

Lesson 1: Migration to the Americas

Vocabulary

Ice Age a long period of extreme cold

glacier a thick sheet of ice

migrate to move

theory an explanation for something

artifact an object that someone made in the past

archaeologist a person who studies artifacts to learn how people lived long ago

Moving into the Americas

About 20,000 years ago, Earth was very cold. This period is called the **Ice Age**. During the Ice Age, sheets of ice called **glaciers** formed. A large part of Earth was frozen under glaciers. The Bering Strait is a narrow body of water between Asia and North America. During the Ice Age, the Bering Strait became shallower. Land under the water was uncovered. This land formed a bridge between Asia and North America. Some people have a **theory**, or explanation, about how people first came to the Americas. Their theory is that hunters from Asia followed animals across the bridge to the Americas. Other people have a different theory. They think that people may have **migrated**, or moved, to the Americas by boat.

Ways of Life

The first people to come to the Americas lived in groups. Their main job was hunting. They killed animals such as mammoths and ate their meat. They used animal bones and skin to make tools, clothing, and shelter. Stone was also used to make tools. We have learned about these people through their **artifacts**. Artifacts are objects that were made a long time ago. People called **archaeologists** study the artifacts. They develop theories about how early people lived from these clues.

Changing Way of Life

About 10,000 years ago, the Ice Age ended. Earth's climate became warmer. Some of the bigger animals died out. The people then had to hunt smaller animals. They also gathered wild grains, root vegetables, berries, and nuts. About 7,000 years ago, these early Americans learned how to plant seeds and grow food. Farming let them settle in one place. They formed communities.

Lesson 2: Early American Cultures

Vocabulary

ceremony an activity done for a special purpose or event

mesa a high landform with a flat top and steep sides

drought a long period of time without rain

The Mound Builders

About 3,000 years ago, a people known as the Mound Builders settled east of the Mississippi River. This was a good place to live. There were forests, lakes, and rivers. The land was good for growing corn. These early American Indian groups lived in communities. There were three main groups of Mound Builders: the Adena, Hopewell, and Mississippians. They built thousands of mounds. They were used for burial places, to honor animal spirits, and to hold **ceremonies**. The mounds they left behind tell archaeologists that these groups were well organized. Many people were needed to build the mounds. Their artifacts show that trade was important to the Mound Builders. Objects from places far away have been found in the mounds. Seashells from the Gulf of Mexico and copper from the Great Lakes area are two examples.

The Anasazi

The Anasazi lived in what is now the Southwest United States. This area is dry. But the Anasazi were able to farm. They dug ditches to carry water from streams to the crops in their fields. The Anasazi built homes into the sides of cliffs. They also built apartment-style buildings on top of **mesas**. The Anasazi mysteriously disappeared. One theory is that they left because of a **drought**. The Anasazi may have moved to find water for farming. Some people believe that the Anasazi are the ancestors of today's Pueblo peoples.

The Inuit

The Inuit live near the Arctic Ocean in what is now Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. They came to North America about 2,500 years ago from Asia. The Inuit adapted, or adjusted, to the cold climate. They hunted whales, walruses, and seals. They also built light, one-person boats called kayaks. They used the kayaks for hunting and transportation. In the winter, some Inuit live in houses called igloos that are made of ice.

Lesson 3: The Rise of Empires

Vocabulary

civilization a culture with systems of government, religion, and schooling

surplus more of something than is needed

specialize to do only one kind of job

pyramid a building with three or more sides shaped like triangles

empire a group of lands and peoples ruled by one leader

tribute payment demanded by rulers from the people they rule

slavery the practice of holding people against their will and taking away their freedom

The Maya

About 3,000 years ago, the Maya settled in what is now Mexico. They cut down trees to create fields. They grew corn and other crops. The Maya were successful farmers. They grew a **surplus** of crops. The extra food allowed some Maya to do other work besides farming. Some people could **specialize** in a job such as making baskets or jewelry. Specialization helped the Maya develop a **civilization** that had many achievements. The Maya studied mathematics and developed a calendar and writing system. They also studied the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The Maya built tall **pyramids**.

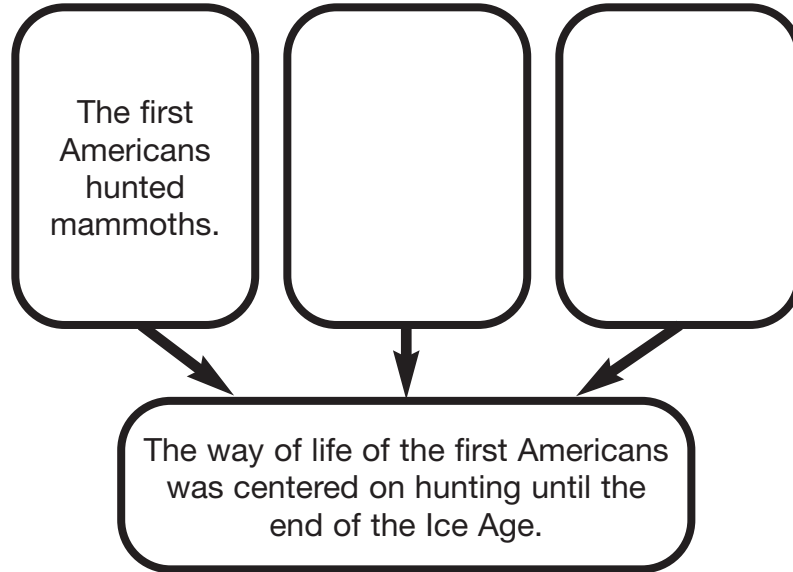
The Aztecs and the Inca

The Aztecs began to migrate south from northern Mexico in about 1200. They built the city of Tenochtitlan on an island in Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico. Tenochtitlan grew to be a large city. The Aztecs built low bridges to connect Tenochtitlan to the land around the lake. They built floating gardens to have more farmland. They also made more farmland by carving steps into hills. Aztec soldiers fought and took over other people in the valley. Soon the Aztecs developed a large **empire**. They made the people in the empire pay them **tribute**. The Aztecs also took some people as tribute and made them slaves. The practice of holding people against their will is called **slavery**.

While the Aztecs were ruling in central Mexico, the Inca Empire grew in South America. The Inca also took over other people who lived nearby. The Inca built thousands of miles of roads. These roads united the parts of the Incan Empire. Good roads made good communication possible. Messengers from the capital city, Cuzco, could travel throughout the empire quickly.

Lesson 1: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the missing details from this lesson that support the summary.



2. Why do some scholars think people migrated from Asia to North America during the Ice Age?

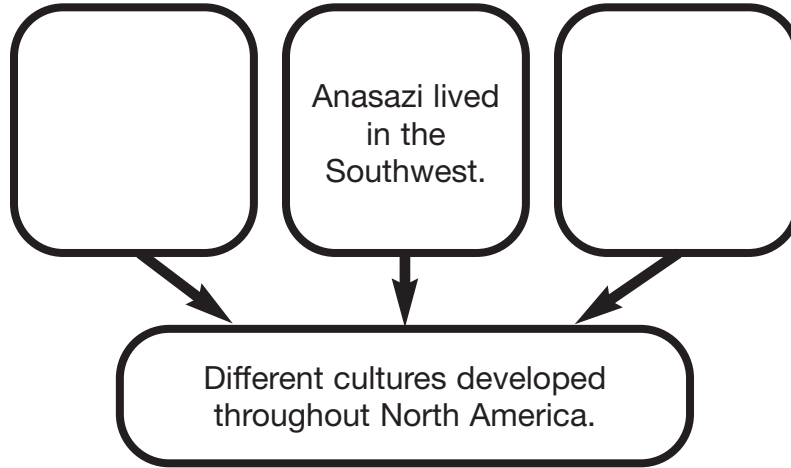
3. How did the first Americans live during the Ice Age?

4. Why did hunters have to find new ways to get food when Earth's climate began to get warmer?

5. **Critical Thinking: Draw Conclusions** How do you think the early people discovered how to grow food?

Lesson 2: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the missing details that support the summary.




2. Why did the people known as Mound Builders build mounds?

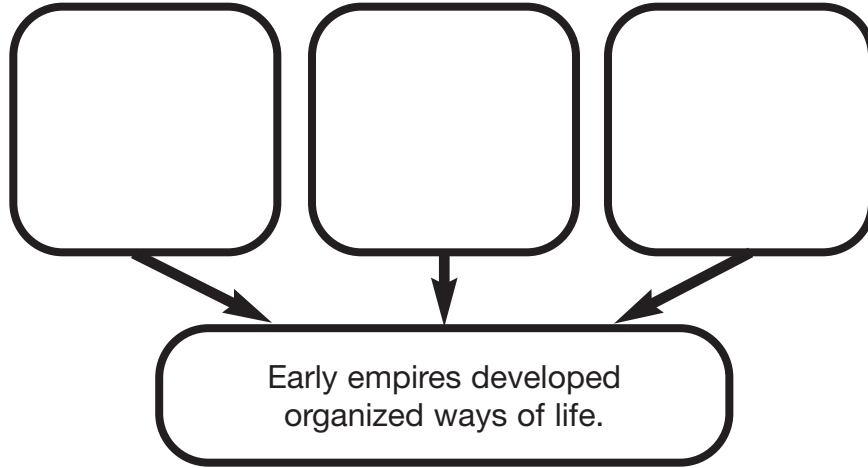
3. Explain how the Anasazi were able to farm in the desert.

4. How did the Inuit adapt to life in the cold climate near the Arctic Ocean?

5. **Critical Thinking: Compare and Contrast** Compare and contrast the cultures of the Mound Builders, Anasazi, and Inuit.

Lesson 3: Review

1.  **Summarize** Fill in the details to the summary about the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan civilizations.



2. Name two achievements of the Mayan civilization.

3. What role did war play in the growth of the Aztec Empire?

4. How was the vast Incan Empire united?

5. **Critical Thinking: Compare and Contrast** How were the civilizations of the Maya, Aztecs, and the Inca similar? How were they different?
