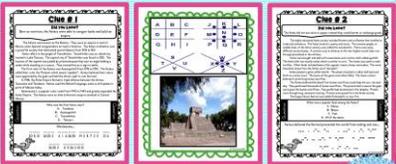


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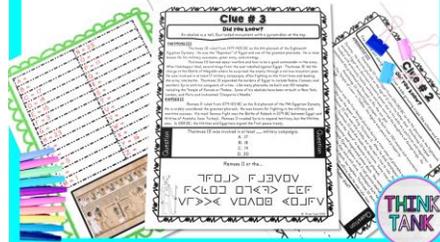


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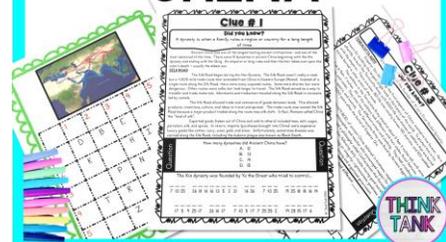


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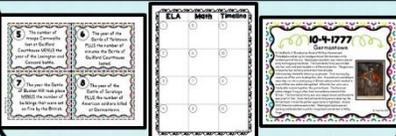


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AZTEC EMPIRE

The Aztec Empire existed in Central Mexico from around 1400 A.D. until the Spanish conquered it in 1521. It was a leading civilization in Mesoamerica. Mesoamerica refers to Mexico and Central America. The Aztecs were originally nomadic, but settled in central Mexico. By the 1400s, a large civilization was formed. It included many city-states.

The Aztec Empire covered 80,000 square miles. Its capital was Tenochtitlan, which was on an island in Lake Texcoco. The Aztec Empire had between 400 and 500 city-states. At its height, the empire had a population of about five million to six million people.

The Aztec Empire was ruled by an emperor. The Aztec word for emperor was "Huey Tlatoani." The city-states were allowed a lot of independence as long as they paid a tribute – or offering – to the emperor. The emperor was still in charge because he decided how much the city-states would pay as a tribute. Also, only the emperor could declare war.

Many of the Mesoamerican religions were similar. They worshiped many gods, had high priests, and built pyramids. However, each civilization's religion had its own unique differences. The Aztecs believed that they needed to make sacrifices to their gods so that the sun had the power to rise. These often included human sacrifices. The high priests oversaw the rituals, which were performed at the temples.

The Aztec Empire had a class system. Those who had more wealth had more power, and those who had less wealth were less powerful. However, this system was flexible. People could raise their social status by serving in the military.

The Aztecs spoke a language called Nahuatl. Some words we use in English come from the Aztecs. These words include avocado, coyote, chocolate, and chili.

The Aztec Empire tragically ended in 1521. The empire had been continuing to expand when the Spanish arrived. The emperor, Montezuma, was taken prisoner by Hernán Cortés. Montezuma died while he was in captivity. The Spanish took over Tenochtitlan, and the empire ended.

WORDS TO KNOW

Nomadic – traveling from place to place
Captivity – being imprisoned
Rituals – religious ceremony

SYMBOLS

Underline the "Words to Know" found in the passage. (see bottom)

? Something you have a question about

! Something that surprised you

♡ Your favorite fact

COMPARISON

YELLOW

What does Mesoamerica refer to?

GREEN

What was the class system like?

BLUE

Why did the Aztec Empire end?

AZTEC EMPIRE

CHECK THE CORRECT ANSWER

What was the Aztec language?

Nahuatl

Maori

Naluha

What year did the Spanish conquer the Aztec Empire?

1517

1519

1521

Who ruled the Aztec Empire?

Pharaoh

King

Emperor

TRUE OR FALSE

The Aztecs were originally nomadic, but settled in central Mexico.

TRUE

FALSE

The emperor, Montezuma, was taken prisoner by Francisco Pizarro.

TRUE

FALSE

WRITE IN THE BLANK

The Spanish took over Tenochtitlan, and the emperor

They worshiped many gods, had high priests, and built

WORD SEARCH

F	N	J	R	X	D	G	Q	F	E	I	U	H	R	R	Q	J	L	E	EMPEROR
R	F	O	K	Y	S	I	C	U	W	E	J	E	S	E	E	K	H	L	MEXICO
O	R	T	M	Z	P	Q	L	B	B	G	M	A	H	R	Y	C	M	L	CORTES
R	R	C	C	A	T	E	J	N	S	B	T	P	C	O	R	T	E	S	NOMADIC
E	T	I	E	P	D	S	P	A	N	I	S	H	I	O	C	S	S	MONTEZUMA	
P	Q	A	T	Y	J	I	G	F	A	L	S	A	C	R	I	F	I	C	SPANISH
M	W	V	Z	A	A	B	C	V	V	F	M	O	N	T	E	Z	U	M	AZTEC
E	I	B	A	G	D	J	W	X	T	M	E	X	I	C	O	E	Z	Y	SACRIFICE
M	E	S	Y	C	H	G	L	S	O	Q	R	G	F	U	Q	R	O	A	EMPEROR
T	Z	Z	N	Q	R	T	J	B	S	L	W	H	P	F	N	L	H	C	

AZTEC GOVERNMENT

The emperor of the Aztec Empire was called a Huey Tlatoani. Aztecs believed that the Huey Tlatoani was chosen by the gods.

The Aztec Empire was based in the capital, Tenochtitlan. The capital was surrounded by other city-states. A city-state had an independent city as the center, and the city governed not only itself, but also the areas around it.

The city-states were fully independent from the main Aztec government. Each city-state had to pay tax each year to be free. The emperor decided how much the fee was.

When an emperor died, a group of nobles would get together and choose a new emperor. They usually chose a member of the emperor's family, but it was not always his son. It could also be a brother or another male family member.

The second most important person under the emperor was the Cuauhtl. He was in charge of keeping the government running, with the help of thousands of officials and government servants. There was also a group called the Council of War. They made big decisions with oversight from the emperor. The nobles were next in line to be emperor.

Other important people in the government included priests who led religious services, judges who helped carry out the law, and the military, which helped to defend the empire.

The Aztecs had a well-developed legal system. There were laws against stealing, killing, and destruction of property. When someone was accused of a crime, a system of courts and judges looked at the case. If the person charged with the crime didn't agree with the court's decision, they could have a higher court check again.

There was also a one-time forgiveness rule. If a person committed a crime, but told a priest before they were caught, the priest could forgive them. However, a person could only do this once.

WORDS TO KNOW

Nobles – upper class

Empire – ruled under a single supreme authority

Servants – lower class

©Think Tank

SYMBOLS

Underline the "Words to Know" found in the passage. (see bottom)

? Something you have a question about

! Something that surprised you

♡ Your favorite fact

COLOR

YELLOW

Who was the Aztec emperor?

What was the Cuauhtl in charge of?

BLUE

What was the one-time forgiveness rule?

AZTEC GOVERNMENT

CHECK THE CORRECT ANSWER

Who led at a court if someone was accused of a crime?

- Judges Servants High priests

Who decided the tax for each city-state?

- Judges Nobles Emperor

If an emperor died, who chose the new one?

- Judges Nobles High priests

TRUE OR FALSE

The second most powerful person after the emperor was the Huantopi.

TRUE FALSE

Each city-state had an independent city as the center, and the city governed not only itself, but also the areas around it.

TRUE FALSE

COMPLETE THE BLANK

Aztecs believed that the Huey Tlatoani was chosen by _____.

Other important people in the government included the _____, which helped to _____ the emperor.

WORD SEARCH

Z R V L O F Q D C C A P I T A L B R K Z GOVERNMENT
E D G E P T C R I S N I D R F C Y P X L E A S T
S V R Z I Q I C B E S K W I L K R D W N O B L E S
S W A Q Y M R J U R C B H Z T S I A X M I L I T A R Y
N T T T E O X K U D Z Y Z F E E U T
W O I S O O T I Z D I L T E S C U I Y F
W C B K S K K S M K G J D T Q E K L K C
C R U L F D K D P M W E S G J T Q I I W C R I M E
X I N D E P E N D E N T S E K E U M G G C A P I T A L
G Y M R J S Q Y M J G O V E R N M E N T I N D E P E N D E N T