

**World History**  
**Objective 2.08**  
**Lesson**

World History Objective 2.08: Lesson

Evaluate the achievements of the major civilizations of the Americas during the pre-Columbian epoch including, but not limited to, the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas.

During the last Ice Age, early hunters and gatherers used a land bridge, connecting the Asian and North American continents, to follow herds of bison and caribou into North America.

Through the study of archaeology, we have learned of some of the societies that existed in early America. First came the Olmecs, followed by the Maya, and later the Azecs.

The Olmecs lived in the area north of Mexico City and farming was their major occupation. They also were involved in trade and their artisans made tools, weapons, pottery and jewelry. Obsidian, a volcanic glass, was used to make tools, mirrors and knives.

Far to the east, on the Yucatan Peninsula, the Mayan civilization developed. They built splendid temples and developed an accurate calendar. The Mayans also developed a sophisticated writing system based on hieroglyphs or pictures.

The Aztec developed a complex civilization with defined social structure including specific roles for boys and girls, art and architecture and a religion with a supreme god and many other gods. Their religion was based on an unending struggle between the forces of good and evil throughout the universe.

Far south of Mexico, centered [in what is now the country of Peru, the Incas built an empire that covered an area extending from modern day Columbia, to a point south of Santiago, Chile. The Incas were the best engineers among native American people, building roadways over mountains, tunnels and bridges.

Lesson:

Using your textbook, the information given above and outside sources, compare the contributions of FIVE different societies that lived in the pre-Columbian Americas. Your goal is to list at least three contributions for each society. When you have done this in a chart form, analyze your chart and see which contributions were the most long-lasting in terms of influence on more modern societies.