Activities marked with an * can be used with one of the transparencies at the back of the book.

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## Ancient Maya Timeline

### The ARCHAIC PERIOD (7000 B.C.-1800 B.C.)

- **Maya live as nomadic hunter-gatherers**
  - **about 5000 B.C.E.** Maya settle along the Pacific coast of Mesoamerica.

### The PRECLASSIC PERIOD (1800 B.C.-A.D. 250)

- **A gradual shift from a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle to an agricultural society.**
  - **about 1800 B.C.E.** The beginning of the period known as the Preclassic era.
  - **about 1000 B.C.E.** Maya craftworkers begin to copy Olmec pottery and jade carvings.
  - **about 900 B.C.E.** Maya farmers design and use irrigation systems.
  - **about 500 B.C.E.** The Maya population grows rapidly. Cities are built.
  - **about 292 B.C.E.** The first-known Maya writing is produced.

### The CLASSIC PERIOD (A.D. 250–A.D. 900)

- **Population growth, the building of great cities, and advancements in art, science, and agriculture.**
  - **around A.D. 250** The beginning of the greatest period of Maya power.
  - **around A.D. 550** Great artistic achievements. Temples and palaces in cities such as Copan, Palenque, and Tikal are built. These great regional city-states are ruled by lords who claim to be descended from the gods.
  - **around A.D. 615** The great Maya leader Lord Pacal rules in the city of Palenque.
  - **around A.D. 650** The city of Teotihuacan begins to decline. It is looted and burned by unknown invaders around A.D. 700.
  - **around A.D. 683** Lord Pacal’s rule in Palenque ends. He is buried in a tomb within the Temple of Inscriptions.
  - **around A.D. 800** The palace-city of Palenque begins to decline.

### The POSTCLASSIC PERIOD (A.D. 925–A.D. 1530)

- **Decline, abandonment of cities, and the arrival of the Spanish.**
  - **around A.D. 900** Many Maya cities, temples, and palaces are deserted and overgrown by the rainforest. Maya power begins to collapse. This is the beginning of the Postclassic period.
  - **around A.D. 1527** Maya lands are invaded by the Spanish.
  - **around A.D. 1535** Mexico becomes a Spanish colony.


For thousands of years before the arrival of Spanish explorers in the 16th century, the Americas were inhabited by clever peoples who migrated from Asia via Berengia—a stretch of land 1,000 miles wide and 60 miles long that once stood above sea level connecting Siberia with Alaska. These first immigrants were nomadic hunters who drifted east and south from Berengia in search of edible plants and large prey such as wooly mammoths, yaks, and antelope. They came in waves over millennia between 35,000 and 12,000 years ago—some in small carved wooden boats and vessels made of animal skin, and some on foot—spreading throughout the Americas from Canada in the north all the way to the southern tip of what is now South America. Those who settled in the middle, inhabiting the southern two-thirds of Mexico and northern Central America have come to be called Mesoamericans. Among them, ancestors of the Maya are believed to have migrated from northern areas of the Americas around 9,000 B.C. and settled in the region of present-day southern Mexico (the area of the Yucatan Peninsula, as well as the Mexican provinces of Tabasco, Chiapas, and Campeche), as well as all of present-day Belize, most of Guatemala, and tiny parts of Honduras, and El Salvador.

1. Using an atlas and as much paper as you need, trace the outline of the present-day countries involved in the early migration of the first Americans. With arrows, show how you think they might have traveled from Siberia to Berengia to the Americas. As “Berengia” is now under water, what name is in its place? How else might early peoples have come to the Americas?

2. Using the map on page 4, do the following:
   a. Outline Mesoamerica in red.
   b. Shade the homeland of the Ancient Maya in green.
   c. Using an atlas as a resource, label the two large bodies of water that touch the land occupied by the Ancient Maya.

3. What were ancestors of the Maya seeking when they left Berengia for the Americas?

4. Define Mesoamerica.

5. Maya may share the same ancestors as the Native Americans who enjoyed a Thanksgiving feast with the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1621. Using another sheet of paper, explain.

6. Using the Internet or other resource, find out what “pre-Columbian” means. Write the definition below:
For simplicity’s sake, it is usually divided into three geographical diversity and countless microclimates. The land of the Maya is one of dramatic home in differing parts of Mesoamerica. Olmecs, the Maya, and the Aztecs all made their used to describe parts of present-day Mexico, become familiar with the term “Mesoamerica” inhabited by the Ancient Maya. Students should modern country boundaries relative to the area activities on pages 3 and 4. Students should note The transparency map can be used with the map native to the area may be drawn on the map. Animals, trees, plants, birds, fish, and insects large white or tan paper mounted on a bulletin board. Students may trace the map on the Transparencies Use with Ancient Maya Map page 3,4,5,6 Maya Codices page 11, 16 Maya Writing pages 9,10,11 Maya Numbers page 26 Maya Ball Game page 23 Maya Gods pages 22 Pyramid of Kukulcan at Chichen Itza pages 13,14,15 Maya Stelae page 10 Ancient Maya map

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