

UNIT 6 The Americas to Colonial Times

1200 B.C. to 1888 A.D.

400 B.C.–250 A.D.
Maya build their first large pyramids.

1500 B.C.

1000 B.C.

500 B.C.

B.C. < > A.D.

1200 B.C.
Olmec city of San Lorenzo dominates Olmec culture.

700 B.C.
Ceremonial mounds are built by Adena civilization.

Olmec and Maya Civilizations

The Olmec and the Maya were the earliest major Native American civilizations. Both developed in Middle America.

- The Olmec civilization developed along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.
- The Olmec built large sculptures and were the first people in the Americas to build pyramids. Their art and religion influenced later cultures of Middle America, including the Maya.
- The Maya civilization developed east of the Olmec. It was one of the longest lasting civilizations in the Americas.
- The Maya used pictographs to record major events in their history on large stone sculptures. Many of these sculptures still stand today.

A

Giant carvings like this one were used in ceremonies at Olmec religious centers. The largest heads were up to 10 feet tall and weighed several tons.



B The Olmec civilization was the first culture in the Americas to build cities with large religious centers. It traded with other cultures and its art has been found throughout Middle America.

700
Anasazi people build the first pueblos.

1505
First slaves arrive at Hispaniola.

1521
Cortés conquers Aztecs.

1888
Slavery ends in the Americas.

1492
Columbus reaches the Americas.

1535
New Spain extends from Mexico to Chile.

500 A.D.

1000 A.D.

1500 A.D.



2000 A.D.

900
Hohokam civilization begins using irrigation.

1325
Aztec people settle at Tenochtitlan.

1438–1471
Inca Empire rises to power in South America.

1750
European powers claim most lands in the Americas.

 <p>Built elaborate limestone pyramids for religious ceremonies.</p>	 <p>Developed accurate 365-day solar calendar.</p>
 <p>Created an advanced pictographic writing system to record history.</p>	 <p>Made many advances in astronomy, including predicting eclipses.</p>



Maya Contributions, 250–950 A.D.

C The Maya produced many achievements in art, astronomy, and mathematics. Use this chart and the one on page 13 to compare Babylonian contributions with those of the Maya.

D Large limestone pyramids with temples at the top were built by the Maya for religious ceremonies. This pyramid is located in the Maya city of Tikal. Find Tikal on map E.



E During this time, Maya civilization flourished. Cities became centers of culture, and a vast trade network developed. Compare Maya territory on this map to Maya territory on map B.

Aztec Empire

The Aztec migrated from the north to a small island in the Valley of Mexico. They built one of the largest empires of Middle America.

- Religion dominated every part of Aztec life. The Aztec worshipped hundreds of gods and performed many kinds of religious ceremonies.
- The Aztec were fierce warriors. They waged war to expand their empire.
- The Spanish came to Mexico in 1519. They conquered the Aztec Empire in 1521 and destroyed its capital.



A The Aztec capital city, shown here, had many temples and public buildings for religious ceremonies. Look at map B. What is the name of the Aztec capital?



B The Aztec constantly fought with their neighbors in order to gain more territory and capture more people to sacrifice to their gods.

Inca Empire

Around the same time the Aztec were building their empire, the Inca developed a large empire in South America.

- The Inca built an empire that extended through the Andes Mountains and along the west coast.
- They were excellent architects and engineers and built a vast network of roads and bridges. These helped their strong central government control even the most remote parts of the empire.
- The Spanish came to South America in 1532. They killed the Inca Emperor and took over the Empire.



C Powerful emperors greatly expanded Inca territory in less than 100 years. By 1525 the empire stretched 2,600 miles.

Inca Empire 1438-1532

- By 1463
- By 1525
- ★ Inca capital
- Main road
- Desert

0 250 500 miles
0 250 500 kilometers

AZTEC

Built large limestone pyramids for religious ceremonies.

Used pictographs to record history and myths.

Created floating gardens to grow food without using additional land areas.

INCA

Built enormous stone buildings with great precision.

Spread news throughout the Empire using a messenger system.

Connected the Empire using an extensive network of roads.

Aztec and Inca Contributions

D Use this chart and the one on page 71 to compare and contrast Aztec, Inca, and Maya contributions.



E

The Inca city of Machu Picchu, whose ruins are shown here, was a fortress built on a mountaintop. It could be reached only by crossing a bridge. If enemies were near, the bridge could be removed.