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The Aztec Civilization: Way of Life

The Aztec were an American Indian people who ruled a mighty empire in Mexico during the 1400's and early 1500's. The Aztec had one of the most advanced civilizations in the Americas. They built cities as large and complex as any in Europe at that time. They also practiced a remarkable religion that affected every part of their lives. The legacy of the Aztec Civilization is seen even today in the culture of modern Mexico.

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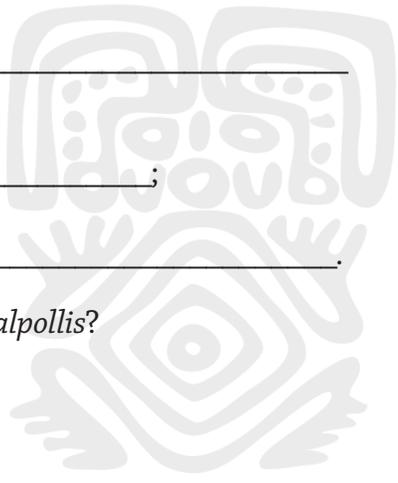
Use the World Book search tool to find the answers to the questions below. Since this activity is about the Aztec civilization, it is recommended you start by searching the key words "Aztec."

For some questions, fill in the correct term in the blank space to complete the sentence.

For other questions, write a short paragraph answering the question.

Hint: For the following questions, see the Introduction and the section "The Aztec Empire" in the article "Aztec."

1. The name "Aztec" is used to describe what people?
2. The people of the Aztec civilization referred to themselves by the names _____; _____ and _____ in their native language (3 terms).
3. The largest Aztec city was the capital, called _____. This city was built on an island in Lake _____.
4. Where was the Aztec Empire centered?



5. The Aztec emperor was called the _____
(2 words), which means “Great Speaker.”
6. The four main social classes in Aztec society were: _____;
_____; _____ and _____.
7. Describe how the Aztec managed their lands through groups called *calpollis*?

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Matching!

The Aztec worshiped many gods and goddesses, each of whom ruled one or more human activities or aspects of nature. Match the Aztec god or goddess from column A with the aspect of nature or activity they were associated with in column B.

Hint: For the following questions, see the section “Way of Life” in the article “Aztec.”

Column A

- _____ 8. Huitzilopochtli
- _____ 9. Tonatiuh
- _____ 10. Centeotl
- _____ 11. Quetzalcoatl
- _____ 12. Tlaloc
- _____ 13. Mictlantecuhtli
- _____ 14. Ehecatl
- _____ 15. Xipe Totec
- _____ 16. Xiuhtecuhtli
- _____ 17. Xochiquetzal
- _____ 18. Tezcatlipoca

Column B

- A. Goddess of fertility and beauty
- B. Associated with civilization and learning
- C. A corn god
- D. Associated with springtime
- E. A fire god
- F. The sun god
- G. An all-powerful divinity
- H. Ruler of the dead
- I. God of war
- J. God of the wind
- K. A rain and fertility god

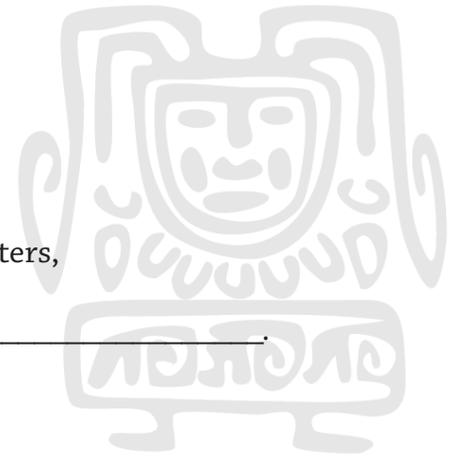


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Find It!

For the following questions, fill in the correct term in the blank space to complete the sentence. For other questions, write a few sentences or a short paragraph answering the question.

19. What was the purpose of many Aztec religious ceremonies?



20. Why did the Aztec perform animal and even human sacrifices?
21. Most Aztec religious ceremonies took place in walled ceremonial centers, the main structures within these were called _____.
22. Many Aztec ceremonial centers had a playing court called _____ for a game called _____ that resembled a mixture of soccer and basketball.
23. The Aztec had two different calendars. Describe how they were different.
24. How were the houses of Aztec commoners designed and how were they different from the homes of wealthy Aztec families?
25. Briefly describe the most famous surviving Aztec sculpture. Who's face appears in this?
26. What was the purpose of warfare in the Aztec civilization?
27. The chief weapon of Aztec warriors was a wooden club edged with sharp pieces of volcanic glass, called obsidian. This weapon was called a _____.

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See It!

28. In the section "Language" within the World Book article "Aztec," you will find the picture titled "Aztec Writing." Study the picture. What similarities and differences do you see between the Aztec writing and written language today?

Word Search!

Many of our words for popular foods and other items come from Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. In the puzzle below, find the Aztec words hidden within the puzzle by reading the definitions below. In the Word Search Puzzle below, words may be spelled backwards, forward, or diagonally.

Hint: For the following questions, see the sections “Food” and “Warfare” as well as the section “The Aztec Heritage” in article “Aztec.”

Clues:

1. The Aztec used the juice of maguey plants to make this alcoholic beverage.
2. The principle food of the Aztec was this thin flat corn bread.
3. The Aztec raised this bird for food.
4. Only wealthy Aztec could afford to drink a beverage made with this popular ingredient made from cacao beans.
5. The Aztec gave us the name for this popular food used in ketchup, salads, and pizza sauce.
6. This Aztec food made of a flat cornbread stuffed with meat remains popular today.
7. The Spanish name for the food described in clue #2.
8. We use an Aztec word to describe this green round or pear-shaped fruit.
9. This is the Aztec word for small mud islands made by farmers in shallow lakes to grow crops.
10. The Aztec used this spear-throwing device to increase the range and force of their spears.

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I D O P C A M F K E L
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