

Mesoamerica

- **Standard:** Demonstrate an understanding of the development of societies in Central and South America.
- **Essential Question:** How did the societies in Central and South America develop?



Mesoamerica's Rise and Fall

- **Element:** Explain the rise and fall of the Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Inca empires.
- **Vocabulary:** Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, Inca empire

Mesoamerica

- the name for areas of Mexico and Central America
- were civilized before the Spanish arrived



Olmec: Rise

- began around 1200 B.C.
- in the hot, swampy lowlands on the coast south of Veracruz, Mexico
- farmed the area's muddy riverbanks
- built large cities that were centers of religious rituals



Olmec: Fall



- collapsed around 400 B.C.
- Reason unknown

Maya: Rise

- flourished between A.D. 300 and 900
- on the **Yucatán Peninsula**
- City-states form



Maya: Fall

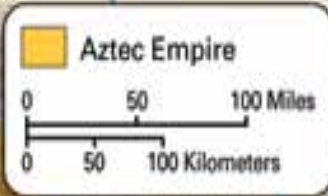


- Most Mayan cities were mysteriously abandoned around AD 800s
- Suggested causes for decline:
 - Warfare among city-states
 - Disruption of trade and economic hardships
 - Over farming and population growth that resulted in ecological damage which resulted in food shortages, famine and disease

Aztec: Rise

- 1200-1521
- Sometime during the twelfth century A.D.
- began a long migration to the Valley of Mexico
- established their capital at **Tenochtitlán**
 - an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco (Mexico City)
- Aztec power increased by taking neighbor's land through war





Hernan Cortes

- in 1519 a Spanish force under the command of **Hernán Cortés** landed at Veracruz
- marched to Tenochtitlán
- Cortés had only 550 soldiers and 16 horses



Aztec: Fall



- the monarch, Montezuma (Moctezuma) gave the Spanish gifts of gold
- tensions eventually arose between the Spanish and the Aztec
- by 1520, the Spanish forces had destroyed the city of Tenochtitlán

Inca: Rise

- flourished in South America in the fifteenth century
- developed in the Andes Mountains
- in the 1440s began to expand their lands
- extended as far as Ecuador, central Chile, and the edge of the Amazon basin



Francisco Pizarro



- The first Spanish expeditions arrived in the central Andes in 1530
- under the command of **Francisco Pizarro**
- only had a small band of about 180 men
- Armed with steel weapons, gunpowder, and horses

Inca: Fall

- experienced a smallpox epidemic that destroyed villages and killed the emperor
- Armed with stones, arrows, and light spears, the Inca could not defeat the Spanish
- Pizarro captured the capital Cuzco with the help of Incan allies
- by 1535 Pizarro had established a new capital at Lima for a new colony of the Spanish Empire



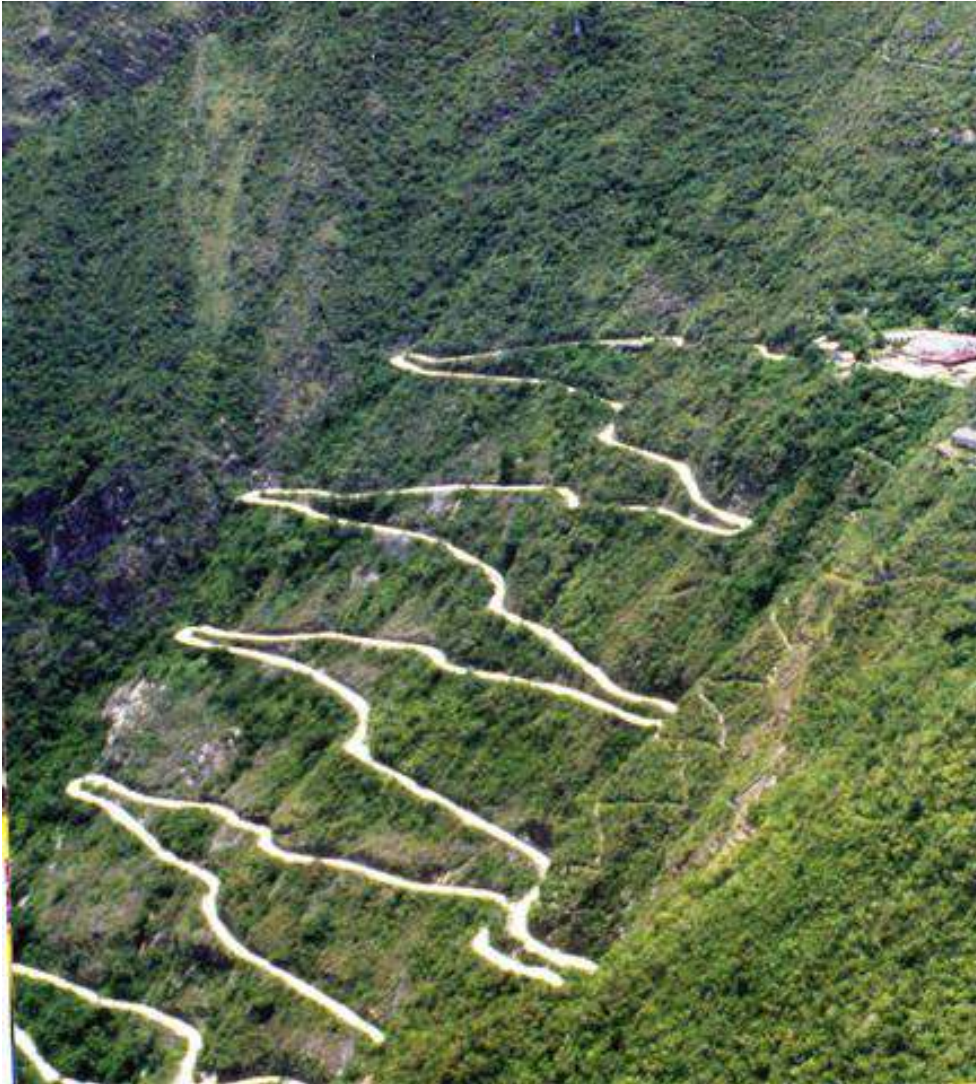
Mesoamerican Culture

- **Element:** Compare the culture of the Americas to include government, economy, religion and the arts of the Mayans, Aztecs and Incas.

Government

Mayans	Independent city-states ruled by a king/priest. Power gained through hereditary means.
Aztecs	Had a central emperor with regional rulers who paid tribute to the emperor.
Incas	Led by a king with the empire divided into units. All towns were connected to the capital by roads. Citizens expected to work a certain number of days for the state

Incan Roads



Economy

Mayans	Based on agriculture and trade (salt, feathers, jade)
Aztecs	Based on agriculture and trade. Goods paid as tributes from conquered peoples.
Incas	Based on trade and self-sufficient farming

Religion

Mayans	Central to Mayan life. Worshiped multiple gods. Some human sacrifice- mainly worshiped through prayer and assorted offerings.
Aztecs	Central to Aztec life. Worshiped multiple gods. Large scale human sacrifice to the Sun God.
Incas	Ancestor worship with human sacrifice on special occasions

Arts

Mayans	Developed a religious calendar based on astronomy and an advanced writing system. Carved jade, built pyramids.
Aztecs	Developed a calendar similar to the Mayans. Built pyramids. Paintings and pottery were usually religious or war based in theme.
Incas	Worked metal, pottery and cloth





