

Research paper: aztec culture



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Research Paper: Aztec Culture The Aztec culture dates all the way back to the 13th century. Some say that a few Aztec people still survive, although they are not exactly " pure. " Their culture was derived from South America. In this research paper the plan is to inform and explain to the teacher that the Aztec were an impressive group of people for their time period because they were so advanced in science, agriculture and were far more civilized than people from other regions had assumed during that time period. What caused the collapse of such a refined empire? Moving on to government and political systems, the Aztec people's started off with what is called the Calpulli - the basic unit of government. Each group is made up of multiple families and these families own land together. Whoever is made the leader of the Calpulli group is in charge and responsible for all the needs of everyone in the group. They set up what is called telpochalli - school for the common citizens. Leaders of these groups collect taxes as well. Although in cities the Calpulli leader is less family based and more about the region and surroundings (Cottrill). The next section of their government goes on to the nobility and councils. People in the nobility and council held a lot of power in society but they were not automatically put in government positions. Every city had a Calpulli and each Calpulli has a leader. All of the leaders from each group made up a council, these held a lot of the power in their government system. In the early to middle 1400s there were 3 main city-states that held the most power. The 3 city-states together were called the " Triple Alliance, " which was located in Mexico Valley. Each of these had a name; there was, Tenochtitlā;n, Texaco, and Tlacopan. Tenochtitlā;n came to dominate the whole empire itself. For each council an executive council is formed within it. Four members are chosen to lead; one of these chosen members is the

tlatcani — leader of the city. Finally we come to the Huey Tlatcani which means “ great speaker. ” This person led the city, and was worshipped as a god and also considered the emperor (Cottrill). The emperor was supported by judges, governors, hosts of other officials, and priests. Even though the emperor was given “ absolute power” in some sort of form, sometimes people also had a say. Emperors were chosen in a partially democratic system, meaning they could be removed from power at any time.

Archaeologists and historians are unsure of how any certain Aztec person was chosen to get the position of Huey Tlatcani. It was not hereditary but it did have something to do with family lines. The control of the Aztec empire did not go everywhere in Mexico. Lands that the Aztec people conquered and claimed as their own did have to pay a price of tribute to them, but still had a certain amount of freedom. The gain of land was accomplished by warriors making attacks on surrounding areas, where they also took sacrificial prisoners. Most of the time, when villages, towns or cities were captured by the Aztec, it was an incentive bringing more trade and better goods to be traded along with infrastructure. So where in history did the Aztec contribute to us? Well to start, they didn't have twenty different ones, they had about 5. The first one of these is onions and horses and this is not technically an invention or contribution but it was introduced to them by the Spaniards. Education was not seen as a “ must” or a “ need” by most countries during their time, yet the Aztec people made it mandatory. Unlike in countries today there are rules and regulations to education. In some countries you can't go to school if you are a girl, yet in others it doesn't matter what sex you are. Black, white, poor, rich, middle class, low class, it didn't matter to the Aztec. School was for everyone (Cottrill). Another thing introduced was popcorn, yes, <https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-aztec-culture/>

popcorn. It was first used by the Aztec people for head dresses and for honoring the God of Maize and Fertility; this god is also named Tlaloc. This item was not eaten until years later and was mainly popular for Aztec use only. Foods are important in understanding cultures a second from the Aztec was chocolate. Where would you be today without it? This item was exceedingly valued by them and was used as a currency. They also demanded cacao beans which played a part in the tributes they made to their gods. A drink was made from the chocolate that the Aztec called “xocoatl” — meaning bitter water, this word was actually invented by the Aztec people themselves (Cottrill). The Aztec culture brought about chewing gum and instead of calling it gum or something of the sort they called it “chicle” which is what some Mexican vendors still call it today. Although, when the Spaniards showed up they destroyed their trading routes and the gum or “chicle” disappeared with it. The item didn’t show back up for another 350 years. Aztec people were actually good with medicine and knew some things about it. For the time period they were living in they were considered to be advanced. One of the main things they had used for medicine was called “antispasmodic medicine” this helped to prevent muscle spasms. It could be useful during surgeries and was made from what is still growing today and that is a passion flower. The passion flower is still used as an herbal remedy which is believed to help insomnia, high blood pressure, and epilepsy. The Aztec culture was not a poor one. The Aztec were simple in clothing, but not in economy. They were very rich as a country and would have been considered a first world country. Though their culture seemed simple since they wore little and lived simple lives they were very smart, Aztec people knew of value, and of money. Cocoa beans were

the main form of money, which was used the most. A single rabbit would cost 30 cocoa beans. Something common in their trading system was to trade a child, most likely a daughter, for 600 cocoa beans. This should not come as a surprise since they also made human sacrifices to honor their gods. There was another type of money used, though not as often. It was treasured by the Aztec people and was highly valued. This form of money was called “ quachtli”. Quachtli is a type of cloth used to make clothes. Legends say that during the time of the Aztec 10 pieces of this cloth was enough to support an Aztec for 6 months in the big city of Tenochtitlán (Cottrill). Trade was a major source of the Aztec’s income. The biggest trading market was located in Tlatelco. The Tlatelco had a large variety of goods which made it the most accommodating for people, over 60, 000 came per day to visit. Whatever you wanted or needed was found here, cloth, corn, seeds, spices, pottery, etc. Not all villagers grew crops which led to other Aztec people being able to specialize in other trades. Some of the trades included were feather workers, stone workers, lapidary, and metallurgy workers. The economy of this culture came to a slow halt as soon as the Spaniards arrived. They destroyed trading routes, cities, took control, and made rules. Fighting with the Spaniards caused the Aztec people no time to grow crops and this was the start of the downturn for their economy. A somewhat discussed subject that we’re moving forward on is the social system of the Aztec people. They did not have very complex social system, just two main groups. The first group is the higher ranked of the two. Nobles, which were called pipiltin and pilli for singular usage made up the higher status people of the Aztec culture. The people in this group received a more extent education than other people in the culture. Also, these people were

allowed to decorate their houses to their choosing and wear superior clothes compared to that of the average people of the town, village, or community they were living in. Nobles mostly held places in the office of government, but not all, some were craftsmen of different sorts, and a few were even the palace servants. Even if they were given a lower ranked area of work it was possible to move up to a new or more suited position just by doing a good job at what was presently assigned. Second to the Nobles were the

Commoners or what were called by the Aztec; macehualli, which these were the people who worked the land of the area. Not all people worked the land, albeit some were stuck working land forever you could also move up a bit in this class with some hard work. The poor of this class could sell themselves and become a slave, eventually working off their debt. Slaves were not treated badly at all, they even had laws that firmly protected them.

Commoners also included craftsmen and merchants. The merchants were given more opportunity and could travel, sell, trade, and were given more respect than most in this class. Soldiers can be included in both classes because even if they started out at a low rank they could work their way up to being a noble, and become a pilli. The classification of the Aztec culture is fairly simple. They were rich. Aztec people possessed many, many, many important goods that you could not easily get around the world. Being a first world country was not exactly an easy task. Unbeknownst to them though, was that they had predators lurking in the shadows (Spaniards) that wanted their gold, cocoa beans, and much more. Their society and area was highly valued. Plus, the land they lived on was not known by many people and had not been explored. Aztec people were civilized, eminent, smart, cunning, and ethical, but their empire did fall. Not all things last forever as history shows

us. Spaniards eventually came in search of new land and treasures such as gold, upon which they found the Aztec people. Invaded on November of 1519 the Aztec people welcomed the Spaniards. Cortes was a Spanish conquistador looking to conquer them. At first, the outcome looked to be in the favor of the Aztec people, but because their religion called for sacrificing hundreds to thousands of people they lost many of their own that could have been used in battle. The Spaniards brought the smallpox disease with them, which was not purposely but did favor Cortes' side when the time came for battle. Twenty-five percent of the Aztec people died from smallpox. By 1520 the Aztec people were low on food, and still dying of the smallpox disease, eventually it claimed their emperor's life. In 1521 Cortes finally conquered them and they surrendered. In conclusion, even though the pure Aztec race was ruined by a change in their culture from the Spaniards' invasion there are descendants left, but with little Aztec blood in them. The legends told, pottery, huts, temples, and much more still remain in Mexico. Life in their society was very well planned and put together, yet when the Spaniards arrived that all changed. Disease, death, famine, and much more caused them to lose hold of their culture. They went from being the richest in their country to being slaves and commoners to the Spaniard conquistadores. A lot of their culture was destroyed with the invasion so most researchers have little to go on. The possibilities of how different their society would have been if the Spaniards were defeated, or had never come into contact with the Aztec people are infinite. References " Aztec Economy." edublogs. edublog, 9 Mar. 2011. google. Web. 10 Oct. 2011. . (Aztec Economy edublog) " Aztec: Economic and Trade System." PLU. Pacific Lutheran University, n. d. google. Web. 10 Oct. 2011. . (Pacific Lutheran University) Baquedano, <https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-aztec-culture/>

Elizabeth. Aztec, Inca, and Maya. : Eyewitness Books, 1993. (Baquedano)

CÃ³trill, Jaime. Aztec-History. Ed. Jaime CÃ³trill. , 2006. Google. Web. 10

Oct. 2011. . (Cotrill) Outline I. Intro a. Aztec Culture b. In this research paper

the plan is to inform and explain to the teacher that the Aztec were an

impressive group of people for their time period because they were so

advanced in science, agriculture and were far more civilized than people

from other regions had assumed during that time period. II. Political System

III. Major Contributions to Human History IV. Economy V. Social System VI.

Classification VII. Reasons for Success/Destruction VIII. Conclusion