

BELL WORK

- PG 145 in WHIN (You started this Friday after quiz.)
- Read pg. 165- 169 (stop at **North American People**)
- Explain the roles of peoples in the Aztec and Incan societies by writing a paragraph, drawing a diagram, or illustrating with pictures.

LIFE OF THE AZTECS & INCAS

(WHIN 146)

LESSON MAIN IDEAS

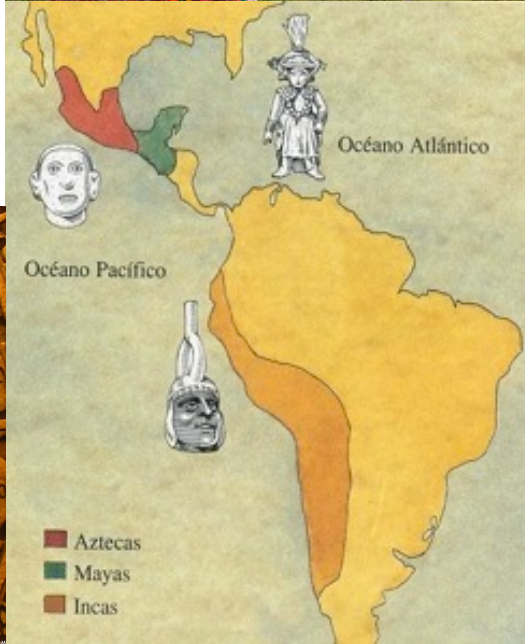
Class Structure

Family Life

Warfare

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Slavery



▲ Aztec God Quetzalcoatl
Quetzalcoatl, whose name means "feathered serpent," was the important god of wind. Quetzalcoatl was sometimes pictured as a serpent.



How did the Aztecs adapt to the Valley of Mexico?

After search for land for over 1,000 years, the Aztecs established their civilization in the middle of Lake Texcoco, a swampy body of water located in present-day Mexico. The Aztecs built the city Tenochtitlan, which is Mexico City today.

The lands around Tenochtitlan were swampy, and the lake was in a valley surrounded by high mountains with little level land for farming. There was also little wood or stone nearby for building. But the Aztecs adapted. They learned to construct raised garden beds on the lake which helped them grow many crops like corn, squash, and chili peppers.

With a plentiful food supply, the population of Tenochtitlan grew. Soon, the Aztecs spread out from the island to new communities on the lakeshore. At its largest, between 200,000 and 400,000 people may have lived in the area of Tenochtitlan.



Priests

Priests performed many important duties, such as keeping calendars.



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Warriors

Warriors fought to conquer other peoples and capture victims for sacrifice.



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Merchants

Aztec merchants traded goods like food, clothing, and tools.



Based on your understanding of social classes in other civilizations, in which social class would you place each of these groups?

Building An Empire

As the years passed, the Aztecs made alliances with some city-states and used their warrior skills to conquer others. Between 6 and 12 million people lived under Aztec rule. From the peoples they conquered, the Aztecs demanded *tribute*. This forced payment took the form of goods such as corn, jade, and gold.

How did the Aztecs use their military strength to grow?



At the top of the social classes was the emperor, who belonged to the noble class. His power came from control of the military and was supported by Aztec religious beliefs.



As in most societies, the nobles made up the smallest class but they had the most power. They owned large estates and ran the government and military. Priests, too, came from the noble class.

Nobles

Below the nobles was an intermediate class. Merchants and skilled artisans made up this group.

Intermediate Class

Most people in Aztec society were in the third class, the commoners. Some commoners were landowning farmers, fishers, craftspeople, and soldiers. Also included were landless workers, or serfs, who labored in the fields of the nobles and could not move off the land.

Enslaved persons were at the very bottom of this class. They were usually prisoners of war. Slaves worked at many different tasks. In all classes, women's roles were restricted.

Commoners

Family Life & Religious Practices

The Aztecs lived in family groups in large land-based communities. Most men farmed their own or nobles' land. The women cooked the meals, tended the children, and did other domestic chores. Boys began formal education at about age 10. They learned about religion and were taught fighting skills. As in many societies, girls were usually taught at home.

Aztec life was dominated by religion. It was central to the daily lives of all members of society. The Aztec religion was based mainly on the worship of agricultural gods. Aztecs believed in about 1,000 gods.

Priests in the temples used a complex calendar to set the times for many public religious ceremonies each year. The most important were held to ask the gods for a good harvest. Humans, usually war prisoners, were sometimes sacrificed to the gods. Families also worshipped at small altars in their homes.

Think about it... Why do you think the Aztecs worshipped agricultural gods?



Aztec Warriors and Warfare

To the Aztecs, war was a sacred duty. Territory and peoples had to be conquered for the empire to expand and grow. Most boys had begun intensive training to become warriors by age 15. In battle, the Aztecs were fearsome. During an attack, they might kill everyone in an enemy village who was not a warrior. The warriors would be taken as prisoners to be used as slaves or human sacrifices in religious ceremonies.

CHECKING IN

Discuss the following questions in your group and jot down answers in your WHIN. Cite evidence when discussing your responses and be prepared to share out in whole group. 😊

1. How was life different for Aztec men and women?
2. Who had the most power in Aztec society?
3. What was the largest social class of the Aztecs?
4. What were some religious practices of the Aztecs?
5. How do you know that war was an important part of Aztec society?

GOING DEEPER

Tomorrow, we will be learning about how the Inca lived... Briefly review your assignment from pg 145. Choose an aspect of Incan culture – family groups, social classes, religious beliefs and practices, warfare, slavery, or some other topic that interests you and highlight the information.

Jot down a few "fun facts" that you learned so that you can share with your group. We will use these as part of our Do Now, so be prepared! 😊

