

“MAI” (Mayans, Aztecs, Incas) Unit Summary

| | <u>Mayans</u> | <u>Aztecs</u> | <u>Incas</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Location | Yucatan Peninsula; Central America | Valley of Mexico / Lake Texcoco; Central Mexico | Andes Mountains; South America (Peru, Ecuador, Chile) |
| Capital (in bold) & cities | Different city-states: Tikal, Palenque, Copan, etc. | Tenochtitlan | Cuzco , Machu Picchu |
| Time Period | 1500 BCE – 250 CE (old) 250 – 800s CE (classical) | 1200s – 1521 CE | 1200s – 1532 CE |
| Geography | Dormant volcanic mountains & lowland areas (good for farming) | Tenochtitlan – swampy valley surrounded by mountains Little wood/stone | Mtn. valley w/ tropical rain forests below Andes Mountains |
| Social Order (Top to bottom) | Kings/Priests Nobles/Warriors Peasants Slaves | Emperor/Priests/Nobles Merchants/Artisans Commoners (Peasants, soldiers, serfs, slaves) | Nobles – Emperor, priests, & gov’t/military officials Commoners – Artisans, peasants, & soldiers |
| Crops & food | Maize, beans, squash, chili peppers, avocados, pineapples, cacao | Corn, squash, chili peppers, local animals (deer, rabbit, etc.) | Corn, potatoes, llamas, very little meat |
| Religion | Polytheistic -Worship through fasting, prayer, & sacrifices at pyramids -Considered afterlife to be an unhappy place of existence -Ruler-priests as leaders | Polytheistic -Mostly agricultural gods -Priests used complex calendars for ceremonies -Human sacrifices (captured enemy warriors) | Polytheistic -Emperor as son of sun god -Priests conducted daily prayers/rituals -RARE human sacrifices (animal sacrifices were more common) |
| Achievements & Legacy | Hieroglyphic writing system recorded in codices (codex) Math – dots/bars for numbers, one of the first civs to use “0” Used math to do astronomy, plan harvests, & record history Used pyramids for astronomy Calendars – 260 day, 18 month calendar to record events | Hieroglyphic writing system based on words/ideas (instead of sounds) Wrote in codices (like Maya) Chinampas – floating gardens for agriculture Art/arch – huge buildings, pottery, sculptures, feather head dresses Stone calendars (for farming & religion) | Mountaintop cities (Sasahuaman – fort w/ no mortar to hold stones in place, Machu Picchu, Cuzco) Vast road network connecting empire together through use of chasquis (messengers) Recorded information/math through use of quipus (strings & knots) No written language |
| Downfall | Unknown – left cities in 800-900s (possibly b/c of disease, over farming, war, or rebellions) | Montezuma II defeated by Hernando Cortez (a.k.a. Hernan Cortes) in 1521 b/c of guns, germs, & steel | Atahualpa captured & executed by Francisco Pizzaro , Inca subjects revolted, & Spanish conquered Incas in 1532 |

Note: This is only a brief summary of the “MAI” Unit and in no way represents everything you need to know for the Unit Assessment & Benchmark, so do not simply rely on this and ignore the notes you have taken in class.