



**WORLD HISTORY**

# **AZTECS INCA MAYA**

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## Introduction

### Goals

The main goal of this book is to help students develop skills outlined in the Common Core Standards by clarifying what the standards are asking for and by giving teachers specific activities they can use to address the standards.

### Organization

The book is mostly organized by the categories into which Common Core places its standards. The first three chapters are “Key Ideas and Details,” “Craft and Structure,” and “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.” Because “Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity” is addressed every time students read, it does not have its own chapter. Also, because it is common for many writing categories to overlap on a paper, the fourth chapter covers all the writing standards and is divided into the three main paper types: argumentative, informative, and narrative.

Activities open with an introductory page that includes every standard covered by the activities, directions, estimated lesson length, and additional teaching ideas. At the back of the book are selected answers for the reading activities.

### Tracking Common Core Standards

On page 3, there is a chart that can help you track which Common Core Standards you have addressed and with which activities.

### Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is not required for social studies teachers, which is why there is no WHST.6-8.3. However, this form of writing was included in this book because numerous social studies teachers also teach language arts, for the many educators who find creative writing a valuable way to explore history, and because other required writing standards can be covered with narrative writing.

### Common Core Standards

If a teacher covers the six reading activities and three papers outlined in this book, he or she will have addressed every 6–8 History/Social Studies Common Core Standard at least once. Although it is not expected that teachers cover every standard in each unit of study, this gives teachers a great way to see examples of every standard and have numerous assignments to choose from.

# Common Core Standards

## READING

### Key Ideas and Details

#### **RH.6-8.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

#### **RH.6-8.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

» *Summarize primary or secondary sources.*

#### **RH.6-8.3**

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

» *Summarize the steps of a process or historical event.*

### Craft and Structure

#### **RH.6-8.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

» *Use context to decipher the meanings of difficult words.*

#### **RH.6-8.5**

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

» *Determine how the author has ordered the information.*

#### **RH.6-8.6**

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

#### **RH.6-8.7**

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

» *Interpret a reading with a visual.*

#### **RH.6-8.8**

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

#### **RH.6-8.9**

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

#### **RH.6-8.10**

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

## SPEAKING AND LISTENING

### Comprehension and Collaboration

#### **SL.6.1–SL.8.1**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6–8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

## WRITING

### Text Types and Purposes

#### **WHST.6-8.1**

Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

» *Argumentative writing.*

#### **WHST.6-8.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

» *Informative writing.*

#### **W.6.3–W.8.3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

» *Creative writing. (This is not required for social studies teachers.)*

### Production and Distribution of Writing

#### **WHST.6-8.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization,

and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

» *Write for a specific audience.*

#### **WHST.6-8.5**

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

» *Use writing process.*

#### **WHST.6-8.6**

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

» *Publish writing for an audience.*

### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

#### **WHST.6-8.7**

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

» *Research to answer a question.*

#### **WHST.6-8.8**

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

» *Use multiple credible sources when researching and summarize findings in own words.*

#### **WHST.6-8.9**

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

» *Support essays with information or quotes from texts.*

### Range of Writing

#### **WHST.6-8.10**

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.



CHAPTER

1

# Key Ideas and Details

**ACTIVITY 1**

Why Did the Maya Abandon Their Cities?

**RH.6-8.1**

**RH.6-8.2**

**ACTIVITY 2**

How Did Montezuma Die?

**RH.6-8.1**

**RH.6-8.2**

**RH.6-8.3**

7. In the eighth paragraph, Prescott discussed how some sources believed the Inca were hiding weapons inside their clothes. Why did Prescott decide that this was probably not the case?
8. In the final paragraph, Prescott discussed how there were different estimates for how many people died at the Battle of Cajamarca. What were the two estimates? Why might the Spanish estimate have been lower? If you were asked how many people died at Battle of Cajamarca, what do you think would be the best way to answer that question?
9. Historians respect Prescott's work, but he has been accused of sacrificing accuracy to make it a more enjoyable read. Which part or parts do you think may not be entirely historically accurate? Explain why.
10. Break down the Battle of Cajamarca into five to seven events.

## ACTIVITY 4

CHAPTER  
Craft and Structure

DURATION  
1 class period

# Maya, Aztec, and Inca Compared

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

#### RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

#### RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/ social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently..

#### RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

### DIRECTIONS

- The class reads the first two paragraphs of the reading together, highlighting parts they can connect to, have a question about, or are surprised by. Students should draw a line from the highlighted part to the margins and explain their connection, ask their question, or describe why they were surprised.
- Students read the remaining paragraphs independently, annotating as they did in the previous step. Students share what they highlighted with a neighbor, then the class.
- With a partner, students use the reading to complete the Venn diagram. Students should aim to find two to three facts for each section (which may be difficult for the Inca and Maya, but not Aztec section). Students share what they wrote with the class.
- Students independently complete “Maya, Aztec, and Inca Questions.”

### Extensions

- Split students into three groups: Inca, Aztec, and Maya. Each group’s job is to learn additional information about their group (arts, achievements, social structures, etc). Students share what they learned with the other groups.
- Explore the ideas of Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, specifically, how these three factors explain the Spanish conquering the Aztecs and Inca, and not the other way around.
- Show students relevant and appropriate *Horrible Histories*, a BBC show that creates historically accurate spoofs on history. It has various skits on the Aztecs and Inca.

## OVERCOMING GEOGRAPHY <sup>1/3</sup>

The Maya, Inca, and Aztec were impressive civilizations that reached significant cultural heights despite living in areas that were not ideal for a settled society.

The Maya civilization developed in today's Central America, including all or parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, and El Salvador. Much of the climate in these locations is tropical, with hot, humid rain forests covering a great deal of the land. It might seem that living in such a fertile terrain would be a good thing for a civilization. In fact, this is a good example of how it is possible to have too much of a good thing. As one would expect, there was much life there, but the jungle made it extremely difficult to develop a settled civilization. Clearing the dense rain forest to build towns or create farmland was hard enough, but the vegetation continued to come back. Also, the amount of rainfall greatly depended on the

season, meaning farmers had to endure months with very little precipitation. Lastly, the soil was actually quite thin and deficient in most nutrients. The Maya overcame these challenges to create a large, advanced civilization that developed innovations in writing, math, and astronomy. How did they do it?

The Maya tamed the jungle terrain by using slash-and-burn agriculture. This entailed cutting down part of the forest, then lighting the dried trees and brush on fire. After using the cleared land for a period of time, the Maya left that land fallow for a few years, allowing the vegetation to grow back and the land to recover, before slashing and burning again. Not only did



Slash-and-burn agriculture

this successfully clear out large sections of the jungle, but it also added nutrients to the soil. Using this method, the Maya successfully harvested corn, squash, and beans. Additionally, the Maya took advantage of the excess rain from the wet season by creating irrigation systems that allowed them to save water for the dry months.

The Inca Empire stretched along the world's longest above-water mountain range, the Andes. At its height the Inca Empire included all or parts of the modern countries of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia. It would seem strange to walk along the Andes, which reach heights of over 20,000 feet, and think, "Let's start a farm here." Making it even more difficult for the Inca, the Pacific coast they lived near was bordered by the Atacama Desert. But even before the Inca, the people of this area, referred to as the Andean peoples, decided to live in large numbers as farmers in the Andes Mountains.