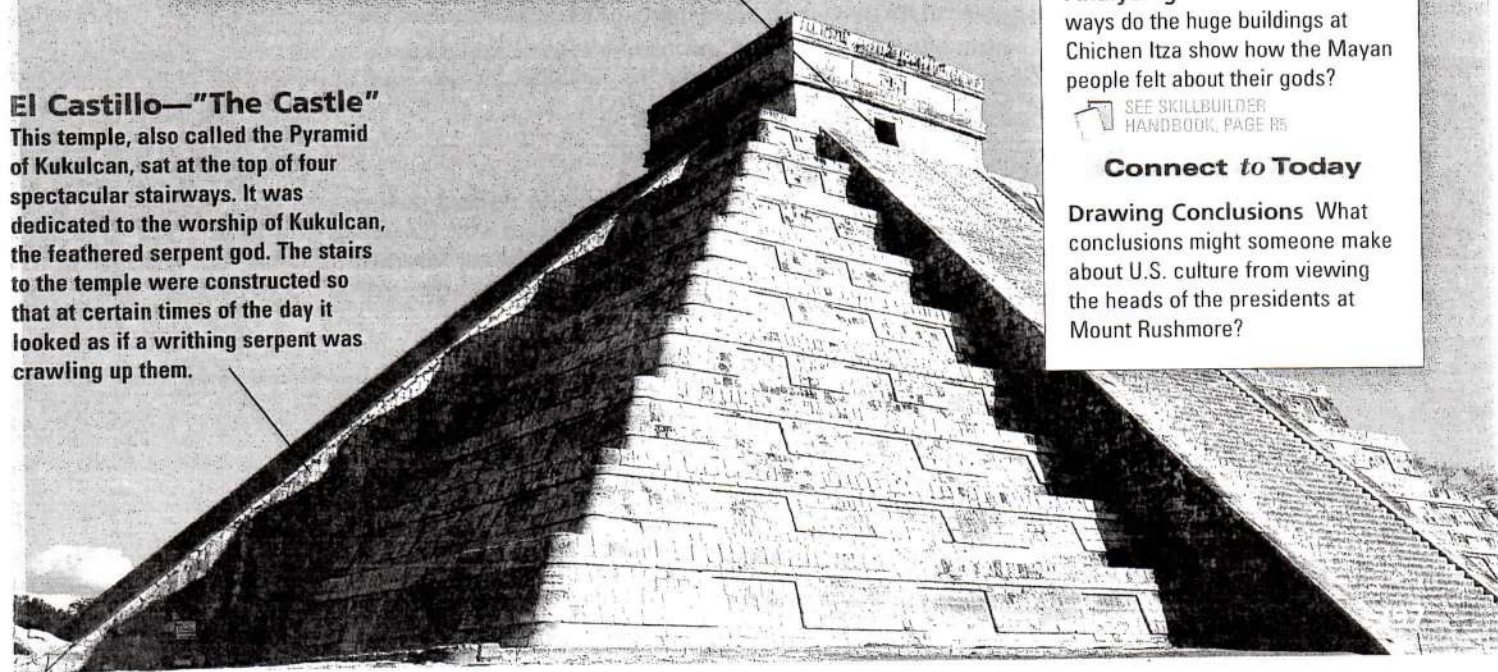
### Connect to History

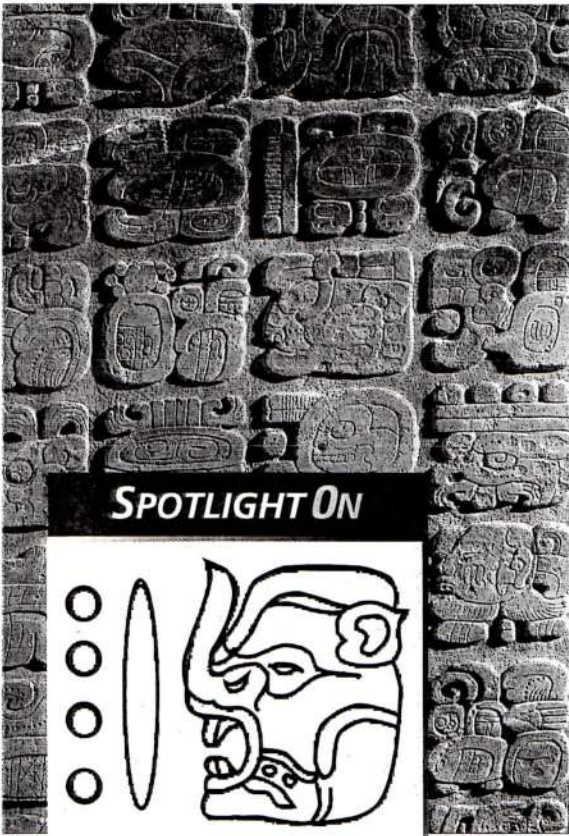
**Analyzing Motives** In what ways do the huge buildings at Chichen Itza show how the Mayan people felt about their gods?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R5

### Connect to Today

**Drawing Conclusions** What conclusions might someone make about U.S. culture from viewing the heads of the presidents at Mount Rushmore?





## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Calendar Glyph

The glyph shown above is the date "9 Zotz" on the 365-day calendar. The symbol stands for the name of the month. The number is represented by the bar, which equals 5, and dots, which together equal 4.

Pictured above is a group of Mayan hieroglyphs from Temple 18 at Palenque. They are undecoded. Like Egyptian hieroglyphics, the glyphs can be grouped into two categories: those that are word signs and those that are syllables. The way the glyphs are translated involves deciding if the sign sets are word pictures or syllables.

Many of the glyphs on stone monuments are records of kings and the history of their rule. Other glyphs provide information on the Mayan gods and religious activities.

a burden carried on the back of a god. At the end of a day, month, or year, one god would lay the burden down and another would pick it up. A day would be lucky or unlucky, depending on the nature of the god. Thus it was very important to have an accurate calendar to know which god was in charge of the day.

The Maya developed a 260-day religious calendar, which consisted of twenty 13-day months. A second 365-day solar calendar consisted of eighteen 20-day months, with a separate period of five days at the end. The two calendars were linked together like meshed gears so that any given day could be identified in both cycles. The calendar helped identify the best time to plant crops, attack enemies, or crown new rulers.

The Maya based their calendar on careful observation of the planets, sun, and moon. Highly skilled Mayan astronomers and mathematicians calculated the solar year at 365.2420 days. (Only .0002 of a day too short!) The Mayan astronomers were able to attain such great precision by using a math system that included the concept of zero. The Maya used a shell symbol for zero, dots for the numbers 1 to 4, and a

bar for 5. The Mayan number system was a base 20 system. They used the numerical system primarily for calendar and astronomical work, not to count people or objects.

**Written Language Preserves History** The Maya also developed the most advanced writing system in the ancient Americas. Mayan writing consisted of about 800 hieroglyphic symbols, or **glyphs** (glihfs). Some of these glyphs stand for whole words, while others represent syllables. The Maya used their writing system to record important historical events, carving their glyphs in stone or recording them in a bark-paper book known as a **codex** (KOH-DEHKS). Only three of these ancient books have survived.

Other original books telling of Mayan history and customs do exist, however. These were written down by Mayan peoples after the arrival of the Spanish. The most famous of these books, the **Popol Vuh** (POH-pohl VOO), recounts the Highland Maya's version of the story of creation. "Before the world was created, Calm and Silence were the great kings that ruled," reads the first sentence in the book. "Nothing existed, there was nothing."

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Then let the emptiness fill! they said. Let the water weave its way downward so the earth can show its face! Let the light break on the ridges, let the sky fill up with the yellow light of dawn! Let our glory be a man walking on a path through the trees! "Earth!" the Creators called. They called only once, and it was there, from a mist, from a cloud of dust, the mountains appeared instantly.

From the *Popol Vuh*

## Mysterious Mayan Decline

The remarkable history of the Maya ended in mystery. In the late 800s, the Maya suddenly abandoned many of their cities. Some Mayan sites in the Yucatan, such as Chichen Itza and Uxmal, continued to thrive for several more centuries. Invaders

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### B. Making

**Inferences** How are math, astronomy, and calendars related?

#### Background

The codex was made of long strips of bark paper that were folded like a fan.

from the north, the Toltec, moved into the lands occupied by the Maya. These warlike peoples from central Mexico changed the culture. The high civilization of Mayan cities like Tikal and Copan disappeared.

No one knows exactly why this happened, though experts offer several overlapping theories. By the 700s, warfare had broken out among the various Mayan city-states. This violence caused some Maya to flee their cities and take refuge in the jungle. Increased warfare disrupted trade and produced economic hardship. In addition, population growth and over-farming may have caused ecological damage, causing food shortages, famine, and disease. All these circumstances probably contributed to the fall of Mayan civilization. By the time the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, the Maya were divided into small, weak city-states that gave little hint of their former glory.

As the Mayan civilization faded, other peoples of Mesoamerica were growing in strength and sophistication. Like the Maya, these peoples would trace some of their ancestry to the Olmec. Eventually, these people would dominate the Valley of Mexico and lands beyond it, as you will learn in Section 3.



A trio of modern Mayan women sell textiles at the marketplace. The traditional designs on their clothing and the textiles have been used on Mayan fabrics for hundreds of years.

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**Evaluating** Which of the causes for the fall of the Maya do you think was most important? Explain.

**Vocabulary**  
 Theocracy: combined state and religious rule

Maya		
Traits of Civilization	Strength Leading to Power	Weakness Leading to Decline
Religious beliefs and theocracy	United culture Loyalty to the king	Many physical and human resources funneled into religious activities
Independent city-states	Wealthy and prosperous culture	Frequent warfare occurs between kingdoms
Intensive agriculture	Production of more food feeds a larger population	Soil depletion and population growth creates need for more land

**SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts**

- Which trait aids in building a sense of loyalty to the ruler?
- How can intensive agriculture be both a strength and a weakness?

**Section 2 Assessment**

**1. TERMS & NAMES**

- Identify
- Tikal
  - glyph
  - codex
  - Popal Vuh

**2. TAKING NOTES**

Draw a diagram like the one below and fill in details that support the main idea in the center. You may want to review the characteristics of a civilization found in Chapter 1.



**3. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS**

How important do you think the development of advanced mathematics was in the creation of the Mayan calendar?

**THINK ABOUT**

- how records are kept over long periods of time
- the need for numbers larger than 20
- the need for precision

**4. THEME ACTIVITY**

**Religious and Ethical Systems**

Imagine that you are a reporter visiting Mayan city-states. Write a one-page article that describes various aspects of the Mayan religion.

# 3 The Aztecs Control Central Mexico

## TERMS & NAMES

- obsidian
- Quetzalcoatl
- Triple Alliance
- Montezuma II

### MAIN IDEA

Through alliances and conquest, the Aztecs created a powerful empire in Mexico.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

This time period saw the origins of one of the 20th century's most populous cities, Mexico City.

**SETTING THE STAGE** While the Maya were developing their civilization to the south, other high cultures were evolving in central Mexico. Some of the most important developments took place in and around the Valley of Mexico. This valley, where modern Mexico City is located, eventually became the site of the greatest empire of Mesoamerica, the Aztec. The Aztecs were preceded by two other important civilizations who traced their ancestry to the Olmec and Zapotec.

## The Valley of Mexico

The Valley of Mexico, a mountain basin 7,000 feet above sea level, served as the home base of several powerful cultures. The valley had several large, shallow lakes at its center, accessible resources, and fertile soil. These advantages attracted the people of Teotihuacan (TAY-oh-TEE-wah-KAHN) and the Toltecs. They settled in the valley and developed advanced civilizations that controlled much of the area. (See the map on page 395.)

**Teotihuacan: An Early City-State** The first major civilization of central Mexico was Teotihuacan, a city-state whose ruins lie just outside Mexico City. In the first century A.D., villagers at this site began to plan and construct a monumental city, even larger than Monte Albán, in Oaxaca.

At its peak in the sixth century, Teotihuacan had as many as 125,000 people, making it one of the largest cities in the world at the time. In the heart of the city was the giant Pyramid of the Sun. This 200-foot-tall pyramid was larger at its base than Egypt's Great Pyramid. The city also included numerous apartment compounds and artisan workshops.

Teotihuacan became the center of a thriving trade network that extended far into Central America. The city's most valuable trade item was **obsidian** (ahb-SIHD-ee-uhn),

### Background

The Olmec civilization was located further south in Mexico and was the first major civilization in all of Mexico.

Below is the Street of the Dead at Teotihuacan. Along the sides of the mile and a half long street are pyramid platforms that were originally topped with temples. The Pyramid of the Sun is visible in the distance.



a hard, glassy green or black rock found in the Valley of Mexico and used to make razor sharp weapons. There is no evidence that Teotihuacan conquered its neighbors or tried to create an empire. However, evidence of art styles and religious beliefs from Teotihuacan have been found throughout Mesoamerica.

After centuries of growth, the city abruptly declined. By 750 it was virtually abandoned. The vast ruins astonished later settlers in the area, who named the site Teotihuacan, meaning “City of the Gods.”

**Toltecs Take Over** After the fall of Teotihuacan, no single culture dominated central Mexico for decades. Then, around 900, a new people from the southwest, the Toltecs, rose to power. For the next three centuries, the Toltecs ruled over the heart of Mexico from their capital at Tula, just north of Mexico City. Like other Mesoamericans, they built pyramids and temples. They also carved tall pillars in the shape of armed warriors.

In fact, the Toltecs were an extremely warlike people whose empire was based on conquest. They worshiped a fierce war god who demanded blood and human sacrifice from his followers. According to legend, an early Toltec king, Topiltzin, tried to replace this war god with a god of peace. That god was named **Quetzalcoatl** (kehT-SAHL-koh-AHT-uhl), the Feathered Serpent. Magically, Topiltzin and Quetzalcoatl merged, becoming a single god-king and ruling in peace. Followers of the war god rebelled, however, overthrowing Quetzalcoatl and returning the Toltecs to their warlike ways. Through trade and conquest, Toltec power spread as far as the Yucatan, where it influenced late-Mayan culture. By the early 1200s, however, the Toltec reign had ended.

The Quetzalcoatl legend lived on, though, taking on the power of myth. According to legend, after his exile from Tula, the god traveled east, crossing the sea on a raft of snakes. It was said that he would return one day, bringing a new reign of light and peace. That myth would come back to haunt the greatest empire of Mexico, the Aztecs.

## Aztecs Build an Empire

The Aztecs arrived in the Valley of Mexico around A.D. 1200. It was home to a number of small city-states that had survived the collapse of Toltec rule. The Aztecs, who were then called the Mexica, were a poor, nomadic people from the harsh deserts of northern Mexico. Fierce and ambitious, they soon adapted to local ways, finding work as soldiers-for-hire to local rulers.

According to an Aztec legend, the Aztecs’ sun god, Huitzilopochtli (wee-tsee-loh-POHCH-tee), told them to found a city of their own. He said to look for a place where an eagle perched on a cactus, holding a snake in its mouth. Part of the legend is captured in these words:

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The place where the eagle screams,  
where he spreads his wings;  
the place where he feeds,  
where the fish jump,  
where the serpents  
coil up and hiss!  
This shall be Mexico Tenochtitlan  
and many things shall happen!

*Cronica Mexicayotl*

## SPOTLIGHT ON



### Quetzalcoatl: Feathered Serpent God

The story of Quetzalcoatl is found throughout Mesoamerican culture. This god, as seen above, was a combination of a snake and the brightly colored quetzal bird. He had his origins in Teotihuacan, where he represented the earth and rain.

He was later adopted by the Toltecs, who saw him as the god of the morning and evening star, Venus, and as a bringer of culture. The Maya also worshiped Quetzalcoatl, as did the Aztecs. They saw him as a god of learning and a symbol of death and rebirth.

The quetzal bird that represents the god is found throughout the forests of Central and South America. Its three-foot-long emerald green tail feathers were highly valued by the Maya and the Aztecs, who traded to obtain them.

Today, the quetzal bird appears on the coat of arms of the country of Guatemala. Also, the currency of that country is called the quetzal.

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

**.. Making Inferences** Why would the followers of the war god rebel against the king?

### Background

The eagle on a cactus with the snake appears on the national flag of Mexico.

They found such a place on a small island in Lake Texcoco, at the center of the valley. There, in 1325, they founded their city, which they named Tenochtitlan (teh-NOCH-tee-TLAHN).

**Aztecs Grow Stronger** Over the years, the Aztecs gradually increased in strength and number. In 1428, they joined with two other city-states—Texcoco and Tlacopan—to form the **Triple Alliance**. This alliance became the leading power in the Valley of Mexico and soon gained control over neighboring regions. By the early 1500s, they controlled a vast Mesoamerican empire, which stretched from central Mexico to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and south into Oaxaca. This empire was divided into 38 provinces. It had an estimated population of between 5 and 15 million people.

The Aztec state based its power on military conquest and the tribute it gained from conquered people. The Aztecs exercised loose control over much of their empire. They often let local rulers govern their own regions. The Aztecs did demand tribute, however, in the form of gold, maize, cacao beans, cotton, jade, and other products. If local rulers failed to pay tribute, or otherwise defied the Aztecs, the Aztec warriors would respond brutally. They would destroy villages and capture or slaughter the inhabitants.

**Nobles Rule Aztec Society** At the height of the Aztec Empire, military leaders held great power in Aztec society. Along with government officials and priests, these military leaders made up the noble class. Many nobles owned vast estates, which they ruled over like lords, living a life of great wealth and luxury.

The other two broad classes in Aztec society were the commoners and the slaves. Commoners included merchants, artisans, soldiers, and farmers who owned their own land. The merchants were a special type of elite. They often traveled widely, acting as spies for the emperor and gaining great wealth for themselves. The lowest class, the slaves, were captives who did many different jobs.

The emperor sat at the top of the Aztec social pyramid. Although he sometimes consulted with top generals or officials, his power was absolute. He lived in royal splendor in a magnificent palace, surrounded by servants and his wives. Visitors had to treat him like a god. They entered his presence in bare feet and cast their eyes down so as not to look at him.

#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

**B. Compare** How are the Aztecs' methods of controlling the empire like those of other empires you have read about?

#### Background

The Aztec emperor's palace grounds included a zoo.

## CONNECT to TODAY

### Aztec Ruins Unearthed

On February 21, 1978, electric company workers broke through a thick layer of concrete on a street in Mexico City. Underneath the street was an enormous piece of carved rock. It was the statue of the Aztec moon goddess. The location of the accidental find proved to be the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, the most sacred Aztec shrine.

The world's largest city, Mexico City, is built on the ruins of Tenochtitlan. Although the lake that surrounded the Aztec capital is gone, many of the ruins of Aztec civilization remain. Most of these ruins lie buried beneath city streets, but a few major sites such as the Great Temple have been excavated and rebuilt.

**Trade Brings Wealth** The Aztecs controlled an extensive trade network, which brought many products from faraway regions to the capital at Tenochtitlan. The economic heart of the city was the huge market of Tlatelolco (TLAH-tehl-AWL-koh). According to Hernando Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, this market was larger than any in Spain:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Day after day 60,000 people congregate here to buy and sell. Every imaginable kind of merchandise is available from all parts of the Empire, foodstuffs and dress, . . . gold, silver, copper, . . . precious stones, leather, bone, mussels, coral, cotton, feathers. . . Everything is sold by the piece or by measurement, never by weight. In the main market there is a law court in which there are always ten or twelve judges performing their office and taking decisions on all marketing controversies.

HERNANDO CORTÉS, *Letters of Information*

Much of the agricultural produce sold at the market was grown on *chinampas*, farm plots built on the marshy fringes of the lake. These plots, which spread out from Tenochtitlan in all directions, were extremely productive. They provided the food needed for a huge urban population.

#### Background

*Chinampas*, sometimes called "floating gardens," were an agricultural practice passed on from the earliest settlers thousands of years earlier.



**Tenochtitlan: A Planned City** By the early 1500s, Tenochtitlan had become an extraordinary urban center. With an estimated population of 200,000 people, it was larger than London or any other European capital of the time. Tenochtitlan remained on its original island site. To connect the island to the mainland, Aztec engineers built three raised roads called causeways over the water and marshland. Other cities ringed the lake, creating a dense concentration of people in the Valley of Mexico. One of Cortés's soldiers, Bernal Díaz, was amazed to find a bustling urban civilization in the heart of Mexico:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

When we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight and level causeway leading to Mexico, we were astounded. These great towns and cues [pyramids] and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision. . . . Indeed, some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream.

**BERNAL DÍAZ**, *The Conquest of New Spain*

In Tenochtitlan, palaces, temples, markets, and residential districts were connected by streets and avenues. Canals divided the city, allowing canoes to bring people and cargo directly into the city center. Aqueducts funneled fresh water in from the mainland.

At the center of the city was a huge, walled complex, filled with palaces, temples, and government buildings. The main structure in this complex was the Great Temple. It was a giant pyramid with twin temples at the top, the Aztec religious center.

**background**  
The twin temples were dedicated to the sun god and the rain god.

## Religion, the Center of Aztec Life

Religion played a major role in Aztec society. In Tenochtitlan there were hundreds of temples and religious structures dedicated to the gods. The Aztecs adopted many of their gods and religious beliefs from other Mesoamerican peoples, particularly the Toltecs.

Aztec religious practice centered on elaborate public ceremonies designed to communicate with the gods and win their favor. At these ceremonies, priests made offerings to the gods and presented ritual dramas, songs, and dances featuring masked performers. The Aztec ceremonial calendar was full of religious festivals, which varied according to the god being honored.

**Sacrifices for the Sun God** The most important rituals involved the sun god, Huitzilopochtli. According to Aztec belief, Huitzilopochtli made the sun rise every day, but only when he was nourished by human blood. Without regular offerings of blood, the sun would fall from the sky and all life would perish. For that reason, Aztec priests carried out human sacrifice on a massive scale. Thousands of victims, usually prisoners of war, were led to the altar atop the Great Temple, where priests carved out their hearts using obsidian knives.

To fulfill this sacred duty, the priests required a steady supply of war captives. This in turn pushed the Aztec military to carry out new conquests. The battle tactics of Aztec warriors were designed to provide live prisoners of war for the sacrifices.

Men on a flying wheel and dancers entertain warriors on a festival day. Sacrificial offerings are carried to the top of the pyramid. The picture is a detail from a fresco at the National Palace in Mexico, painted by Diego Rivera in 1950.

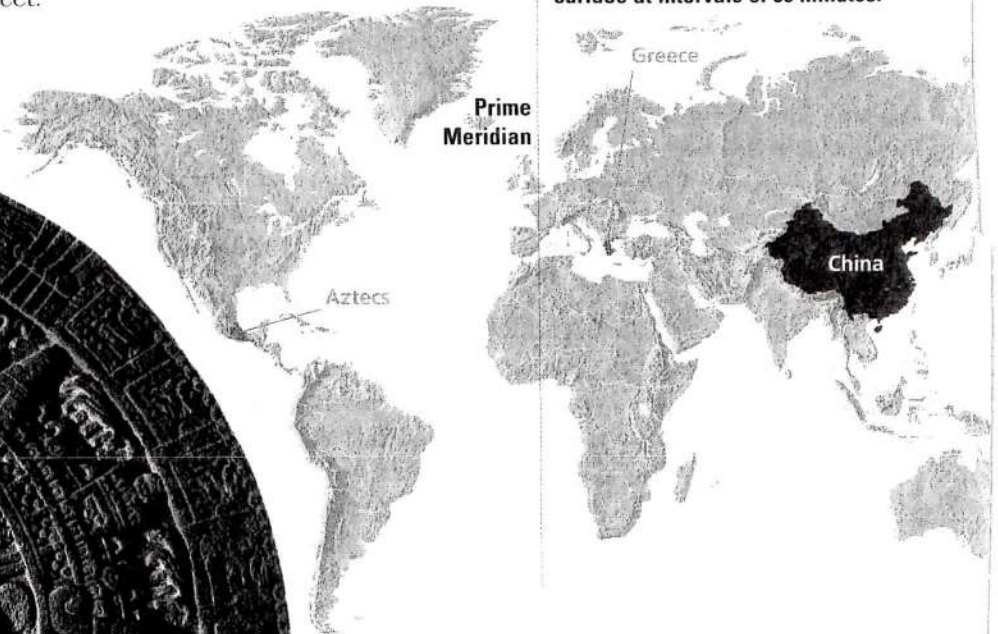
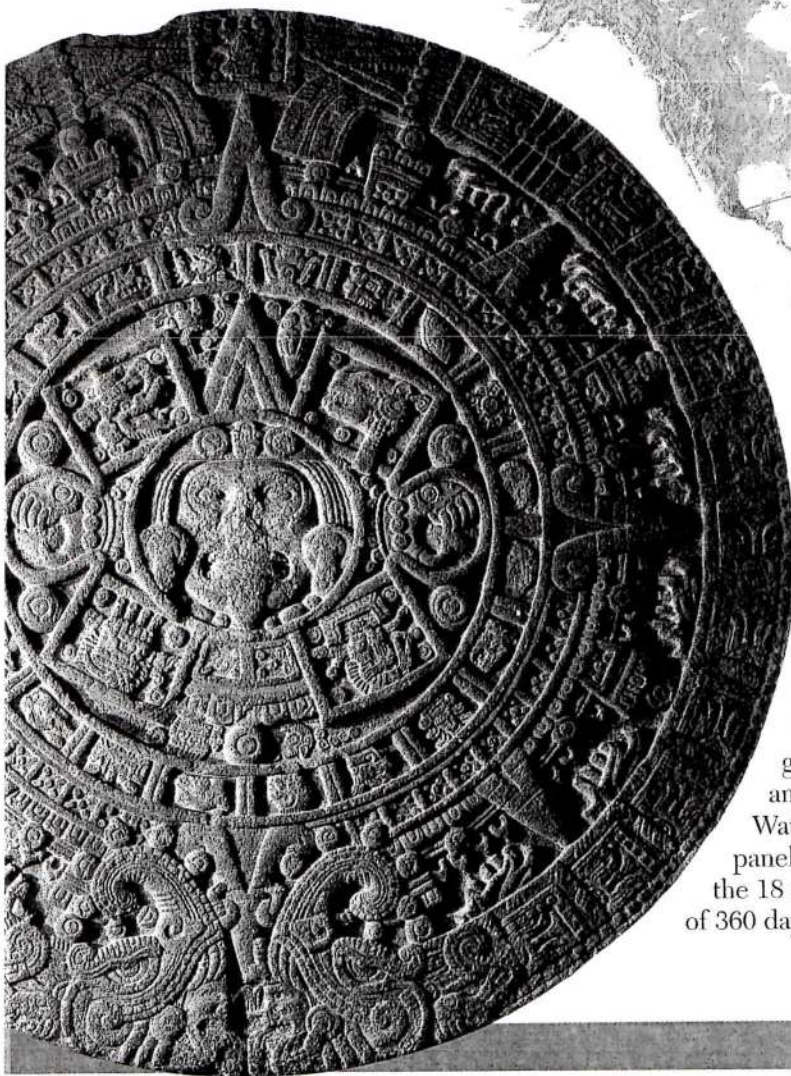


**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
2. **Clarifying** Why were so many war captives taken?

# Measuring Time

Personal experiences and changes in the environment force all humans to sense time. How that passage of time is measured is a cultural characteristic that reflects the needs of the society. For example, if the society needs to know when a yearly flood will take place, the measuring of time will provide an answer. The need to get many people to work together at an identical time requires a different measurement of time. Cultures have devised a variety of ways to measure time to meet their needs. As you compare and contrast the methods of measuring time on these pages, think about what needs each of these timepieces helps meet.

In 1884, nations around the world agreed to set standard time zones. They begin at the Prime Meridian. There are 24 standard zones that cover the earth's surface at intervals of 60 minutes.



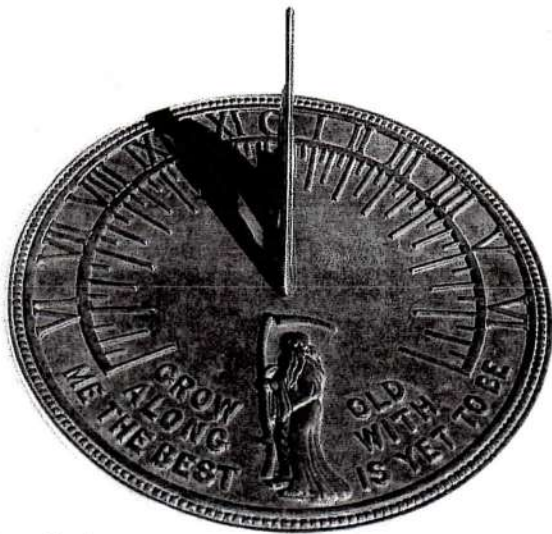
## Aztec Sun Stone at Tenochtitlan

Religious activities in the 14th century surrounding both the day and the year required a method of identifying the time period and the god who controlled it. Originally located in the main ceremonial plaza of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec calendar stone measures 13 feet in diameter and weighs 24 tons. In the center is the sun god Tonatiuh. He is surrounded by symbols of movement and the four worlds preceding the time of the Aztecs: Tiger, Water, Wind, and Rain of Fire. In the ring just outside these panels, 20 segments represent the 20 days that make up each of the 18 months of the Mesoamerican year. The year was composed of 360 days plus 5 extra days that were considered to be unlucky.

**a closer look** AZTEC CALENDARS

The Aztec gods pictured here were closely associated with the calendar and the passage of time. Since gods ruled specific periods of time, it was important to know which gods controlled the day. During the time they ruled, offerings were made to them.

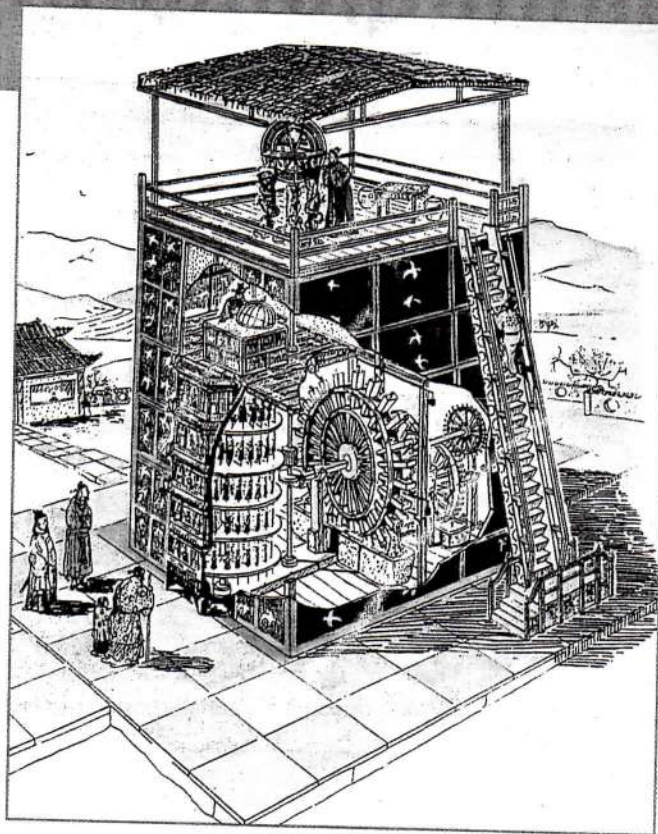




### Sundial

The need to know which part of the day to pray or assemble created a need for a timepiece with more exactness. The earliest known sundial dates from about the eighth century B.C. The style pictured above was used by the astronomer Ptolemy in Alexandria in A.D. 125–141.

A sundial tells time by measuring the angles of a shadow cast by the sun. A flat triangular piece of metal is set in the center of the dial. The shadow it casts on the dial tells the time. The dial face is divided into hours, and sometimes half and quarter hours. Many sundials have faces numbered from 5 A.M. to 7 P.M. in Roman numerals.



### Chinese Mechanical Clock

Built in A.D. 1090, during the Song Dynasty, this clock's movements were driven by water flowing into buckets on a waterwheel inside the clock tower. As each bucket filled, a lever tilted, the wheel turned, and a new bucket was filled. Every 15 minutes, bells and gongs rang. To chime the hours, revolving figures appeared at the clock windows. For accuracy, the mechanical movement was coordinated with the celestial globe at the top of the tower.



### Wristwatch

Wristwatches became popular during World War I when soldiers and pilots needed both convenience and precision in measuring time. This modern navigator style chronograph shows the time, acts as a stop watch, and can calculate miles per hour.

### Connect to History

**Contrasting** For which need for measuring time were the majority of the clocks/calendars invented?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R7

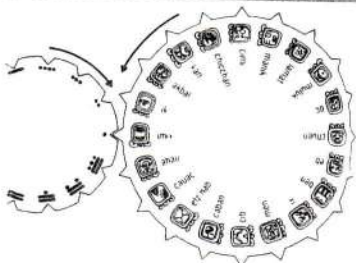
### Connect to Today

**Reporting** Find out the reasons for the origin of daylight-savings time. Also try to find out what impact daylight-savings time has on the use of electricity in the United States. Write a brief report on your findings.

For an Internet activity on Counting: Calendars and Cords...

**NET ACTIVITY**  
CLASSZONE.COM

The Aztecs, like the Maya, used two calendars to calculate time—a 260-day religious calendar and a 365-day solar one. They meshed as if they were a pair of wheels. Once every 52 years both cycles started on the same day.





Masks such as this were sometimes placed on the head of a dead person. The mosaic pattern dates from the Teotihuacan era and was repeated in Aztec masks. The mosaic pieces are jade, coral, and shell on an obsidian base.

## Problems in the Aztec Empire

Eventually, the Aztecs' need for an ever-expanding empire created problems for them. In 1502 a new ruler, **Montezuma II** (MAHN-tih-ZOO-muh), was crowned emperor. Under Montezuma, the Aztec empire began to weaken. For nearly a century, the Aztecs had been demanding tribute and sacrificial victims from the provinces under their control. Now, with the population of Tenochtitlan growing ever greater, the emperor called for even more tribute and sacrifice. A number of provinces rose up against Aztec oppression. This began a period of unrest and rebellion, which the military had to put down.

Montezuma tried to reduce pressure on the provinces caused by great demands for tribute payment. He froze and reduced the number of government officials. But resentment continued to grow. Then, as domestic problems simmered, another threat appeared: the arrival of the Spanish. To many Aztecs, the strangers from across the sea brought to mind the old legend regarding the return of Quetzalcoatl.

Further south in the high mountain valleys of the Andes, another empire was developing, one that would transcend the Aztec empire in land area, power, and wealth. The Inca, too, worshiped the sun and had large armies, but the society they built was much different from that of the Aztecs, as you will see in Section 4.

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**D. Making Inferences** Why would freezing the number of government officials reduce the need for tribute money?

### Aztec

Traits of Civilization	Strength Leading to Power	Weakness Leading to Decline
Religious beliefs and theocracy	United culture Loyalty to the king	Many physical and human resources funneled into religious activities
Powerful army	Adds land, power, and prisoners for religious sacrifice	Need for prisoners changes warfare style to less deadly and less aggressive
Empire of tribute states	Provides wealth and power and prisoners for religious sacrifice	Tribute states are rebellious and need to be controlled

#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

- How was the tribute system both a strength and a weakness?
- How are the army and religious beliefs linked in the Aztec Empire?

## Section 3 Assessment

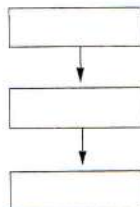
### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- obsidian
- Quetzalcoatl
- Triple Alliance
- Montezuma II

### 2. TAKING NOTES

Draw a chain of events diagram like the one below and fill in the main events that led to the establishment and growth of the Aztec Empire.



### 3. RECOGNIZING EFFECTS

How did the Aztec need for victims for sacrifice lead to problems controlling the empire?

**THINK ABOUT**

- reactions of the conquered peoples
- changes in army tactics

### 4. THEME ACTIVITY

**Power and Authority** With a small group of students, write a short play in which Montezuma discusses with his advisers how to gain control of rebellious provinces of the Aztec Empire. Be sure one adviser wants to keep peace at all costs.

# 4 The Inca Create a Mountain Empire

## TERMS & NAMES

- Pachacuti
- ayllu
- mita
- quipu

### MAIN IDEA

The Inca built a vast empire supported by taxes, governed by a bureaucracy, and linked by extensive road systems.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The Inca system of government was similar to some socialist governments in the 20th century.

**SETTING THE STAGE** While the Aztecs were ruling in Mexico, another people—the Inca—were creating an equally powerful state in South America. From their capital in southern Peru, the Inca spread outward in all directions. They brought various Andean peoples under their control and built the largest empire ever seen in the Americas.

## The Inca Come to Power

Like the Aztecs, the Inca built their empire on cultural foundations thousands of years old. Ancient civilizations such as Chavín, Moche, and Nazca had already established a tradition of high culture in Peru. They were followed by the Huari and Tiahuanaco cultures of southern Peru and Bolivia. The Chimú, an impressive civilization of the 1300s based in the northern coastal region once controlled by the Moche, came next. The Inca would create an even more powerful state, however, extending their rule over the entire Andean region.

**Incan Beginnings** The word *Inca* was originally the name of the ruling family of a group of people living in a high plateau of the Andes. After wandering the highlands for years, the Inca finally settled on fertile lands in the Valley of Cuzco. By the 1200s, the Inca had established their own small kingdom in the valley.

During this early period, the Inca developed traditions and beliefs that helped launch and unify their empire. One of these traditions was the belief that the Incan ruler was descended from the sun god, Inti, who would bring prosperity and greatness to the Incan state. Only men from one of 11 noble lineages believed to be descendants of the sun god could be selected as the Incan leader. These 11 families were called *orejones*, “Big Ears,” because of the large plugs they wore in their earlobes.

Another tradition was the custom of worshipping dead rulers, who were preserved as sacred mummies. The mummies were brought to all important events and housed in special chambers. These royal mummies and their descendants retained rights to all the wealth and property accumulated during the king’s lifetime. Succeeding rulers had to acquire their own wealth, which led them to conquer new territories.

**Pachacuti Builds an Empire** At first the Incan kingdom grew slowly. In 1438, however, a powerful and ambitious ruler, **Pachacuti** (PAH-chah-KOO-tee), took the throne. Under his leadership, the Inca expanded quickly, conquering all of Peru and then moving into neighboring lands. By 1500 the Inca ruled an empire that stretched 2,500 miles along the western coast of South America, from Ecuador in the north to Chile and Argentina in the south. The Inca called this



This gold mask is covered with cinnabar, a red ore. The eyes are formed of tree resin. The ear spools are marks of nobility. The mask is from the Siccan culture, which was conquered by the Chimú.

## HISTORY MAKERS

### Pachacuti

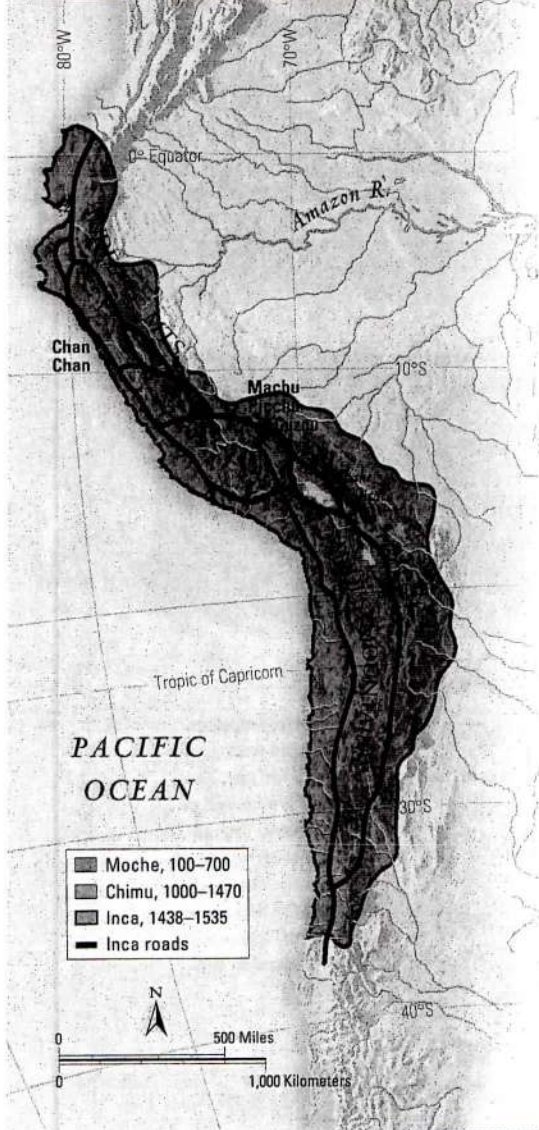
As the second son of the Inca ruler Viracocha, Pachacuti was not in line to succeed his father. In the early 1400s, however, Cuzco was attacked by the enemy state of Chanca. Viracocha and his first son, Urcon, fled the city. However, Pachacuti stood his ground and defeated the enemy. He then seized the throne from his brother to become the new king.

Pachacuti, whose name meant “World Transformer” (or in some translations “Earthshaker”), ruled for 33 years, until 1471, creating the largest empire in the Americas.

Pachacuti has been compared to Philip II of Macedonia. His son, Topa Yupanqui, who further enlarged the empire, has been compared to Alexander the Great.



## South American Cultures, 100–1535



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

1. **Place** The lands of which earlier South American cultures were included in the Inca Empire?
2. **Human-Environment Interaction** Look at the shape and terrain of the Inca Empire. What problems related to geography might occur in controlling the land?

grand and stately,” wrote Cieza de León. “It had fine streets, . . . and the houses were built of solid stones, beautifully joined.” Like the Romans, the Inca were masterful engineers and stonemasons. Though they had no iron tools and did not use the wheel, Inca builders carved and transported huge blocks of stone, fitting them together perfectly without mortar. Many Inca walls still stand in Cuzco, undisturbed by the region’s frequent earthquakes.

**Inca Government Organizes Communities** The Inca system of government was based on age-old patterns of community cooperation. Small groups of people known as *ayllu* (EYE-loo) worked together for the common good, building irrigation

empire Tihuantinsuya, or “Land of the Four Quarters.” It included about 80 provinces and perhaps as many as 16 million people.

Pachacuti and his successors accomplished this feat of conquest through a combination of diplomacy and military force. The Inca had a powerful military but used force only when necessary. The Inca were clever diplomats. Before attacking, they typically offered enemy states an honorable surrender. They would allow them to keep their own customs and rulers in exchange for loyalty to the Inca state. Because of this kind of treatment, many states gave up without resisting.

Once an area was defeated, the Inca would make every effort to gain the loyalty of the newly conquered people. According to a 16th-century Spanish observer:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The Inca always had the mastery, but when the enemies were vanquished, they were not destroyed; on the contrary, orders were given to release the captives and restore the spoils, and allow them to retain their estates. For the Inca desired to show them that they should not be so mad as to revolt against his royal person and reject his friendship; rather they should wish to be his friends, as were those in other provinces.

PEDRO DE CIEZA DE LEÓN, *Chronicle of Peru*

## Inca Government Creates Unity

The Inca were also extraordinary organizers and administrators. To control the huge empire, the rulers divided their territory and its people into manageable units, governed by a central bureaucracy. The Inca created an efficient economic system to support the empire and an extensive road system to tie it together. They also imposed a single official language, Quechua (KEHCH-wuh), and founded schools to teach Inca ways. Certain social groups were identified by officially dictated patterns on clothing. All of these actions were calculated to unify the variety of people controlled by the Inca.

**Inca Cities Show Government Presence** To exercise control over their empire, the Inca built many cities in conquered areas. The architecture of government buildings was the same all over the empire, making the presence of the government apparent. As in Rome, all roads led to the capital, Cuzco. The heart of the Inca Empire, Cuzco was a splendid city of temples, plazas, and palaces. “Cuzco was

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**A. Forming and Supporting an Opinion** Of all the methods used to create unity, which do you think would be most successful? Why?

canals and agricultural terraces on steep hillsides. The ayllu also stored food and other supplies to distribute during hard times.

The Inca took this principle of community organization and welfare and applied it to their empire. They incorporated the ayllu structure into a governing system based on the decimal system. They divided families into groups of 10, 100, 1,000, and 10,000. Each group was led by a chief. He was part of a chain of command. That chain stretched from the community and regional levels all the way to Cuzco, where the Incan ruler and his council of state held court. In general, local administration was left in the hands of local rulers, and villages were allowed to continue their traditional ways. If a community resisted Incan control, however, the Inca might relocate the whole group to a different territory. The resisters would be placed under the control of rulers appointed by the high rulers.

The main demand the Incan state placed on its subjects was for tribute, mainly in the form of labor. The labor tribute was known as **mita** (MEE-tuh). It required all able-bodied citizens to work for the state a certain number of days every year. Mita workers might labor on state farmlands, produce craft goods for state warehouses, or help build public works, such as roads, palaces, or irrigation canals.

**Roads Link the Empire** The most spectacular public works project was the Incan road system. A marvel of engineering, this road system symbolized the power of the Incan state. The 14,000-mile-long network of roads and bridges spanned the empire, traversing rugged mountains and harsh deserts. The roads ranged from paved stone to simple paths. Along the roads, the Inca built guest houses to provide shelter for weary travelers. A system of runners, known as *chasquis* (SHAH-skeys), traveled these roads as a kind of postal service, carrying messages from one end of the empire to the other. The road system also allowed the easy movement of troops to bring control to zones where trouble might be brewing.

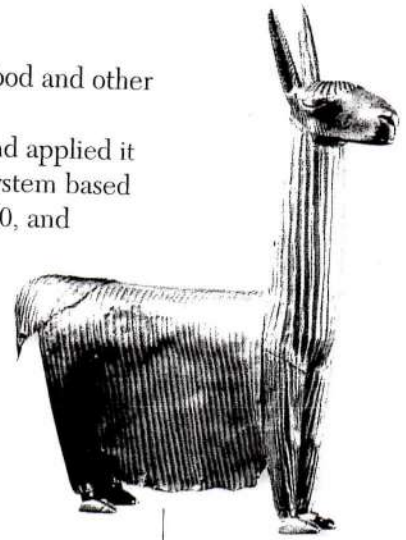
**State Controls the Economy** Incan power was also evident in economic life. The Incan state controlled most economic activity, regulating the production and distribution of goods. Land was organized into upper and lower geographical units, each producing goods the other could not. The units were linked together to create a total economy. Unlike the Maya and the Aztec, the Inca allowed little private commerce or trade.

Historians have compared the Incan system to a type of socialism or a modern welfare state. Citizens were expected to work for the state and were cared for in return. For example, the aged and disabled were often supported by the state. The state also held public feasts, distributing food and maize beer as a reward for citizens' labor.

Land ownership was divided in three ways: state lands, religious lands, and community lands. Farmers worked on all three types of land. Expanding on irrigation systems developed by earlier people, the Inca created a massive water management system that stored water for the dry season. They even straightened an entire river channel to better provide water for agriculture.

With a terracing system they produced crops such as maize and quinoa, a grain native to the Andes. The Inca developed a method for freeze-drying potatoes. They then stored the freeze-dried potatoes, called *chuño*, in huge warehouses for times of shortages of food. The *chuño* could be kept indefinitely.

**Government Keeps Records** Despite the sophistication of many aspects of Incan life, the Inca never developed a writing system. History and literature were



A miniature silver llama illustrates how important the llama was in Incan society. It helped transport goods and food in the mountains, provided wool and meat, and was offered to the gods as a sacrifice.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Incan Relay Messengers

Communication in the Incan Empire was the task of runner-messengers called *chasquis*. The system worked like a modern relay race. A runner would "hand off" a memorized message or package to another runner waiting at a way station. That runner would sprint to the next station along the road.

The stations were placed about every mile or so along the main roads, which covered about 3,100 miles. In this way, a message could travel 140 miles a day. The distance from Cuzco to the coast could be covered in just three days. A century later, the same journey took the Spanish 12 days on horseback!

The *chasquis* who traveled the Inca roads served in 15-day shifts. This job was a part of their mita labor tax.

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### B. Recognizing

**Effects** How would relocating troublesome people help government control of an area?

### Background

The irrigation systems were originally built by the Moche, Chimú, and Tiwankans.

One and one-half miles up a mountain, Machu Picchu could only be reached by a log bridge across a deep canyon. Although the details of its origin and its abandonment are unclear, some historians believe that it was a religious or ceremonial city.

memorized as part of an oral tradition. For numerical information, the Inca created an accounting device known as the **quipu** (see “Spotlight” on page 18), a set of knotted strings that could be used to record data. The knots and their position on the cord indicated numbers. Additionally, the colors of the cords indicated categories of information important to the government. For example, red strings were used to count warriors.

The Inca also developed an elaborate calendar system with two types of calendars, one for night and one for day. They were used primarily for religious purposes. Like the calendars of the Maya and the Aztec, the two calendars provided information about the gods who, the Inca believed, ruled the day and time. Like the Maya, Incan mathematicians and astronomers used complicated methods to create calendars necessary for the proper worship of the gods.

## Religion Supports the State

As in ancient Mexico, religion was important to the Inca and helped reinforce the power of the state. The Inca worshiped fewer gods than the Aztecs. The Inca focused on key nature spirits such as the moon, the stars, and thunder. In the balance of

nature, the Inca saw patterns for the way humans should relate to each other and to the earth. Chief of the Incan gods was a creator god called Viracocha. Next in importance was the sun god, Inti. Because the Incan ruler was considered a descendant of Inti, sun worship amounted to worship of the king.

Incan priests led the sun-worship services, assisted by young women known as *mamakuna*, or “virgins of the sun.” These women, all unmarried, were drafted by the Inca for a lifetime of religious service. The young women were trained in religious activities, as teachers, spinners, weavers, and beer makers. Young men, known as *yamacuna*, also served as full-time workers for the state and in religious activities. Sacrifice of llamas and exchange of goods were a part of the religious activities. The goods were distributed by the priest to the people as gifts from the gods.

The Temple of the Sun in Cuzco was the most sacred of all Incan shrines. It was heavily decorated in gold, a metal the Inca referred to as “sweat of the sun.” According to Garcilaso de la Vega, the son of an Inca princess, the temple even had a garden crafted entirely from precious metals.

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Here could be seen all sorts of plants, flowers, trees, animals, both small and large, wild and tame, tiny crawling creatures such as snakes, lizards, and snails, as well as butterflies and birds of every size. . . . All of these valuable works were made by the goldsmiths attached to the Temple, from the tribute of gold and silver that arrived every year from all the provinces of the Empire.

GARCILASO DE LA VEGA, *The Incas*

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

**B. Recognizing Effects** How might Incan achievements in math and astronomy have helped create a strong government?

### Background

Notice the similarity to the Egyptian ideas about the sun and the ruler.





In addition to producing beautiful gold and silver articles, Incan artisans even covered walls in Cuzco with shining sheets of gold.

Cuzco was the administrative and ceremonial capital of the Incan Empire. It included a sun temple and storage areas. Other Incan cities also had monumental architecture and seemed to have multiple purposes. For example, Machu Picchu, discovered by Hiram Bingham in 1912, was isolated and mysterious. Like Cuzco, Machu Picchu also had a sun temple, public buildings, a water system, and a central plaza. Some sources suggest it was an estate of Pachacuti. Others believe it was a retreat for Inca rulers or the elite. Its true function has not been determined.

## Discord in the Empire

In the early 1500s, the Inca empire was at the height of its glory. King Huayna Capac toured the empire in a royal litter, covered with gold and surrounded by attendants. Trouble was on the way, however. Stopping in Quito, Ecuador, the king opened a gift box. Out flew butterflies and moths, considered an evil omen. About 1525, while still in Quito, Huayna Capac died of disease. Soon after his death, civil war broke out between Huayna Capac's sons, Atahualpa (ah-tah-WAHL-pah) and Huascar (WAHS-kahr), who both claimed the throne. Atahualpa won, but the war tore the empire apart. As you will learn in Chapter 20, within a few years, the Spanish arrived. Taking advantage of Incan weakness, they would soon divide and conquer the empire.

### Inca

Traits of Civilization	Strength Leading to Power	Weakness Leading to Decline
Religious beliefs and theocracy	United culture Loyalty to the emperor	Many physical and human resources funneled into religious activities
Major road systems	Connected entire empire and aided control	Enemy could also use roads to move troops
Type of welfare state with huge bureaucracy	Care for entire population during good and bad times	People unable to care for themselves with the elimination of the welfare state

#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

1. In your opinion, which of the three traits leading to power was the most valuable? Briefly discuss your reasons.
2. Which trait did you find repeated in the Maya and Aztec Empires?

## Section 4 Assessment

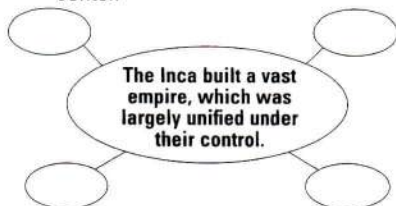
### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Pachacuti
- ayllu
- mita
- quipu

### 2. TAKING NOTES

Draw a diagram like the one below and fill in the methods the Inca used to achieve the idea in the center.



Which of these methods for unification were acceptable to the conquered people? Explain.

### 3. ANALYZING MOTIVES

Why do you think the Inca used the ayllu system as the basis for governing the people of the empire?

THINK ABOUT

- ways to control a large empire
- the ease of using a system that already existed

### 4. THEME ACTIVITY

**Power and Authority** Choose a partner to debate the value of the welfare state of the Inca. One partner should support the welfare state and the other should be against it. Focus the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the Incan welfare state.

#### Vocabulary

**litter:** a chair that is carried by bearers

## People and Empires in the Americas

### North America 600–1600

- Government by a variety of small tribes to very complex societies
- Similar religious beliefs in the Great Spirit
- Economy influenced by the environment
- Trade links to other groups



### Mesoamerica: Maya 250–900

- Government by city-state kings
- Religion plays a major role in society and rule
- Trade links between city-states and other Mesoamerican groups
- Math and astronomy develop to support religious beliefs
- Pyramid builders
- Written language using hieroglyphs



### Mesoamerica: Aztec 1200–1521

- Government by warrior-kings
- Religion plays a major role in society and rule
- Trade links between tribute states and other Mesoamerican groups
- Human sacrifice practiced for religious offerings
- Pyramid builders
- Pictorial written language



### South America: Inca 1400–1532

- Government by theocracy—sun-god king
- Religion plays a major role in society and rule
- Social welfare state cares for all people
- Extensive road system links the country together



### TERMS & NAMES

Briefly explain the importance of each of the following to the development of Native American cultures in North America, Mesoamerica, or South America.

1. pueblos
2. Mississippian
3. Iroquois
4. Tikal
5. glyph
6. Quetzalcoatl
7. Triple Alliance
8. Montezuma II
9. Pachacuti
10. mita

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### SECTION 1 (pages 391–394)

#### Diverse Societies of North America

11. Why were Native American societies in North America so diverse?
12. What were the three things that most Native Americans in North America had in common?

#### SECTION 2 (pages 395–399)

#### Mayan Kings and Cities

13. What role did religion play in Mayan life?
14. What were three major achievements of the Mayan civilization?

#### SECTION 3 (pages 400–406)

#### The Aztecs Control Central Mexico

15. How did the Aztecs build and control their empire?
16. What role did trade play in the Aztec Empire?
17. Why did the Aztecs sacrifice human beings to their gods?

#### SECTION 4 (pages 407–411)

#### The Inca Create a Mountain Empire

18. How did the Inca custom of worshiping dead rulers affect the conquest of new territories?
19. List three ways in which the Inca government involved itself in people's lives.
20. How did Inca religion reinforce the power of the state?

### Interact with History

From the mask clues and detective thinking, you should have determined that the Bella Coola society was a salmon fishing society that lived in forests by the Pacific Ocean. They probably used the mask in a ceremony about the chief god bringing fish to the people. Using the guide questions on the Interact page, look back in the chapter at the masks in each section to see what you can determine about other cultures.