

Knowledge Organiser

Year Group	Subject	Topic
4	History	Maya, Aztec and Incas

The Big Picture

This summer term in year 4, we will be exploring life and beliefs of the Maya, Inca and Aztecs. The Maya, Inca, and Aztecs built great civilizations in **Mexico** and in Central and South America between 1,800 and 500 years ago.

In short, the **Maya** came **first**, and settled in modern-day Mexico. Next, came the Olmecs, who also settled Mexico. They didn't build any major cities, but they were widespread and prosperous. They were followed by the **Inca** in modern-day Peru, and finally the **Aztecs**, also in modern-day Mexico.

Incas were **more powerful**, because they were much **more** unified (and their organisation was definitely superior) than **Aztecs**. **Aztecs**, in fact, had no empire. ... They were both good in civil engineering, **Inca's were** incredibly advanced and efficient in agriculture, but **Aztecs** were also good in this field.

Enquiry Question

Which of the three was more powerful?
Did the Aztec take over the Mayans?
What disease wiped out the Mayans?
We're to as or Aztecs more advanced?

Key Vocabulary

Civilization	The stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced.
Climate	The weather conditions prevailing in an area in general or over a long period.
Powerful	Having great power or strength.
Unified	Made uniform or whole; united.
Warriors	(especially in former times) a brave or experienced soldier or fighter.
Excavation	The action of excavating something, especially an archaeological site.

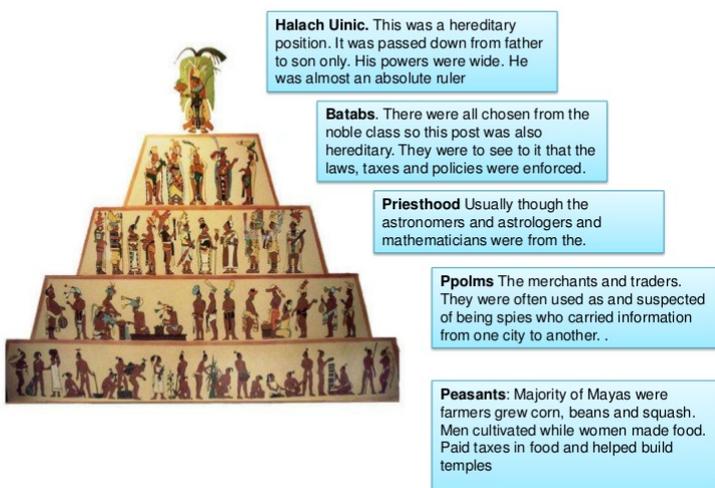
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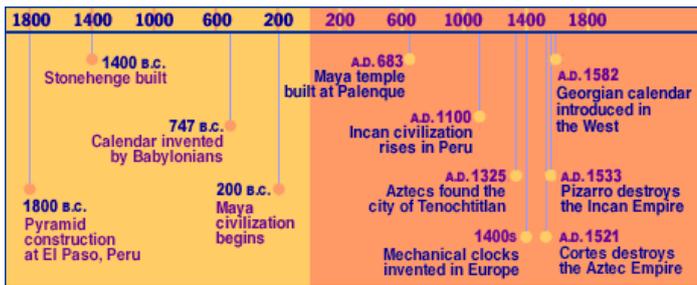
Aztec Civilization

The centre of the Aztec civilization was in the Valley of Mexico, a huge high-elevation basin in the Sierra Madre Mountains. This valley had a mild climate that was good for agriculture. The surrounding lowlands offered a hotter, wetter tropical climate and an abundance of natural resources.

Around 1325, the Aztecs settled on an island in Lake Texcoco, where they built their capital and largest city, Tenochtitlán. They called themselves the Mexica (pronounced me-shee-ka) and became accomplished corn farmers, warriors, and temple builders. The ceramic shown here is one of a pair of life-size statues discovered during the recent excavation of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlán. The statues stood guard at the doorway of the meeting room of the Aztec warriors. The aggression and warrior skill of the Aztecs allowed them to conquer neighboring people. Eventually, the empire stretched over most of central Mexico and included millions of people.

MAYA SOCIAL STRUCTURE





Inca, Aztec, Maya Timeline

Inca Dates:

- Empire began, 1200 AD
- Decide to organize empire, 1438 AD
- Francisco Pizarro lands in Panama to conquer territory, 1526 AD
- All traces of Inca rule had been erased from the empire, 1572 AD

Aztec Dates:

- An epidemic of smallpox hits the capital city, 1521 AD
- An estimated 2 million Aztecs survive the epidemic, 1581 AD
- Aztec move to Valley of Mexico, 1100 AD
- Aztec people join people of Lake Texcoco to defeat the Tepanec, 1430 AD

Maya Dates:

- Begin to develop their culture, 300 BC
- Mayan civilization disappears, 909 AD
- Mayans begin building cities, 250 AD
- First written inscription from Mayans appears, 250 BC



The Inca civilization

The Inca began settling in the Valley of Cuzco in the Andes Mountains of central Peru around the year 1200. Between 1440 and 1500, they expanded their empire until it extended nearly 2,500 miles from north to south and included as many as 16 million people. The lands they occupied included mountains, coastal desert, and low-lying jungle.

The Incan central government at Cuzco maintained a strong military and passed laws to create official customs and an official language and calendar. The Inca engineered 14,000 miles of roads, including tunnels and bridges, and built the great fortress of Sacsahuaman. They also developed highly advanced terracing and irrigation methods to allow farming in difficult mountain terrain.

Maya Civilization

About 2,800 years ago, people known as the Maya lived in farming villages on the Yucatan Peninsula and the highlands to the south. From about A.D. 250 to A.D. 900, they built city-states in Central America that included great pyramid temples and public plazas featuring huge stone columns that recounted their history.

Excavations at Tikal, Guatemala, one of the greatest and oldest Maya centres, have revealed thousands of structures and arti-facts. The findings include temples, pyramids, ball-playing courts, stone monuments, tools, ceremonial objects, and a great many pottery fragments.

The limestone of the Yucatan Peninsula was easily quarried and used for building and tool making. In the south, volcanoes stretched over the highlands and yielded valuable resources. The fertile volcanic soil allowed the people to grow crops.

The **Maya** empire was located in what was a thick jungle on the Yucatan Peninsula.

The **Aztecs** settled in what is now Mexico City, while the **Incan** empire could be found along the Andes Mountains. ... However, the **Maya** were able to trade off food due to their plentiful supply, something the **Aztecs** could not.