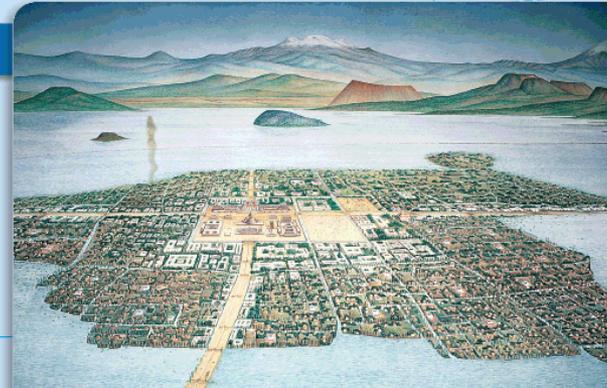
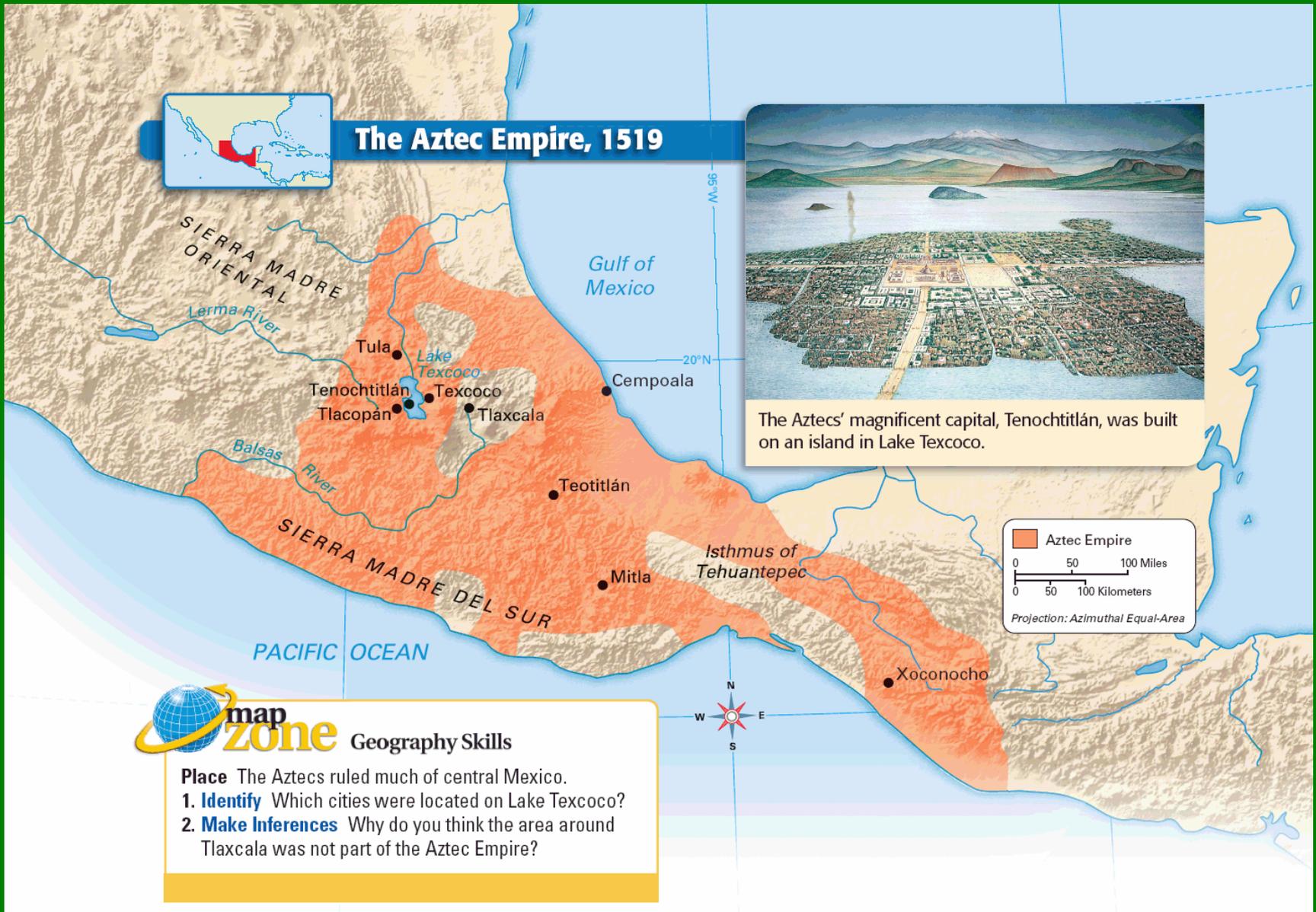


The Aztec Empire, 1519



The Aztecs' magnificent capital, Tenochtitlán, was built on an island in Lake Texcoco.



map zone Geography Skills

Place The Aztecs ruled much of central Mexico.

- 1. Identify** Which cities were located on Lake Texcoco?
- 2. Make Inferences** Why do you think the area around Tlaxcala was not part of the Aztec Empire?

The Aztecs

The Big Idea

The strong Aztec Empire, founded in central Mexico in 1325, lasted until the Spanish conquest in 1521.

Main Ideas

- The Aztecs built a rich and powerful empire in central Mexico.
- Social structure, religion, and warfare shaped life in the empire.
- Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire in 1521.

Main Idea 1:

The Aztecs built a rich and powerful empire in central Mexico.

- In 1325, Aztecs migrated south to central Mexico and settled on a swampy island in Lake Texcoco.
- The Aztecs rose to power by waging war and demanding tribute from conquered people.
- The Aztecs controlled a huge trade network.
- By the early 1400s, the Aztecs ruled the most powerful state in Mesoamerica with **Tenochtitlán** as their capital.

Tenochtitlan

- The Aztecs built canals and three **causeways**—raised roads across water or wet ground—to make travel easier.
- To increase the amount of farmland, the Aztecs created floating gardens.
- Tenochtitlán was home to some 200,000 people at its height.



Main Idea 2:

Social structure, religion, and warfare shaped life in the empire.

Emperor

- Held the most important position in society
- Attended to law, trade, tribute, and warfare



Nobles

- Served king as tax collectors, judges, and other government officials
- Noble positions were passed down from father to son.



Warriors and Priests

- Priests more influential than warriors
- Led religious ceremonies and decided when to plant and harvest



Social Structure, continued

Merchants and Artisans

- Held the position in society below the priests and warriors



Farmers and Laborers

- Made up the majority of the population
- Didn't own their lands



Slaves

- At the bottom of society



Social Structure, continued

Religion and Warfare

- The Aztecs worshipped many gods.
- They made as many as 10,000 human sacrifices per year.
- Most victims were battle captives or slaves.
- Priests led bloody ritual ceremonies.
- The Aztecs fought wars to supply enough victims for sacrifice.

Cultural Achievements

- The Aztecs created stone pyramids, statues, jewelry and masks.
- Women wore embroidered cloth. 
- The Aztec studied the stars and created a calendar similar to the Maya's. 
- They recorded historical and cultural events.
- They had strong oral tradition.



The Aztecs The Aztecs were known for warfare as well as for their arts.

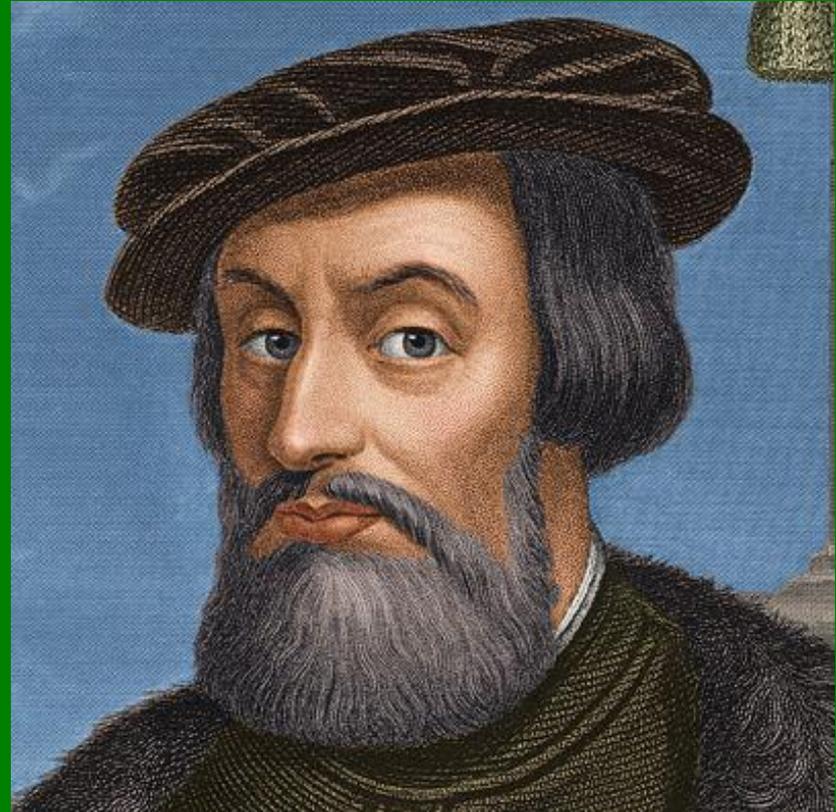
Main Idea 3:

Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire in 1521.

- In the late 1400s the Spanish arrived, seeking riches and converts to Catholicism.
- Hernán Cortés led the **conquistadors**, or Spanish conquerors, in 1519.
- The Aztec emperor Moctezuma II believed Cortés to be the god Quetzalcoatl and gave the Spanish gold.

Conquered by the Spanish

- Cortés took the emperor prisoner.
- The Aztec drove out conquistadors, but Moctezuma was killed.
- Within a year, the conquistadors returned and conquered the Aztec by 1521.



Why the Conquistadors Succeeded



- They had help from people who resented harsh Aztec rule.
- They used better weapons, including armor, cannons, and swords, and had big horses that terrified the Aztecs.
- They spread disease that killed thousands of Aztecs.



Interactive Map

The Inca Empire, 1530





The Incas lived in a region of high plains and mountains.

The Incas

The Big Idea

The Incas controlled a huge empire in South America, but it was conquered by the Spanish.

Main Ideas

- The Incas created an empire with a strong central government in South America.
- Life in the Inca Empire was influenced by social structure, religion, and the Incas' cultural achievements.
- Francisco Pizarro conquered the Incas and took control of the region in 1537.

Main Idea 1:

The Incas created an empire with a strong central government in South America.

- The Incas began as a small tribe in the Andes with **Cuzco** as their capital.
- From the mid-1400s, Pachacuti and other leaders expanded Inca territory.
- By early 1500s, the Inca Empire spread from Ecuador to central Chile and included about 12 million people.



Strong Central Government

Central Rule

- Pachacuti replaced local leaders with his own officials.
- Children of conquered leaders were educated at Cuzco and sent back to teach and govern their villages.
- All business was done in the Inca's official language, **Quechua**.

Well-Organized Economy

- Each household was told what to do.
- The Inca developed a labor tax system, *mita*, in which
 - Farmers tended their own and government land.
 - Villagers made goods for soldiers.
 - Incas worked building roads, in mines, or as soldiers.
- The Inca had no merchants.
- The government distributed goods and stored extra in the capital.



Main Idea 2:

Life in the Inca Empire was influenced by social structure, religion, and the Incas' cultural achievements.

Upper Classes

- Included the emperor, government officials, and priests
- Lived in stone houses and wore the best clothes
- Did not have to pay labor tax and had other privileges



Lower Classes

- Included farmers, artisans, and servants, but not slaves because there were none
- Grew crops such as maize, peanuts, and potatoes
- Raised llamas for wool and meat in the Andes
- Dressed in plain clothes and could not own more goods than they needed to survive



Life in the Inca Empire

Religion

- The Incas believed their kings were related to the sun god.
- The Incas sacrificed llamas, cloth, food, and only rarely humans.
- People outside Cuzco worshiped other gods and believed certain places had magical powers.

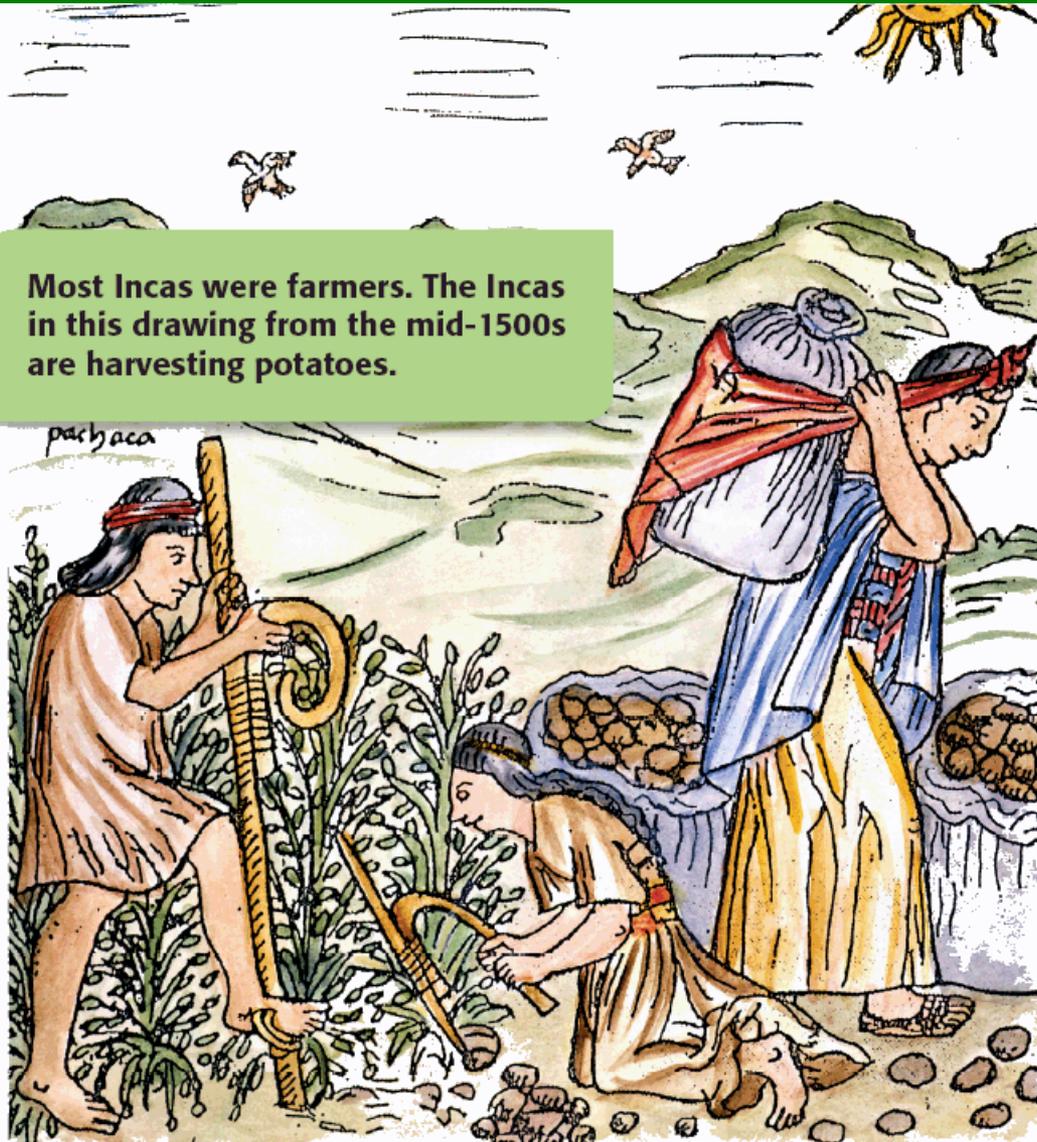
Achievements

- The Incas are known for their expert **masonry**, or stonework.
- The Incas made pottery, gold and silver jewelry, and fine textiles.
- The Incas had no writing system, but recorded information through cords known as *quipus*.
- The Incas had an oral tradition that was written down after the conquistadors arrived.



Most Incas were farmers. The Incas in this drawing from the mid-1500s are harvesting potatoes.

THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK



Main Idea 3:

Francisco Pizarro conquered the Incas and took control of the region in 1537.

- In the late 1520s, a civil war began when the two sons of the ruler fought for the throne.
- 1532: Atahualpa defeated his brother, but the Inca army was weakened.
- Atahualpa went to meet a band of 180 Spanish soldiers, led by Francisco Pizarro, that had arrived in the empire.
- The Spanish launched a surprise attack.
 - Captured Atahualpa
 - Killed thousands of Inca soldiers

Spanish Conquest



Atahualpa

- The Incas filled a room of silver and gold for the Spanish, asking for the release of Atahualpa. The Spanish killed him instead.
- Some Inca continued to fight, but Pizarro defeated them in 1537.
- The Spanish ruled the region for the next 300 years.

Interactive Map

Maya Civilization, c. 900

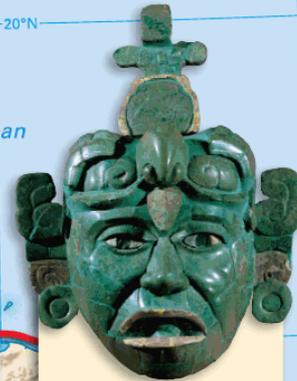
Legend:

- Maya areas
- Maya city
- Trade routes
- Cacao
- Cotton
- Jade
- Obsidian

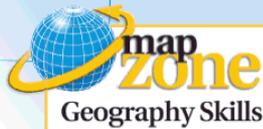
Scale: 0 50 100 150 Miles / 0 50 100 150 Kilometers

Projection: Lambert Azimuthal Equal-Area

Obsidian, valued for its sharp edges and considered sacred by the Maya, was mined in the mountains and traded throughout the Maya world.



Jade was mined in the mountains and traded to lowland cities.



Movement The Maya established trade routes throughout Mesoamerica.

- Identify** What two resources were mostly found in the lowland region?
- Explain** Why might Maya in the lowlands want jade and obsidian from the highlands?

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Geography Skills

Place The Aztecs ruled much of central Mexico.

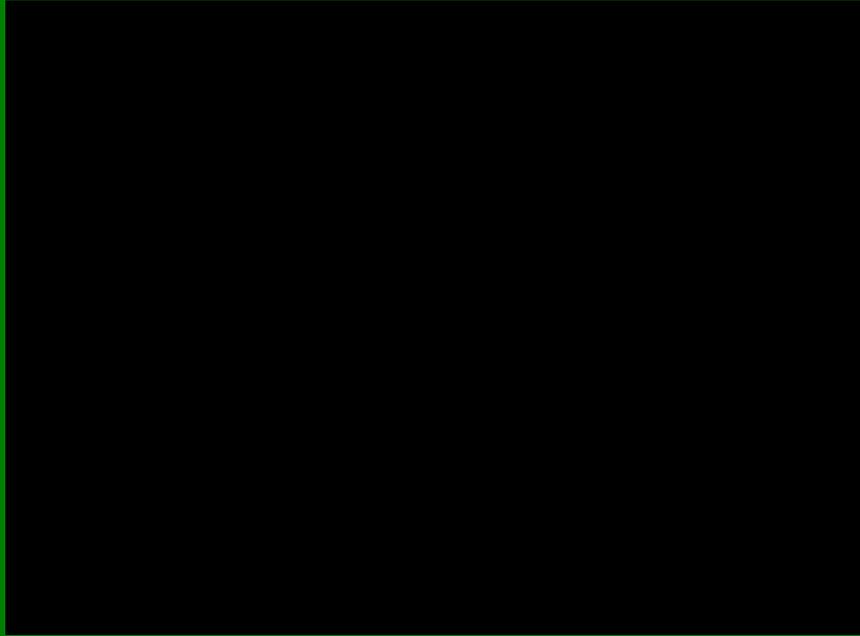
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