

Discovering the Maya of Yesterday



A Multidisciplinary Integrated Curriculum Unit for Grades 5–8

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Discovering The Maya of Yesterday

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Topics Covered:

Geography; Timelines; Art; Mayan Civilization; Cultures and Traditions; Comparative Essay Writing

Enduring Understandings:

By the end of this unit students will have had the opportunity to gain the following essential skills and enduring understandings:

- * Acquire knowledge of geographic patterns, locations and processes through the use of maps.
- * Describe and give examples of ways in which the Maya interacted with the physical environment, including use of land, location of communities, methods of construction, design of dwellings, etc.
- * How the Maya and Aztecs are alike and different, comparing characteristics such as size, hobbies, celebrations, where families live, and how they make a living.

Key Questions:

How did geography influence the Mayan civilization?

When and where did the Mayan civilization thrive?

What achievements did the Mayan civilization reach?

What was Mayan art like?

How were the Mayans similar to and different from other ancient civilizations?

Unit Summary:

1. Introduction: Discovering the Maya of Yesterday
2. Geography: Where on Earth Were the Maya?
3. Timeline: Ancient Mayan Civilization
4. Art: Ancient Mayan Relief Sculpture
5. Mayan Comparison Essay: Maya and Aztec Civilization
6. Culminating Project: Mayan Civilization Book

Lesson 1

Introduction: Discovering the Maya of Yesterday

Objective(s): *After completing the lesson students will be able to:*

1. Identify background knowledge of the ancient Maya.
2. Identify what they are interested in learning about the ancient Maya.
3. Explain who the ancient Maya are.

Relevant Content Standards:

Social Studies

STRAND: History. Content Standard I: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history in order to understand the complexity of the human experience.

5–8 Benchmark 1-A. New Mexico: Explore and explain how people and events have influenced the development of New Mexico up to the present day:

1. compare and contrast the contributions of the civilizations of the western hemisphere (e.g., Aztecs, Mayas, Toltecs, mound builders) with the early civilizations of the eastern hemisphere (e.g., Sumerians, Babylonians, Hebrews, Egyptians) and their impact upon societies, to include:
 - a. effect on world economies and trade;
 - b. roles of people, class structures, language;
 - c. religious traditions and forms of government; and
 - d. cultural and scientific contributions (e.g., advances in astronomy, mathematics, agriculture, architecture, artistic and oral traditions, development of writing systems and calendars).

Materials (attached):

1. KWL chart
2. Background Information on the Mayan Civilization

Procedures:

Using a KWL chart pose several questions about who the Maya were to assess students' prior knowledge.

To begin a dialogue with students about the Maya, share some basic information about their civilization.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the KWL chart.

Resources and Background Expanders:

Books

Teacher:

Coe, M.D. 1999. **The Maya 6th Ed.** New York: Thames & Hudson.

Sabloff, J.A. 1990. **Archaeology and the Maya.** New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Sharer, R J. 1996. **Daily Life in Maya Civilization.** Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Students:

Baquesano, E. 2000. **Eyewitness: Aztec, Inca, and Maya.** New York: DK.

Coulter, L. 2001. **Secrets in Stone: All about Maya Hieroglyphics**. New York: Little, Brown Children's Books.

Crosner, J. 1998. **Technology in the Time of the Maya**. New York: Raintree.

Web Resources

Jaguar Sun

www.jaguar-sun.com

A site created by the author of a historically accurate novel about the Maya. The site contains her research on Maya culture of today, and the ancient civilization. Easy to navigate.

Maya Ruins

www.mayaruins.com

A site with great interactive maps of the ruins of major Mayan cities and lots of photographs.

Mundo Maya Online

www.mayadiscovery.com

This is an online magazine. Information is in English and Spanish about the history, geography, daily life, and art of the Maya. Archived articles, with plenty of photos.

Maya Adventure

www.smm.org/sln/ma

Produced by Science Museum of Minnesota, this Web site offers visitors a wealth of information on many Maya sites.

Name _____ Date _____

KWL Chart

Before you begin this unit, list information in the first two columns. Fill in the last column after completing this unit.

The Ancient Maya Civilization		
What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned

Background Information on the Mayan Civilization

The Maya came to the New World from Asia across the stepping-stones of the Bering land bridge with migrations of people who would later be known as Incas, Anasazi, and Kwakiutl. The Maya traveled south through Canada, the United States and into Mexico and Central America. Human settlement is recorded as early as 9000 BCE in Belize.

The Maya occupied a territory the size of the state of New Mexico in the tropical zone between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer. Surrounded on all sides by water—Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea—the land divides naturally into three geographical zones. The highlands, a two-mile high zone of rugged mountains and pine forests, stretch along the Pacific coast of Guatemala. Iridescent-green quetzal birds soar over the sleepy volcanoes and crystal lakes in this land where the cacao tree grows. Black-mirrored obsidian and jade, materials prized by Classic Maya royalty, were mined here and traded throughout the region. The Southern lowlands sprawl over eastern Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador, and southern Mexico. In the rain forests of tropical palm, mahogany, and sapodilla (chewing gum) trees, koatimundis and spider monkeys scamper overhead to the music of screeching toucans and droning insects. Crocodiles and turtles bask in the swamps. On land, jaguars silently stalk unsuspecting deer while parrots dart streaks of red through the emerald canopy. In the Northern lowlands, Mexico's Yucatan, egrets fish along the shore while anteaters feast on termite mounds. An annual rainfall of 30 inches supports the growth of scrubby vegetation and palmettos on this limestone peninsula where rivers flow underground.

Early Maya were discovered in excavations at the ceremonial center of Cuello, Belize. A burial, which archaeologists date to at least 2000 BCE revealed a woman in her 30s with teeth worn flat from a diet of stone-ground maize. Evidence of the first Maya architecture appeared when workers uncovered lime-plastered platforms on which thatch-roofed buildings stood. Life in these early villages revolved around agricultural cycles. The annual duties of planting, tending, and harvesting the newly domesticated crops of maize, beans, squash, and chili kept men, women, and children occupied. To supplement their vegetable-based diet, men hunted deer, rabbit, and oscillated turkeys.

By the Late Pre-Classic Period (250 BCE–250 CE), simple villages had grown into city-states, spurred by advances in agriculture. The Maya hieroglyphic writing system of 800 glyphs, the base-20 mathematic system which included a zero, and the 365-day calendar permitted scribes to record historical and astronomical events and to predict future eclipses. Corbel arches of stone masonry allowed Maya architecture to span space in ways that post and lintel construction could not. This growth in population and intellectual pursuits precipitated economic expansion and increasingly stratified social and political organizations. To maintain stability, a ruler was chosen to intercede with the gods on the people's behalf, to organize farming duties and distribution, and to lead the people in warfare with other city-states. An early jade pendant represents a highland chief carrying a jaguar cub on his shoulder. This connection between high rank and Mesoamerica's most powerful feline continued throughout the Post-Classic Period.

Lesson 2

Geography: Where on Earth Were the Maya?

Objective(s): *After completing the lesson students will be able to:*

1. Identify on a map the Ancient Mayan homeland.
2. Obtain information about the Maya and Mexico by using a map.

Relevant New Mexico Content Standards:

Social Studies

STRAND: Geography. Content Standard II: Students understand how physical, natural, and cultural processes influence where people live, the ways in which people live, and how societies interact with one another and their environments.
5–8 Benchmark 2-A: Analyze and evaluate the characteristics and purposes of geographic tools, knowledge, skills and perspectives and apply them to explain the past, present and future in terms of patterns, events and issues:

1. make and use different kinds of maps, globes, charts and databases.

Materials:

1. **Globe**
2. **Large world map**
3. **Map of North America (attached)**
4. **Directions for Activity 1 and political map of Mexico (attached) – 1 for each student**
5. **Directions for Activity 2 and maps that include the ancient Mayan homeland (attached) – 1 for each student**
6. **Supplies for art activity (Activity 2, see directions)**

Procedures:

Have students explore, look at and use several different types of maps to familiarize themselves with what and how to obtain information from a map.

Then use activities 1 and 2 below to help students deepen and strengthen mapping skills while increasing background knowledge of the Maya.

Assessment:

Successful labeling of the map of Mexico including all information asked for on assignment sheet.

Successful construction, coloring, and labeling of Mayan ruin salt dough relief map.

Resources and Background Expanders:

Books

Day, N. 2001. **Your Travel Guide to Ancient Mayan Civilization.** Minneapolis, MN: Runestone Press.

Web Resources

Maya Ruins

www.mayaruins.com

A site with great interactive maps of the ruins of major Mayan cities and lots of photographs.

Mayan Kids

<http://mayankids.com>

Maps and facts about the Maya.

PBS

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/maya/world.html

Pictures of ancient Mayan sites.

Map of North America



Name _____ Date _____

Activity 1: Geography of Mexico Map Skills

Using a blank political map of Mexico:

1. Draw a compass rose on your map and label all the cardinal directions.
2. Label all the lines of latitude and longitude that run through Mexico.
3. Label all the bodies of water that surround Mexico
4. Label and color all of the modern states in Mexico where Mayan archaeological sites exist.
5. Label 5 Mayan ruin sites such as Chichen Itza.
6. Label and color the countries of The United States of America, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador.
7. Create a Map Legend on your map.

Name _____ Date _____

Activity 1: Political Map of Mexico





Political Map of Mexico with States

Activity 2:

Making a Ruin Map of the Ancient Maya Homeland

Materials

Large piece of thick cardboard, about the size of a large pizza box	Mixing bowl
Pencil	1 cup table salt
Paper	1 Tablespoon lemon juice
Scissors	1 cup water
Toothpicks	Plastic spoon
White school glue	Craft paints (blue and at least 3 other colors)
2 cups all-purpose flour	Paint brush
Fine-tip black marker for labeling	Decorations: beads, feathers, glitter, etc.

Directions

1. On a piece of cardboard, draw the outline of the ancient Maya homeland using a map to guide you. Be sure to leave room for the Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico. Set this map aside.
2. Cut little diamonds out of your paper to make flags to identify the Maya ruins on your map. Wrap the edge of the flags around the toothpicks with a bit of white school glue.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt, and lemon juice. Slowly add water to create your salt dough. If the dough is too dry, add more water. If it is too sticky, add a bit more flour.
4. Use a spoon to spread the dough across your map. Carefully fill in all of the land area, but leave the water areas uncovered. It is okay that the map surface is bumpy as it represents land!
5. Use a toothpick to draw the borders that separate modern-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. You can decorate the borders with beads or glitter.
6. On little rectangle shaped papers, write the name of each country. Use your finger to press the strip of paper into the dough on the appropriate areas of your map. Use your imagination to make the names stand out and look interesting.
7. Stick the toothpicks with the ruin names into the map. You can cut the toothpicks in half, if you want the flags to be shorter.
8. Set your map aside for several days, until the dough has dried and hardened. The thicker your "land," the longer it will take to dry.
9. Once the dough is hard, paint the countries different colors. Use blue to color the water. Let the paint dry. Label the bodies of water with your marker.
10. To seal the dough, so that your map will last longer, mix 1 Tablespoon of white school glue with 1 Tablespoon of water. Use a paintbrush to paint this mixture all over the salt dough to keep it from absorbing moisture.

Map of the Maya Region



Map of the Ancient Mayan Homeland



Lesson 3

Timeline: Ancient Mayan Civilization

Objective(s): *After completing the lesson students will be able to:*
Use a timeline to put historical events in order.

Relevant Content Standards:

Social Studies

STRAND: History. Content Standard I: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history in order to understand the complexity of the human experience.

5–8 Benchmark 1-D. Skills: Research historical events and people from a variety of perspectives:

1. organize information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, drawing inferences and conclusions.

Materials:

1. Several trade books that describe the timeline of Maya history
2. Ancient Mayan Timeline worksheet (attached)

Procedures:

Have student research the major events in Mayan history listed on the Ancient Mayan Timeline worksheet. Then have students place the events in order.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the Ancient Mayan Timeline worksheet.

Resources and Background Expanders:

Books

Baquedano, E. 2000. **Eyewitness: Aztec, Inca, and Maya.** New York: DK.

Perl, R. 2005. **Peoples of the Ancient World: The Ancient Maya.** New York: Scholastic.

Web Resources

Mayan Kids

<http://mayankids.com/timeline2.htm>

A simple timeline of Mayan history that children can understand.

Name _____ Date _____

Ancient Mayan Timeline

Instructions: Use multiple resources to research the events listed below from Mayan history. Put the correct letter on each arrow on the timeline to show when that event occurred.



- A. Reign of K'inich Janaab' Pakal great leader of Palenque in the tropical rain forest of the present-day Mexican state of Chiapas.
- B. Europeans make their first contact with the Maya.
- C. Writing develops in the Maya area.
- D. Chichen Itza dominates northern lowlands.
- E. Mayan Preclassic Period.
- F. The Spanish infiltration of Maya region begins.
- G. Jaguar Paw 1: Also known as as Chak Tok' Ich'aak I, he was king of the prominent city-state of Tikal. He was overthrown and killed by ambassadors from Teotihuacan.
- H. Copan, Quirigua, Tikal, Calakmul, Palenque, Yaxchilan, Caracol, and other sites in the rain forests and tropical lowlands, are abandoned.

Ancient Mayan Timeline

Answer Key



- A. Reign of K'inich Janaab' Pakal great leader of Palenque in the tropical rain forest of the present-day Mexican state of Chiapas. (Ruled 615–683 CE)
- B. Europeans make their first contact with the Maya. (1502 CE)
- C. Writing develops in the Maya area. (200 BCE)
- D. Chichen Itza dominates northern lowlands. (1000–1200 CE)
- E. Mayan Preclassic Period. (2000 BCE–200 CE)
- F. The Spanish infiltration of Maya region begins. (1517 CE)
- G. Jaguar Paw 1: Also known as as Chak Tok' Ich'aak I, he was king of the prominent city-state of Tikal. He was overthrown and killed by ambassadors from Teotihuacan. (360–378 CE)
- H. Copan, Quirigua, Tikal, Calakmul, Palenque, Yaxchilan, Caracol, and other sites in the rain forests and tropical lowlands, are abandoned. (800s CE)

Lesson 4

Art: Ancient Mayan Relief Sculpture

Objective(s): *After completing the lesson students will be able to:*

1. Recognize and explain about Maya relief sculpture on commemorative, stone stelae that celebrate the institution of kingship.
2. Create a bas relief portrait in clay.

Relevant Content Standards:

Visual Arts

Strand: VISUAL ARTS, Content Standard 6: Show increased awareness of diverse peoples and cultures through visual and performing arts.

K-4 Benchmark 6A: Explore the visual arts of diverse peoples, times, places and cultures:

1. experiment with creating art that reflects cultural and historical influences.
2. classify art from various cultures and historical eras.

Content Standard 5: Observe, discuss, analyze, and make critical judgments about artistic works.

6-8 BENCHMARK 5B: Understand personal, contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry:

1. analyze how history, art and culture can influence each other in making and studying works of art.
2. use historic, cultural, and visual art concepts and information to explain the meaning of a piece of art.

Materials:

1. **Words to Know vocabulary list (attached)**
2. **Background Information (attached)**
3. **Art Activity worksheet (attached)**
4. **Supplies for art activity (see worksheet)**

Procedures:

Show students pictures of Mayan relief sculpture. Complete art activity with students.

Assessment:

Students will use the evaluation questions to critique their own work.

Resources and Background Expanders:

Greene, J. D. 1992. **The Maya**. New York: Franklin Watts.

Laughton, T. 1998. **The Maya: Life, Myth and Art**. London: Duncan Baird Publishers.

McKissack, P. 1985. **The Maya**. Chicago: Children's Press.

Otto-Diniz, S. 1995. **Meet the Maya: Royal Relief Sculpture**. Albuquerque, NM: Art in the School.

Words to Know

archaeologist	scientist who studies ancient civilizations through meticulous excavation, collection, documentation, and analysis of artifacts, burials, and architectural remains.
bas relief	type of sculpture that projects from background to which it remains attached, in contrast to sculpture in the round or free standing, from the Italian <i>relievo</i> . Relief sculpture may be shallow, or very high and protruding.
convention	an established means of representation, e.g., Maya rulers presented with head and feet in profile, frontal torso, wearing elaborate headdresses, jewelry, belts, and sandals.
earflare	jewelry disk with central hole worn through the ear lobe and made of jade or shell.
iconography	investigation of the subject matter of a work of art (description, identification, classification, and interpretation) in order to understand it in its historical context.
line	element of design; path created by a moving point.
Maya	native people of Southern Mexico and the Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize.
movement	principle of design; arrangement of elements of design to create a sense of motion and lead the viewer's eye through the work of art.
portrait	painting, sculpture, etching, photography, or other visual representation of a person's face or full figure.
quetzal	bird from the highlands of southern Mexico and Guatemala distinguished by brilliant, iridescent-green feathers.
sculpture	three-dimensional, free-standing art work that is created by the chiseling of stone, modeling of clay, carving of wood or plaster, casting of metal, shaping of wire, or assembling of objects. Sculpting is the process of creating the three-dimensional form using one or a combination of these materials and methods.
stela	(stelae, pl.) free-standing, commemorative stone slab on which words or images are carved on one or more sides.
texture	element of design; describes the look and feel of a surface (rough, smooth, silky, soft).

Background Information

The Classic Maya Period (250–900 CE) witnessed the codification of Maya culture and art. The royal figures became conventionalized in stone bas relief on freestanding stelae and on wall panels. Art functioned politically to record the royal lineage, to celebrate the king's date of accession, and to publicly and persistently remind the nobility and common people of his legitimacy. The narrow and vertical format of a stele made it especially suitable for royal portraits of a standing figure. Traditionally carved out of limestone and smoothed with polishing stones, these sculptures were brilliantly painted in red, blue, yellow, and green.



High Relief



Low Relief

This low relief panel from Palenque portrays Pakal the Great before his ascension to king. The fluid contour lines in the relief display both confidence and elegance in this depiction. He embodies the Maya ideal of beauty. The sloping forehead and aquiline nose were achieved by placing the baby's head between two boards until the skull hardened. A small bead dangling from a strand of hair between the eyes encouraged the eyes to cross.

Art Activity: Relief Sculpture

Materials

4"x4" newsprint per child
paper clips
½ lb ceramic clay per child
water and water containers
rolling pins or 1" dowel rods
manila paper to work on

4 paint sticks to use as rolling guides
scissors
tools to create texture (e.g., paper clips,
buttons, toy parts, vegetable grater,
etc.)

Directions

1. Brainstorm with students possible subjects for their portraits. Tie it in with your study of Mayan culture if possible. Next instruct them to draw the outline of their portrait (bust or full figure) on the 4"x4" newsprint. Remind them to **KEEP IT SIMPLE**. Details will be addressed later. Cut out the drawing.
2. Demonstrate slab construction in the production of a relief tile. Using 4 paint sticks in all, tape two each (one on top of the other) in parallel lines 4" apart on a burlap work surface. Roll out a slab of clay between the sticks to the dimensions of 4"x 8"x ¼". Cut the slab in half to yield two 4"x 4" tiles.
3. Lay the cut out drawing on one tile, and remove the clay around it with an opened paper clip. Scratch the back surface of the cut-out and the top surface of the tile slab where the cut-out will be attached. Apply slip to both surfaces and join the pieces. Carefully smooth the joints with your fingertips.
4. Indicate texture with your tools and add details made of scrap clay. This will provide clues to the person's identity. Press clay through a vegetable grater to create "hair."

Organize one workstation to roll out the clay, separate the two tiles, and cut out the relief portrait. At a second workstation, set out containers of water and a variety of texture tools for cafeteria-style pick-up. Children can go through the workstations, choose their tools and water, and return to their desks to complete the tiles.

You may fire the tiles in a kiln or let them sun bake. Children may paint their reliefs with tempera paint and an adult can varnish them for a glazed look. Or students may glaze and refire the tiles.

Evaluation

Display the tiles together for all to see. Can you identify each portrait? What clues help you? Did someone develop a unique technique? What did you learn about the Maya in this lesson? About working with clay? How would you improve your tile?

Information and art project adapted from: Otto-Diniz, Sara. 1995. **Meet the Maya: Royal Relief Sculpture**. Albuquerque, NM: Art in the School.

Lesson 5

Mayan Comparison Essay: Maya and Aztec Civilization

Objective(s): *After completing the lesson students will be able to:*

1. Explain several ways in which the Maya and Aztecs are similar and different from one another.
2. Understand the process of writing a comparison essay.

Relevant Content Standards:

Language Arts

STRAND I: Reading and Listening for Comprehension. Content Standard I: Students will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information that is read, heard, and viewed.

Make connections between texts by recognizing similarities and differences based on a common theme, lesson, or message.

5–8 Benchmark I-B: Gather and use information for research and other purposes:

1. interpret and synthesize information by responding to information that is read, heard, or viewed.
2. develop informational products and/or presentations that cite multiple print and non-print sources by: a. identifying and using appropriate primary and secondary sources; b. comparing, contrasting, and evaluating information from different sources about the same topic; c. evaluating information for extraneous details, inconsistencies, relevant facts, and organization.
3. examine critical relationships between and among elements of a research topic.

Materials:

1. **Several trade books with information on the Maya and Aztec civilizations**
2. **Maya and Aztec Information Organizers (attached)**
3. **Maya and Aztec Comparison Essay graphic organizer (attached)**
4. **Rough Draft Guidelines (attached)**
5. **Maya and Aztec Comparison Essay Rubric (attached)**

Procedures:

Students will need to use trade books to research information on both the Maya and the Aztec. Have the students use the provided graphic organizers to collect and organize information needed to complete the comparison essay.

Assessment:

Mayan and Aztec Comparison Essay.

Resources and Background Expanders:

Books

Baquedano, E. 2000. **Eyewitness: Aztec, Inca, and Maya.** New York: DK.

Coulter, L. 2001. **Secrets in Stone: All About Maya Hieroglyphics.** New York: Little, Brown Children's Books.

Crosner, J. 1998. **Technology in the Time of the Maya**. New York: Raintree/Steck Vaughn.

Gruzinski, S. 1992. **The Aztecs: Rise and Fall of an Empire**. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Israel, F. L., ed. 1999. **Ancient Civilizations of the Aztecs and Maya: Chronicles from National Geographic**. Philadelphia: Chelsea House.

Morgan, N. 1998. **Technology in the Time of the Aztecs**. Austin, TX: Raintree/Steck Vaughn.

Perl, R. 2005. **Peoples of the Ancient World: The Ancient Maya**. New York: Scholastic.

Sonneborn, L. 2005. **People of the Ancient World: The Ancient Aztecs**. New York: Scholastic.

Web Resources

Aztecs

www.Aztecs.org.uk

Aztec art, history, and culture.

Jaguar Sun

www.jaguar-sun.com

A site created by the author of a historically accurate novel about the Maya. The site contains her research on Maya culture of today, and the ancient civilization. Easy to navigate.

Mundo Maya Online

www.mayadiscovery.com

This is an online magazine. Information is in English and Spanish about the history, geography, daily life, and art of the Maya. Archived articles, with plenty of photos.

Name _____

Date _____

Maya Information Organizer

Geography—Where They Lived	Tools and Weapons
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

How They Dressed

What They Ate	Religious and Spiritual Beliefs
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Type of Dwelling They Lived In

What They Were Skilled At?	What Was Daily Life Like?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____

Date _____

Aztec Information Organizer

Geography—Where They Lived	Tools and Weapons
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

How They Dressed

What They Ate	Religious and Spiritual Beliefs
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Type of Dwelling They Lived In

What They Were Skilled At?	What Was Daily Life Like?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Date _____

Maya and Aztec Comparison Essay Graphic Organizer

Use this graphic organizer to help you organize your information on how the Maya and Aztec civilizations were similar and how they were different from one another.

Introduction Paragraph

Introduce the topic of comparing the Maya and the Aztecs in this sentence.

State a general similarity that the Maya and Aztecs share.

State a general difference that the Maya and Aztecs have.

Conclusion sentence to transition to your first body paragraph.

Body Paragraph 1—How the Maya and Aztecs are Similar

Topic Sentence: General statement of similarities

One way the Maya and Aztecs are similar

Give an example of this similarity from each group.

Another way the Maya and Aztecs are similar

Give an example of this similarity from each group.

Another way the Maya and Aztecs are similar

Give an example of this similarity from each group.

Conclusion of similarity paragraph; transition to differences paragraph

Body Paragraph 2—How the Maya and Aztecs are different

Topic Sentence: General statement of differences

One way the Maya and Aztecs are different

Give an example of this difference, one from each group.
Maya:
Aztec:

Another way the Maya and Aztecs are different

Give an example of this difference, one from each group.
Maya:
Aztec:

Another way the Maya and Aztecs are different

Give an example of this difference, one from each group.
Maya:
Aztec:

Conclusion of difference paragraph; transition to conclusion paragraph

Conclusion Paragraph

Wrap up sentence comparing the Maya and the Aztecs.

Restate in a different way a general similarity that the Maya and Aztecs share.

Restate in a different way a general difference that the Maya and Aztecs have.

Conclusion sentence that wraps up the whole essay.

Rough Draft Guidelines

- Name, date on the top right hand corner of all pages.
- Always skip the first line below the top margin.
- Number all pages.
- Skip Lines!
- Write neatly so it is easily read.
- Write margin to margin.
- Single sided.
- Only write in pencil.
- Leave one blank line at the bottom of each page.
- One staple in the top left hand corner.

Getting Started

- Use your Graphic Organizer! Have it sitting right beside you while you are working.
- Be selective in the ideas and information you include. Pick your best ideas. Make sure everything relates to your chosen topic.
- **WRITE! WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!**
Don't stop once you start writing. Revising and editing come later. Just get your ideas down following the flow of your graphic organizer.
- **NEVER** ask your teacher how long it should be or when it's done. When **YOU** feel that you have completed your ideas and the requirements of the assignment you will be ready for the next stage.
- **HOLD IT!** Before going to the next stage, make sure you have enough content (ideas) written down on your paper to work with. If you don't think you have enough go back to your pre-writing graphic organizer and look for more ideas and details.

Maya and Aztec Comparison Essay Rubric

Student _____ Date _____

Instructions: Check the box next to each number that best describes the student's writing.

A. Introduction

- 4. Developed introduction in paragraph form.
- 3. Introduction with some detail included.
- 2. Simple beginning paragraph.
- 1. Simple beginning sentence.
- 0. Missing a beginning/introduction.

B. Body: Organizes reasons

- 4. Includes 2 separate body paragraphs, one with detailed similarities and one with detailed differences. Each paragraph includes a topic sentence, three or more developed comparisons between the two tribes and a conclusion sentence.
- 3. Includes 3 similarities and 3 differences organized into paragraphs.
- 2. Includes 2 similarities and 2 differences organized into paragraphs.
- 1. One similarity and one difference organized into sentences; no paragraphs.
- 0. No organization of ideas; random words and/or phrases.

C. Includes supportive details

- 3. At least 2 supportive details for each comparison.
- 2. One supportive detail for each comparison.
- 1. Basic detail included about some comparisons.
- 0. No details included.

D. Word Choice

- 3. Precise sensory words and descriptive words.
- 2. Some elaborated sensory and/or descriptive words.
- 1. Common descriptive language.
- 0. No descriptive language.

E. Conclusion

- 4. Developed detailed conclusion in paragraph form.
- 3. Conclusion with some detail included.
- 2. Simple ending paragraph.
- 1. Simple ending sentence.
- 0. Missing an ending/conclusion.

Beginning: 0-4
Early Developing: 5-8
Developing: 9-13
Fluent: 14-18

Student's score _____

Lesson 6

Culminating Project: Mayan Civilization Book

Objective(s): *After completing the lesson students will be able to:*

1. Understand and explain many aspects of the Mayan civilization.
2. Use research skills to identify and locate important and necessary information on a given topic.

Relevant Content Standards:

Social Studies

STRAND: History. Content Standard I: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history in order to understand the complexity of the human experience.

5–8 Benchmark 1-A. New Mexico: Explore and explain how people and events have influenced the development of New Mexico up to the present day:

1. describe the relationships among ancient civilizations of the world (e.g., scientific discoveries, architecture, politics, cultures and religious systems) and their connection to the early development of New Mexico.
2. compare and contrast the contributions of the civilizations of the western hemisphere (e.g., Aztecs, Mayas, Toltecs, mound builders).

5–8 Benchmark 1-D. Skills: Research historical events and people from a variety of perspectives:

1. organize information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, drawing inferences and conclusions;
2. identify different points of view about an issue or topic; and
3. use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a solution; gather information, identify options, predict consequences and take action to implement that solution.

Language Arts

STRAND I: Reading and Listening for Comprehension. Content Standard I: Students will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information that is read, heard, and viewed.

5–8 Benchmark I-B: Gather and use information for research and other purposes:

1. interpret and synthesize information by responding to information that is read, heard, or viewed.
2. develop informational products and/or presentations that cite multiple print and non-print sources by: a. identifying and using appropriate primary and secondary sources; b. comparing, contrasting, and evaluating information from different sources about the same topic; c. evaluating information for extraneous details, inconsistencies, relevant facts, and organization.
3. examine critical relationships between and among elements of a research topic.

Materials:

1. Several trade books on the ancient Maya

2. **Mayan Study Final Project assignment sheet (attached)**
3. **Mayan Civilization Research Organizer (attached)**

Procedures:

Have students use many resources to learn about Mayan civilization. Use the provided assignment sheet and graphic organizer to organize necessary information and then have students compile information into a final book project.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the Mayan civilization book.

Resources and Background Expanders:

All previous resources would be appropriate for the culminating project.

Name _____ Date Assigned _____

Mayan Study Final Project

You have been studying about the ancient Mayan civilization. Your final project will be a book that you assemble using all the information you have gathered and learned. Through research of the ancient Maya, your compiled work will include reports, maps, and illustrations.

Mayan Civilization Book Project Due: _____

Mayan Civilization Book

Cover

Name of your book
Your Full Name and Date
Nicely Illustrated

Title Page

Name of your Book
Your Full Name

Table of Contents

List of every topic included in your book in order and page number within your book where it can be located.

The first 6 topics MUST be researched and included in your final book.

1. Geographic Location and Environment

What region of North America was the homeland of the Maya? What is the climate like? What are the major geographical features of that region? What was the land like?

Draw a map of their location.

2. Shelter

What type of dwelling did they live in? What materials were used to build the dwellings? Were the dwellings permanent or mobile?

Provide several details in your writing and include an illustration of a typical dwelling.

3. Clothing

What was the typical clothing of the Maya like? Did they wear feather headdresses, face paint, or other decorations? How did the clothing differ for men, women, and children? How did it differ between social classes? Who made the clothing?

Include an illustration of the clothing

4. Food

How did they obtain their food? What are the different types of food they ate? Who was responsible for food preparation and how was it prepared?

Include an illustration of what a typical meal would look like.

5. Weapons and Tools

What were the weapons and tools that the Maya used? What were they made from? How were they used?

Illustration of weapons and tools.

6. What are the different theories of why the Maya abandoned their temple cities?

7. Chose 2 of the following topics to be researched and included in your final book:

➤ Spiritual Beliefs

What did the Maya believe about their world and the world of the supernatural? What were some of their rituals and/or ceremonies? Did the Maya have a specific creation story?

Illustration of some aspect of the Maya's spiritual beliefs.

➤ Daily Life

What did a typical day in life of a Mayan look like? What did they do all day? Were chores different for men and women? What did they do for fun? Did they play games?

Illustration of a typical day in the life of a member of your tribe.

➤ Government or Leadership Type

Who was in charge within Mayan Society? How did they govern?

Illustrate how the Maya leadership might have looked.

➤ Language

What languages did they speak? Do they speak this language today? Who were their nearest neighbors? Did they learn their neighbor's language?

List a few words and their meanings.

8. Other item that must be included in your book:

Final copy of your Maya and Aztec Comparison Paper

9. Bibliography

List the sources of information that you used for this report. Include books, magazines, and Internet sites. Follow the bibliography format provided by your teacher.

Once you have completed and compiled all required information bind your book together.

Name _____ Date Assigned _____

Mayan Civilization Research Organizer

Date Research Needs to be Completed_____.

Use this organizer to write down all the information you are compiling on all aspects of the Mayan civilization. Use this information to create your reports for your final Mayan book project.

Geographic Location and Environment

What regions of Mexico did the Maya inhabit? What is the climate like? What are the major geographical features of that region? What was the land like?

Shelter

What type of dwellings did the common Mayan people inhabit? What materials were used to build the dwellings? Were the dwellings permanent or mobile?

Clothing

What was the typical Mayan clothing like? Did they wear feather headdresses, face paint, or other decorations? How did the clothing differ for men, women, and children? Who made the clothing?

Food

How did they obtain their food? What are the different types of food they ate? Who was responsible for food preparation and how was it prepared?

Weapons and Tools

What were the weapons and tools that the Maya typically used? What were they made from? How were they used?

Spiritual Beliefs

What did the Maya believe about their world and the world of the supernatural? What were some of their rituals and/or ceremonies? Did the Maya have a specific creation story?

Daily Life

What did a typical day of a typical Mayan citizen look like? What did they do all day? Were chores different for men and women? What did they do for fun? Did they play games?

Government or Leadership Type

Who was in charge within Mayan society? How did they govern?

Language

What languages did they speak? Do they speak this language today? Who were their nearest neighbors? Did they learn their neighbor's language?

What are the different theories of why the Mayan abandoned their temple cities?