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**Early Peoples Activity Sheet:   
The Aztecs**

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**Pre-Columbian life in the Americas: Social organisation, city life and beliefs**

**Aztec Empire:**

1. Where did the Aztec live?
2. What was the name of the city at the centre of the Aztec empire?
3. What did the Aztecs believe the gods needed to keep them strong?
4. Why did Montezuma I conquer new lands?
5. Under which ruler did the Aztec empire reach its height?

**Roles of key groups in society:**

1. Who was the Tlatoani?
2. What other roles did the tlatoani play in society?
3. Who ruled the country when the ruler was absent?
4. Who advised the tlatoani?
5. Who were the highest rank of people in Aztec society behind the tlatoani?
6. What special rights did nobles have?
7. Who were the commoner class?
8. What was the Calpolli?
9. What was the role of the Calpolli?
10. How did a commoner rise to a more powerful position?
11. What position was a very important position in Aztec society?

**Warfare and Soldiers:**

1. What were the two main reasons Aztecs fought wars?
2. What was the military tactic used by the Aztecs?
3. What was the significance of the hair style on young soldiers?
4. What was the role of a young soldier in their first war?
5. Explain the type of weaponry used by Aztecs.

**Everyday life:**

1. Who were the pochteca?
2. What rank did the pochteca have in society?
3. Why did the pochteca have to hide their wealth?
4. What did merchants travel in on long expeditions?
5. What other roles did merchants play for the tlatoani?
6. How did Aztecs purchase goods and services?
7. List the types of goods that Spanish explorer, Hernan Cortes saw available for sale in the market place at Tlatelolco.
8. What was the approximate population of those living in the Valley of Mexico in the early 1500’s?
9. How did farmers stop their soil from being washed away on steep slopes?
10. What are chinampas?
11. What did the chinampas produce?
12. What were the main crops grown by the Aztec?
13. What type of livestock were on Aztec farms?

**Women:**

1. What was a woman’s role in Aztec society?
2. What tasks did women perform in the home?
3. What role did women play in religious worship?
4. Describe a marriage ceremony?
5. Who was Ayopechcatl?
6. Where did the midwife bury the umbilical cord of a girl and why?
7. What respect was given to a woman who died in childbirth?

**Slaves:**

1. What kind of tasks did slaves complete?
2. Who were slaves?
3. What rights did a slave have?

**Law:**

1. Why were punishments for breaking the law so severe in Aztec society?
2. Explain the court system.
3. What was considered one of the worst crimes to commit?
4. What were the types of punishments given to those who broke the law?
5. Name one of the laws that Montezuma I issued?

**Religion and beliefs:**

1. How was the sun created according to Aztec beliefs?
2. What does this myth tell us about Aztec religion and beliefs?
3. What age did the Aztecs believe they were living in according to the idea of the Five Suns?  
   Match gods and goddesses with what they represented.

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| --- | --- |
| Huitzilopochtli | Goddess of Earth and the mother of Huitzilopochtli |
| Quetzalcoatl | God of learning and of the wind |
| Tlaloc | Goddess of fertility and healing |
| Coatlicue | Fifth sun god and in charge of Aztec heaven |
| Teteoinnan or Toci | God of the night and all material things |
| Tezcatilpoca | God of war and protector of the Aztec |
| Tonatiuh | God of rain, water and fertility |

1. What was the purpose of smaller ceremonies?
2. What was at the centre of most religious ceremonies?
3. How were victims sacrificed?
4. Who were the victims?
5. Who attended the calmecac?
6. If a young man decided to become a priest, what did this mean?
7. Who was the “fire seller”?
8. What were some of the daily duties carried out by priests?
9. What was the dish on the chac mool statue possibly used for?
10. What did the Aztecs use two calendars for?
11. Who did the Aztecs believed controlled time?
12. How many days and months in an ordinary calendar year?
13. What was the ordinary calendar used for?
14. How many days and months in a religious calendar?
15. When did the Binding of the Years, or the New Fire Ceremony occur?

**Everyday Life:**

1. Approximately how many people lived in the city of Tenochtitlan and the surrounding area?
2. What was located at the centre of the city?
3. What was the tallest and most splendid building in the city?
4. How regarded were artists and craftsmen in the commoner class?
5. How many family members lived in a common household?
6. Describe a typical day for an Aztec family.
7. What were most houses made of?
8. What was the layout of Aztec homes?
9. Describe the features of a home owned by a wealthy Aztec?
10. What type of clothing did the Aztec wear?
11. What were their clothes made from?
12. What was the law regarding clothing for commoners?
13. What did priests wear?
14. Look the image on page 45 of the man and woman. Based on what you read about the dress code, what social class are they from and how do you know?
15. What was the main ingredient of most Aztec dishes?
16. List the types of foods the Aztec ate.
17. List the types of food Montezuma II ate.
18. What was a popular drink among the wealthy?
19. What gifts did parents give to their new born babies?
20. Explain the different type of educations boys and girls received.
21. What was the telpochcalli?
22. Where did boys from wealthy families go to school?
23. What kinds of sports and games did nobles enjoy?
24. What type of amusements did commoners enjoy?
25. Explain the ball game, ullamaliztli.
26. How did the Aztec transport goods?

**Spanish arrival in the Americas:**

1. Why did the Aztec have so many enemies?
2. Why did the empire start to weaken?
3. What excited Europeans about the Americas?
4. Based on the supplies and crew Hernan Cortes brought with him on his expedition to the coast of Mexico, what do you think the aim of the expedition was?
5. How did Cortes get the numbers needed to take on the 250,000 strong Aztec army?
6. Look at the map of Tenochtitlan on page 55. What does it tell you about the city?
7. How did Montezuma II’s gesture of sending gifts to the new Spanish force in the hope of getting them to leave go wrong?
8. What events unfolded when Cortes and his forces reached Tenochtitlan?
9. According to Bernal Diaz del Castilo, how was Montezuma II killed?
10. According to the Aztec, how was Montezuma II killed?
11. What epidemic broke out in Tenochtitlan killing thousands of Aztec and weakening the empire?
12. After the surrender of the new tlatoani, why did the Spaniards destroy many of the Aztec cities?
13. Look at the image on page 57. What does it tell you about Spanish rule?