

The toltecs, aztecs, and mayans



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

TOLTECS; The Toltecs were an Indian tribe who existed from 900 A. D. to 1200. They had a capital city of Tollan, and their influences reached south to the Yucatan and Guatemala. They were a composite tribe of Nahuatl, Otomi, and Nonoalca. The Toltecs made huge stone columns decorated like totem poles. AZTECS> Aztecs were an American Indian people who ruled an empire in Mexico during the 1400's and early 1500's. They practiced a religion that affected every part of their lives. To worship the Aztecs built towering temples, created huge sculptures, and had human sacrifices. The center of Aztec civilization was a river valley in Mexico. The emperor of the Aztecs was called the "huey tlatoani" (great speaker). A council of high-ranking nobles chose him from the members of a royal family. The Aztec society had four main classes nobles, commoners, serfs, and slaves. The typical Aztec household consisted of a husband and wife, their unmarried children, and a number of the husband's relatives. Boys were educated by their father until about 10 years of age. The Aztecs married at an early age, women at about 16, men at about 20. Warfare was considered a religious duty by the Aztecs. They fought not only to enlarge their empire but also to take prisoners to sacrifice to the gods. The market place was a major center of Aztec life, more than 60,000 people visited it daily. They had no system of money, they traded goods and services for other goods and services. They had no pack animals, and as a result, they themselves had to carry all their goods over land. The end of the Aztec empire came when the Spaniards came. The first time the Spaniards were mistaken for returning gods. When they returned to Spain, they told of all the gold that the Aztecs had. The Spaniards returned one year later with cannons and they had the help of the other Indian tribes of the area, in destroying the Aztec empire. MAYANS> The Mayan civilization

flourished from the 3rd to the 16th centuries in an area that included the peninsula of Yucatan and the eastern part of Chiapas in Mexico, most of Guatemala, the western region of the Republic of Honduras. In the Spanish conquest only a few Mayans resisted the conversion to Christianity. The Mayans believed that 13 heavens were arranged in layers above the earth, and under the earth were nine underworlds also arranged in layers. The concepts are closely related to those of the Aztecs. The religion has partly survived to this day among the Christianized Mayans. Mayan mathematics included the discovery of zero, the duration of the solar year, and a method of predicting solar eclipses. Mayan cities were primarily ceremonial, government, and market centers. Sacrifices were numerous of animals, birds, insects, fish, plants, blood from tongues, ears, arms, and legs. For rain victims were hurled into deep wells. Drawing blood from bodies often preceded ceremonies and sacrifices. These practices had become so deeply rooted that, even after the Spanish conquest, Christian--pagan ceremonies took place with sacrifices featuring heart removal or crucifixion. The custom of human sacrifice ended in 1868. Ritual activities were complex, and consisted of bloodletting from ears and tongues, sacrifices, and dances. Every social group celebrated its own religious feast. Sorcerers and medicine men were both prophets and inflictors or healers of disease. They used magic formulas, chants, and prayers for healing methods.