

# Early american civilizations



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Early American Civilizations Early American civilizations were composed of four different groups of people. These four groups were composed of the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas, and the North Americans. These groups were the same in many ways, but had some differences that would distinguish their group from the others. These civilizations ruled the Americas for long period of time. These civilizations were the same in almost every way, but they had their differences to show that they were a totally different group of people. The first group that is going to be discussed is the Mayas. The Mayas were thought to be peaceful stargazers for a long time, but not until recently the truth was uncovered about the Mayas. The Mayas were actually rulers of the populous, aggressive city-states. The Mayas built large temples for the glory of the kings and sometimes the queens who ruled cities of tens of thousands. They also had a liking for self-mutilation, warfare, and a prolonged torture of captives. The Mayas had warfare with rival cities frequently. For the most part the Mayas did this to capture aristocrats for torture and sacrifice. If the Mayas sacrificed fewer humans than the Aztecs, against whom they often had been held up as superior, they tortured their victims more viciously. One way they would torture people is, in ancient ball games, like Roman gladiatorial contests, pitted captives were against one another for their lives; the heads of losers were sometimes used for balls. In this selection Reilly mentions how a king would prepare for war. He said, " Before going to war, for example, the king would puncture his penis with a stingray spine, while his wife drew a thorn-barbed rope through her tongue" (Reilly, 326). The Mayas thought this was a vital process for sustaining the universe. The Mayas also practiced advanced irrigation methods, they also focused on astronomy, mathematics, and elaborated on their script. The Maya script

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was written in hieroglyphs, which is one of the five basic writing systems ever developed. This script was made up of phonetic symbols, standing for units of sound, and ideographs, standing for words. According to Dr. Freidel, " Although the stone writings discuss only royalty, evidence indicates a cooperative, sacred relationship between the elite and the commoners" (Reilly, 329). The Mayas were successful because of this harmony among these people. The next group of people is the Aztecs. The Aztec civilization was the last of a long line of Native American civilizations. The Aztecs were the close rivals of the Mayas. Like the Mayas, the Aztecs also believed in torture and warfare. They also had very strict rules, especially when one was around a king. For example, one would have to say, " Lord! My Lord! Sublime Lord!" (Reilly, 331). After that they would have to communicate in few words, the person would also have to keep their eyes cast down, and when leaving one would have to walk backwards out of the room. Also like the Mayas, the Aztecs had an advanced system of irrigation. The Aztecs also believed in sacrifice like the Mayas. The Aztecs were just like the Mayas, but they were different because they seemed to be more strictly about things, and they didn't have the harmony among all the people like the Mayas. The next group is the Incas. The Inca Empire is known as the most advanced in power and refinement. The Incas had an easy means of communication because of the great roads which traversed the mountain passes, and kept the capital close with the remotest extremities of the empire. These roads were long and narrow, the houses were low, and the houses of the poorer were built out of clay. The bridges were made out of timber covered with heavy slabs of stone. This also made communication better. The Inca's had great temples, which were this, the most magnificent structure in the

empire. They also distributed high stations and strong military posts throughout the empire, to establish lines of communication with the court, which enabled the sovereign to act simultaneously and with the effect on the most distant quarters of the empire. According to Reilly the difference is “ although the Peruvian monarch was raised so far above the highest of his subjects, he condescended to mingle occasionally with them, and took great pains personally to inspect the condition of the humbler classes” (Reilly, 340). “ He presided at some of the religious celebrations, and on these occasions entertained the great nobles at his table, when he complimented them, after the fashion of more civilized nations, by drinking the health of those whom he most delighted to honor” (Reilly, 340). In other words the Peruvian king tried to keep in touch with the people he ruled over. Besides those differences the Incas had a great source of communication unlike the others. Finally there were the North Americans. The North Americans were also more powerful and successful than is usually believed. Like the others, the North Americans had impressive structures also. They had build tens of thousands of large earthen mounds. These structures were impressive because of their size and by the number of them. These structures were so impressive that the Europeans that came over didn't believe that the North Americans made these, so they made up stories on how they got there. Reilly said, “ And in the twentieth century, Erich von Daniken's Chariots of the Gods has attributed the mounds to creatures from outer space” (Reilly, 346). The people who ruled these mounds as “ paramount chiefs.” These people were heads of the alliance networks, possibly because of their prestige, control of resources, or their military superiority. Like all the other groups, the North Americans believed in warfare. The also had a good

irrigation system, like the rest. They had a pretty good communication system, but nothing as good as the Incas. The difference that separates the North Americans from the other groups is that they had the impressive mounds. These groups had their distinct similarities, but the differences set them apart. The way for the Mayas to distinct themselves from the others is that they had harmony among all the groups of people. The Aztecs were different because they seemed to be stricter about things, and they didn't have the harmony among all the people like the Mayas. Unlike the others, Inca's rulers tried to keep in touch with the people he ruled over, and the Incas had a great source of communication unlike the others. The North Americans separated themselves by being less cruel to people, and had those huge mounds, which were very impressive structures. Even though they were the same in most ways, these people were different in a lot of ways. If the weren't, then it would have been one group of people ruling the Americas. These slight differences make these people stand out against one another and the rest of the world because of their huge accomplishments.