Chapter 7: The People of the Sun
What did we learn last Chapter?

Treaty of Tordesillas

Imperialism & Expansionism
MEXICO
(Present Day)
You-tube video
The Aztec Civilization

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tP2HHYQjN7E&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active
(end14:49)
Who were the Aztec people?

- The Aztec were a group of people who settled in what is presently Mexico City.
- They wandered over mountains and through valleys in search of the symbol their god Huitzilopochtli had told them to find: An eagle perched on a cactus (eating a snake)
Huitzilopochtli

- God of the Aztec people
- Told the Aztec to leave their homes in Aztlan in search of a new place to live
- Told the Aztec people to travel south, searching for an eagle perched on a cactus, eating a snake. Here they would find their new home.
Huitzilopochtli

- The Aztec believed that Huitzilopochtli was responsible for the sun rising in the morning.
- To keep Huitzilopochtli happy, the Aztec made many human sacrifices in his honour.
Aztecs Cont’d

• For over 150 years the Aztecs travelled south
• 1325 they arrived in the valley of Mexico
• The Aztecs finally saw an eagle sitting on a cactus near a swampy island at the end of a broad lake
• The Aztecs found their home!
• They called it Tenochtitlan (teh-noch-TEE-tlahn)
• The next 200 years the Aztecs transformed the island to become one of the greatest cities in the world
Timeline

- 1168 – Huitzilopochtli commands the Aztecs to find a new home.
- For over 150 years, the Aztec wander south from Aztlan.
- 1325 – Aztecs arrive in the valley of Mexico
- 1345 – The Aztec see an eagle perched on a cactus eating a snake and Tenochtitlan is established.
Worldview of Aztecs

Religious Beliefs
- Many Gods
- Human sacrifice
  - eagle brought them to their homeland

Determination
- Built up powerful empire
- Conquered neighbours

Hardworking people
- altered physical landscape to survive
  - Built Tenochtitlan on swampland
  - chinampa
Worldview Inquiry...

In what ways do a group’s collective beliefs and experiences contribute to shaping a unique identity?
VOCABULARY...

- Aztec
- Tezcatlipoca
- Huitzilopochtli
- Tlaloc
- Tenochtitlan
- Quetzalcoatl
- Migrate
- Codices
- Immigrate
- Great Stone
- Calendar
- Emigrate
- Human Sacrifice
- Templo Mayor
- New Fire Ceremonies

- Aqueduct
- Compulsory Military Service
- Chinampa
- Tribute
- Primary sources
- Bias
- Secondary sources
- Dike
- Artifacts
**VOCABULARY CHECK**

**Aztec**
- Name given to the civilization created by a nomadic tribe (the Mexica) who settled in the valley of Mexico during the 15th century

**Huitzilopochtli**
- God of the Aztec nation
- The Aztecs tribal God and had warlike aspects
- Encouraged the Aztecs to leave their ancestral homeland and settle in the valley of Mexico
- Aztecs believed he needed the blood of sacrificial victims to give him strength
Tenochtitlan
- The capital city of the Aztecs

Migrate
- To move permanently from one geographic area to another

Immigrate
- To move to a geographic area

Emigrate
- To move away from a geographic area
Templo Mayor
- The Great Temple
- Largest and most important building in Tenochtitlan

Aqueduct
- A channel used to move water, usually supported on a bridge structure when it had to cross a valley. It was pioneered by the Romans and also used by the Aztecs

Chinampa
- Floating islands used to grow crops
Primary Sources
- Usually refer to original manuscripts such as letters, journal entries, religious texts, poetry, legal agreements and statutes, meeting minutes, and inventories; may also include artwork, architecture, and artefacts

Secondary Sources
- Accounts of the past written after the event by someone who was not present at the time

Artefacts
- Archaeological objects from the past such as clothing, tools, weapons, buildings, cooking utensils, jewellery, and personal items
Tezcatlipoca
- The most powerful of the Gods
- His name means “smoking mirror” because he used the black mirror to see visions of the future
- He was locked in an eternal struggle with the God Huitzilopochtli

Tlaloc
- The God of rain
- He could unleash deadly floods or withhold the rain for years, causing drought and famine
- He was feared by the Aztecs because he controlled their survival

Quetzalcoatl
- The God of wind, his name means “feathered serpent”
- Priests prophesied he would bring destruction to the Aztec people
Codices
- Early paginated books replacing scrolls. The Aztecs wrote their texts in this form

Great Stone Calendar
- Carved in the mid-1400’s
- Dedicated to Huitzilopochtli
- It shows how the world began and how the world will end

Human Sacrifice
- Killing another person as a sacrifice to the Gods
- Strongest expression of their devotion to the Gods
- Sacrificial blood to nourish the Gods
New fire ceremonies
- An important religious event that took place every 52 years

Compulsory military service
- Military service was required by law among the Aztecs
- Every young man was required to serve in the army

Tribute
- A form of taxes collected by the conquering Nation

Bias
- A type of prejudice rooted in a person’s point of view

Dike
- An embankment or barrier that follows the course of a river and is built to prevent flooding
The Physical Landscape

How might a society’s worldview influence its ability to adapt to the physical geography?
Landscape significance

- The Aztec believed that climbing to the top of a mountain would bring you closer to their gods.
- Mountains were sacred landscape forms in Aztec cultures.
- The Aztec built their temples in the shape of mountains so that their sacrifices could occur closer to the gods.
Mountains continued

- The mountains also caused many problems for the Aztec. The mountains would often keep rain clouds out of the valley. This would deprive the Aztec of fresh water.
- Because of the steep slope of the mountains, the Aztec lands were prone to flash floods.
Mountains continued

- The Aztec solved the problems of fresh water and flash flooding through engineering inventions.
- To bring fresh water into the city, the Aztec built aquifers that brought fresh water from many kilometres away.
- To keep the city safe from flash floods, the Aztec built dikes to keep the water from flooding the land that the city was built on.
Living on an Island

- Living on an Island made life difficult in some ways for the Aztec.
- They did not have much land for farming, and they were isolated from the mainland.
- To solve these issues, the Aztec built chinampas to farm and causeways to link the island to the mainland.
Chinampa

- Chinampas were “floating gardens” that the Aztec used to grow food such as vegetables, flowers, and medicinal herbs.
- Chinampas were built using either stakes or large trees with sturdy roots for anchors. Then, a square frame was built with reed mats. The frames were packed with reeds and mud until it was thick enough to plant seeds.
Causeways

- Causeways were bridges that were used to link the island to the mainland.
- Parts of the bridges could be destroyed quickly to stop invaders in the event the Aztec were worried about an attack on Tenochtitlan.
Think it THROUGH

Some people chose what to eat based on their religion, morals, or health - examples?

What elements of the worldview influence your choices about the food you eat?
Religion in Aztec culture

- The Aztec had many gods that they believed in.
- It was believed that these gods were responsible for natural events such as the rising of the sun, nightfall, or flash floods.
- The Aztec believed in keeping the gods happy by performing human sacrifices.
- It was believed that the blood from the sacrifices kept the gods nourished and happy. If the gods were not nourished, they would be unable to perform their tasks and the world would end.
Aztec gods

- Huitzilopochtli – Encouraged the Aztecs to leave their ancestral homeland and settle in the Valley of Mexico. The Aztecs believed he needed the blood of sacrificial victims to give him strength to overcome the night’s darkness. He was the Aztec’s tribal god and had warlike aspects.
Aztec gods

- Tezcatlipoca – The most powerful of the Aztec gods. His name means “smoking mirror,” from the black mirror that the Aztecs believed he used to see visions of the future. Also called Lord of the Night Sky, he was locked in an eternal struggle with the god Huitzilopochtli.
Aztec gods

- Quetzalcoatl – The god of wind, his name means “feathered serpent.” The priests offered him flowers, incense, and birds. He left Mexico after a fight with Tezcatlipoca, sailing to the west on a raft of snake skins. The priests prophesised he would return from the east in the year “One-Reed,” bringing destruction to the Aztec empire.
Aztec gods

- Tlaloc – The god of rain, Tlaloc could unleash deadly floods or withhold the rains for years, causing drought and famine. The Aztecs feared him because he controlled their survival.
Aztec Calendars

- The Aztecs had two calendars. One was a sacred calendar, and the other was a solar calendar.
- The sacred calendar was 260 days long, taking 52 years to “catch up” with the solar calendar.
- The Aztec also created a great stone calendar dedicated to Huitzilopochtli. This calendar showed the beginning of the world and how it will end. In the middle of the great stone calendar is the god Tonatiuh. He has his tongue open, signifying a thirst for blood.
Aztec Sacrifice
Human Sacrifice: Why?

Deep religious significance

Strongest expression of their devotion to the Gods

Believed victims blood nourished the Gods → without it they will die

World would end if sacrificial blood was NOT fed to the Gods

One of the reasons why war is important for the Aztecs
Think it THROUGH

What beliefs of the Aztecs led to their warlike nature?

Do those beliefs mean that war and human sacrifice were ‘right’?

How would an Aztec of the 1500’s answer this question?

How might Indigenous people living near them answer it?
Tenochtitlan

- The Aztec believed that Tenochtitlan was the center of the world.
- According to the Aztec, the world was flat, split into four sections. Tenochtitlan was where the four slices all came together.
- The city was split into four sections itself to represent the four sections of the Earth.
Valley of Mexico
Tenochtitlan

- In the center of the city was the great temple.
- The Aztec wanted to show as much respect to their gods as possible and built the temples on the highest points of land where they believed the physical and spiritual worlds met.
- The Great Temple was believed to be the physical and spiritual center of the universe.
Tenochtitlan temples
Tenochtitlan

- Tenochtitlan was often referred to by the Spanish as the “Venice of the New World”.
- The main reasons for this comparison were because of the size and magnificence of Tenochtitlan. Also, the many waterways and canals that needed to be navigated by canoes reminded the Spanish of the canals in Venice.
Aztec Expansion

- The Aztec developed a worldview and lifestyle of being disciplined, independent, and resourceful. This became apparent when they Aztec began to expand their empire.
- The Aztecs would expand the empire by conquering other empires or cities. The people captured in these battles would often be sacrificed to the Aztec gods or forced into slavery.
- The two most often used methods of expansion were forming trade relations and defensive alliances with neighbours.
Aztec Trade

- The Aztecs enjoyed establishing trade relations for the same reason that countries establish trading agreements today.
- The surrounding areas had foods such as tropical fruits that did not grow in Tenochtitlan. Also, the Aztecs wanted rare flowers and bright feathers. Often these valuable items would be sacrificed to their gods.
Aztec Trade

- The Aztecs would send large groups of slaves and merchants to other cities to carry out trades.
- The merchants would not only trade with locals, but also draw out maps and details as to where the city had reinforcements. The Aztec would use this information to attack the city if they chose to take it by force.
Expanding the Aztec Empire through War

- The Aztec believed that they would conquer the entire universe.
- The Aztec built such a strong empire by believing that the group as a whole was more important than any of the individuals within the society.
- Military service was compulsory among the Aztecs. The worst insult was to call someone a coward as it weakened the army and therefore threatened the empire.
Tribute

- The Aztec would not completely destroy a civilization that they conquered.
- Instead, they would collect a tribute or tax from the conquered nation as a fee for being part of the Aztec empire.
- Tributes took the form of headdresses, cocoa beans, cornmeal, metals, etc.
Summary

- The Aztec wandered for many years over treacherous terrain to find a new home that was promised to them by their god Huitzilopochtli. They settled Tenochtitlan on lake Texcoco after they saw the sign of an eagle perched on a cactus eating a serpent. This land was not ideal in many ways, but the Aztec adapted with many incredible inventions including aqueducts and chinampas. Human, and other sacrifices were very important in the Aztec society. The Aztec believed the gods needed to be kept happy and nourished for the Earth to survive. Through hard work and determination the Aztecs expanded their empire through military might, trading and defensive alliances. The Aztecs built up the largest empire in the America’s during the 1500’s until the Spanish invaded.
AZTECS

- Landscape
- Religion
- War
- Tribute
- Trade