

Mayan, aztec, and incan civilizations



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The Mayan, Aztec, and Incan civilizations were far more advanced than what we expected and have made lasting contributions to modern day society. Some of these accomplishments ranged from agriculture to architecture and on to writing and trade. For example, the Mayans advanced in agriculture and the monumental temple and pyramids and the Aztecs traded in the city of Tenochtitlan. Incans advanced in methods of agriculture such as, terracing. The ancient Mayans were located in central Mexico basin on the Yucatan Peninsula and had achievements in architecture, math, astrology, and writing.

The Mayans had the tallest structure, a pyramid temple in Tikal, until the twentieth century (Document 1). This shows the ancient Mayans had knowledge about geometry, math, and construction. This is a sign of architecture achievement especially because the Mayans didn't have the technology to move the big rocks and stones around. This structure proved to be long-lasting and shows the Mayans were far more advanced than what we previously imagined. As long with their advances in architecture the Mayans developed a complex calendar with glyphs (Document 2).

These glyphs were based on their advanced writing system. Mayan writing consisted of 800 hieroglyphic symbols and they used their writing system to record important historical events. Glyphs are found on religious temples, stairs, walls of homes, and stairs. In addition, the Mayans were very much interested in astronomy. In fact, they observed the moon, sun, and the stars and then created a calendar! The ancient Aztecs were also located in central Mexico, near Mexico City and its biggest achievement was trading.

The Aztecs controlled an extensive trade network, which brought many products from faraway regions to the capital city, Tenochtitlan. Tenochtitlan is a very impressive city, not only because of its impressing trading city, but because of its beauty and complexity. When Spanish conqueror, Hernan Cortes, came to conquer the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, he was awed by its magnificence (Document 3). He was so impressed he wrote a letter to King Charles of Spain, describing the city.

Hernan Cortes wrote, “ The city has many squares where markets are held and trading is carried on. ” He then continues on to say that all kinds of merchandise is produced here such as, “ Food products, jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, zinc, bones, shells, and feathers” (Document 3). The diversity and magnificence of this city is noteworthy considering its time frame. The ancient Incans were located in the Andes Mountains of South America and life revolved around agriculture. The Incan empire used a farming technique called terrace farming.

Since the Incans live in high altitude mountains, they had to prevent water from running off too quickly, therefore terracing came into use. Terracing is when the Incans cut into the mountains, creating what look like huge steps. These steps are flat and don't point downhill, so it's easier to farm on them and obtain the necessary amounts of water. According to Document 4, various systems to expand farmland were set up as soon as any kingdom was conquered. Irrigation channels were constructed and it was water was supply to the crops more efficiently.