

Lesson developed and shared by Ryan Markel, Cusick School District  
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Notes to Educators from Ryan: This project comes from my 9<sup>th</sup> Grade World History Project. It focuses on Indigenous pre-Columbian cultures before the arrival of Columbus. It spans both North and South America. I used it this year in conjunction with portions of the NK360 lesson on the Inca: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/inka-water/geography/geography> I have seen projects like this before, but never with a Pre-Columbian focus.

## Life Before Columbus Exhibit Project

Directions: You've been hired as a curator of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian to create a **"Life before Columbus" exhibit**. Your task is to research your assigned Native American identity group and create a presentation/exhibit that highlights cultural categories for your tribe. (See rubric / hand out handout). Your presentation should also include paintings, drawing, graphs and other images to enhance your exhibit. Every image should have brief description that highlights the significance in helping us understand that particular group identity. NOTE: your presentation can be in the form of a PowerPoint, poster presentation or classroom exhibit.

Groups and Sources: The website(s) under each group is to get you started. You should have one to two other sources in addition to the one provided below. **Please include a reference and bibliography at the end of your presentation.** (10 Bonus Pts)

1. Mississippians

[http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat\\_amer/pre/htmls/miss.html](http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/pre/htmls/miss.html)

2. Eastern Woodland Tribes—Iroquois

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3406400267.html>

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Iroquois>

3. Eastern Woodland Tribes—Algonquian/Algonquin

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Algonquin>

4. Aztec/Mexica

<http://www.indians.org/welker/aztec.htm>

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>

5. Incas

<http://coe.fgcu.edu/students/webb/meso/inca.htm>

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Incas>

6. Ancestral Pueblo (Anasazi)

[http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pueblo\\_Indians](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pueblo_Indians)

7. Powhatan's Confederacy

[http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Powhatan\\_Confederacy.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Powhatan_Confederacy.aspx)  
<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Powhatan>

8. Taino/Arawak

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Tainos>

9. Mayans

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Mayan>

Additional Resources:

Sharer, Robert J. Daily Life in Maya Civilization (The Greenwood Press Daily Life Through History Series)

### **Content:**

I have provided a list of things that you must include in your presentation. It would be wise to have a section / slide for each of the following criteria. (Please note all information in the presentation should be about the group before European contact in 1492)

- **Name of Civilization /** Contemporary and traditional (5pts)
- **Geography /** You must include a map of their traditional homeland (5pts)
- **Language Group /** Include related language groups (5pts)
- **Food and Diet** (Crops they grew, plants they gathered, and/or animals they hunted) (10pts)
- **Modes of Transportation** (How did they travel?) (5pts)
- **Special Ceremonies** (These could include ceremonies that take place during a celebration, harvest, birth, or coming of age) (10pts)
- **Societal Structure** (Who is in charge? How are decisions made?) (10pts)
- **Gender Roles** (Highlight the different roles for men and women) (10pts)
- **Housing / Shelter** (what type of structures did they build and how did they construct them.) (10pts)

- **Additional Cultural Information** (This can be information about the types of music/art/clothing that are popular with this group) (10pts)
- **Unique Facts** (Two unique pieces of information about your group) (10pts)
- **Visual Aids** (You should include pictures, maps, illustrations, throughout your presentations) (10pts)

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /100Pts

## CATEGORIES USED BY HISTORIANS TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION

(SPICER handout)

### **SOCIAL**

This primarily refers to relations between groups within some sort of community (a community can be as small as a neighborhood or as large as a country). This includes the classes or castes to which people belong (the working class, the aristocracy), the ethnicity or racial groups to which people associate themselves or others, and the attitudes people share towards other groups and institutions.

### **POLITICAL**

Questions of how humans are governed, including such matters as the exercise of power in peace and war, the use of law, the formation of governments, the collection of taxes, and the establishment of public services.

### **INTELLECTUAL**

This refers to the ideas, theories, and beliefs (non-religious) expressed by people in some organized way about topics thought to be important. This includes such matters as political theories, scientific ideas, social theories, and philosophies of life.

### **CULTURAL**

This is perhaps the broadest category. This refers to what groups do and to all those things which surround us, both tangible and intangible (e.g., ideas and values). For those tangible things that surround you, think about your senses. It is what you see (architecture, paintings, movies, clothes), taste (food), hear (dialect and music), and smell (food and other aromas). It also encompasses what a society does with its time (e.g., taverns, gambling, sporting events, museums, etc.). Further, it refers to the ideas, values, and expressions human beings hold, the customs people follow (marriage, eating), and the activities people engage in together (clubs).

### **ECONOMIC**

This refers to the production and distribution of goods and services and the developments of new technology which aid the production of goods and services. On the production side, historians usually focus on agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, and finance. On the distribution side, they deal with who gets what and how much of what is produced (i.e., the distribution of wealth in a society). For example, how much and what kind of food is on the shelves at the grocery store and how much it costs for the consumer. This also includes what people do to earn a living and how much they make. In terms

of technology it includes things like innovations and inventions in transportation (the car), farming equipment (the tractor), consumer goods (washing machine), public utilities (dams and nuclear energy) ...just to name a few.

## **RELIGION**

This refers to theories, beliefs and practices related to the supernatural or the unknown.

This includes such matters as the growth of religious institutions, the formation of beliefs about the relation between human beings and God, and the practice of rituals and festivals.