

Chapter 7

The People of the Sun



Students will...

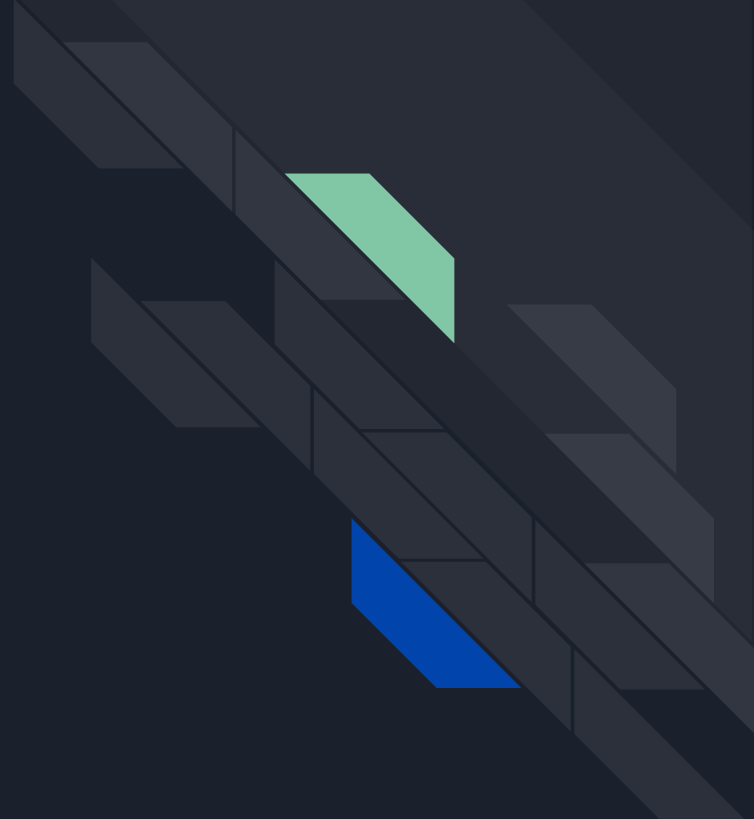
1. Understand how we know about history and the Aztec worldview
2. Examine the history of the Aztec people, and how their history affects their worldview?
3. Explore the importance of physical geography to the Aztecs, and how they adapted to geographical challenges.



Review from Monday

- What is one term that you learned from the vocabulary class? What does it mean?
- What is one element of worldview that we talked about in the second class? How does it influence worldview?

How do we know about
history?





Sources

Primary Sources - usually refer to original manuscripts such as letters, journal entries, religious texts, poetry, legal agreements and statutes; may also include artwork, architecture, and artifacts

Ex. The original Mona Lisa - Primary Source from the Renaissance

Secondary Sources - accounts of the past written after the event by someone who was not present at the time

Ex. Article about Mona Lisa's smile, written in 2018.



Codices

- Primary sources from the Aztecs
- They used these to record information
- Codices were written as pictures, as the Aztecs did not use an alphabet
 - Why might this be an issue for historians?
- Many of the codices were destroyed by the Spanish; later, Aztec codex makers made new codices under Spanish supervision.
 - Which codices would be more reliable? Those created before or after the Spanish invasion?





Brief History of the Aztecs

- Nomadic Tribe from the North
- The legend says: In 1168, Huitzilopochtli sent the Aztecs to find a permanent home. They were to move south until they saw an Eagle perched on a cactus.
- For 150 years the Aztecs roamed Mexico.
- 1325: Aztecs arrived in the Valley of Mexico.
- Founded Tenochtitlan (Capital City)

Physical Geography of Valley of Mexico

- Fertile land
- Plentiful water
- Mild climate

Challenges:

- Tenochtitlan was founded on a swampy island
- Island was in the middle of a salt water lake (Lake Texcoco)
- Flooding (dikes)
- Growing food (*chinampas*)



Mexico Valley

c. 1519

- Brackish Water
- Fresh Water
- Marshes
- Chinampas
- Causeway





Aztec view of Tenochtitlan

Proud of itself is the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan.

Here no one fears to die in war... Have this in mind, oh princes,

Do not forget it. Who could conquer Tenochtitlan?

Who could shake the foundation of heaven?

- Miguel Leon-Portilla

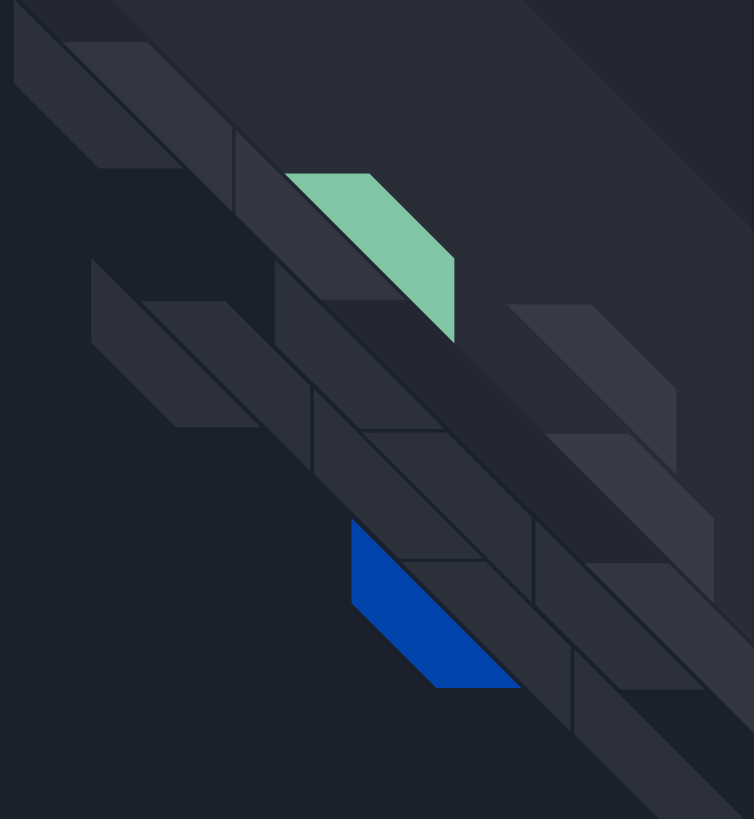
The Power of Mountains

Mountains were important to the Aztecs:

- Surrounded Tenochtitlan; provided a sense of security.
- Mountains were a sacred/holy site.
 - Brought the Aztecs closer to the Gods.
 - Aztecs shaped their temples like mountains - pyramids.



The Sacred Landscape and Aztec Gods



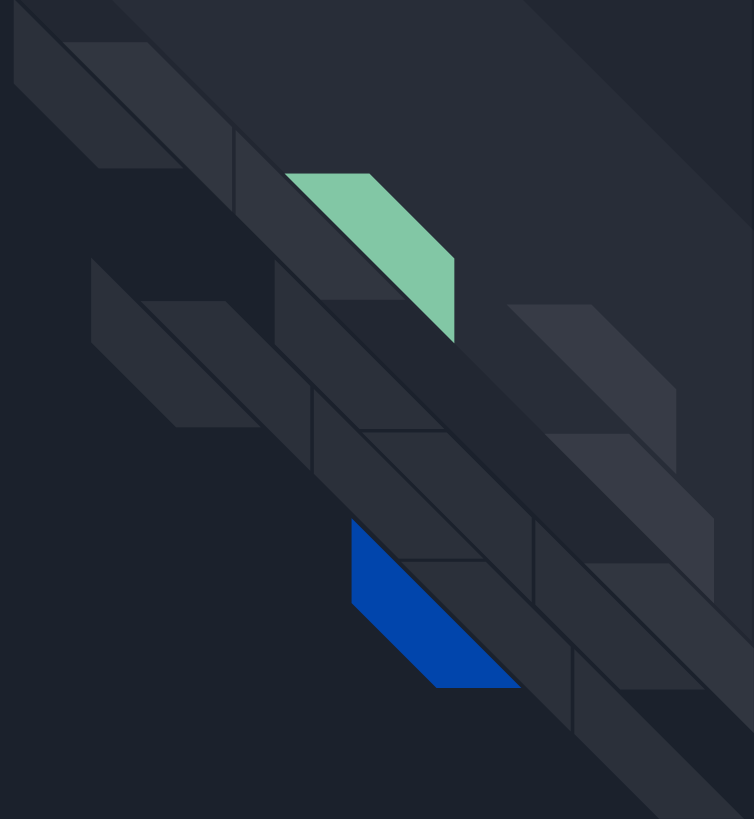
Aztec Gods

- Aztecs believed gods controlled their lives.
- The gods told them how to live.
- They believed that some were greater than others, and treated them specially.

Huitzilopochtli



Jigsaw Activity - Aztec Gods



Aztec Gods - Myths and Legends skits



Aztec Calendars

The Aztec Calendar represented the connection between gods and humans.

Two Types:

- Sacred Calendar

Ex. The Great Stone Calendar - shows how the world began and how it will end.

- Solar Calendar

Which do you think would be more important to the Aztecs?



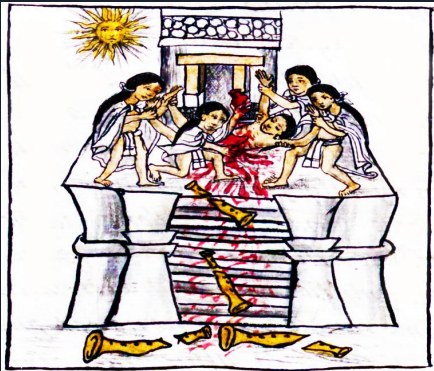
Human Sacrifice

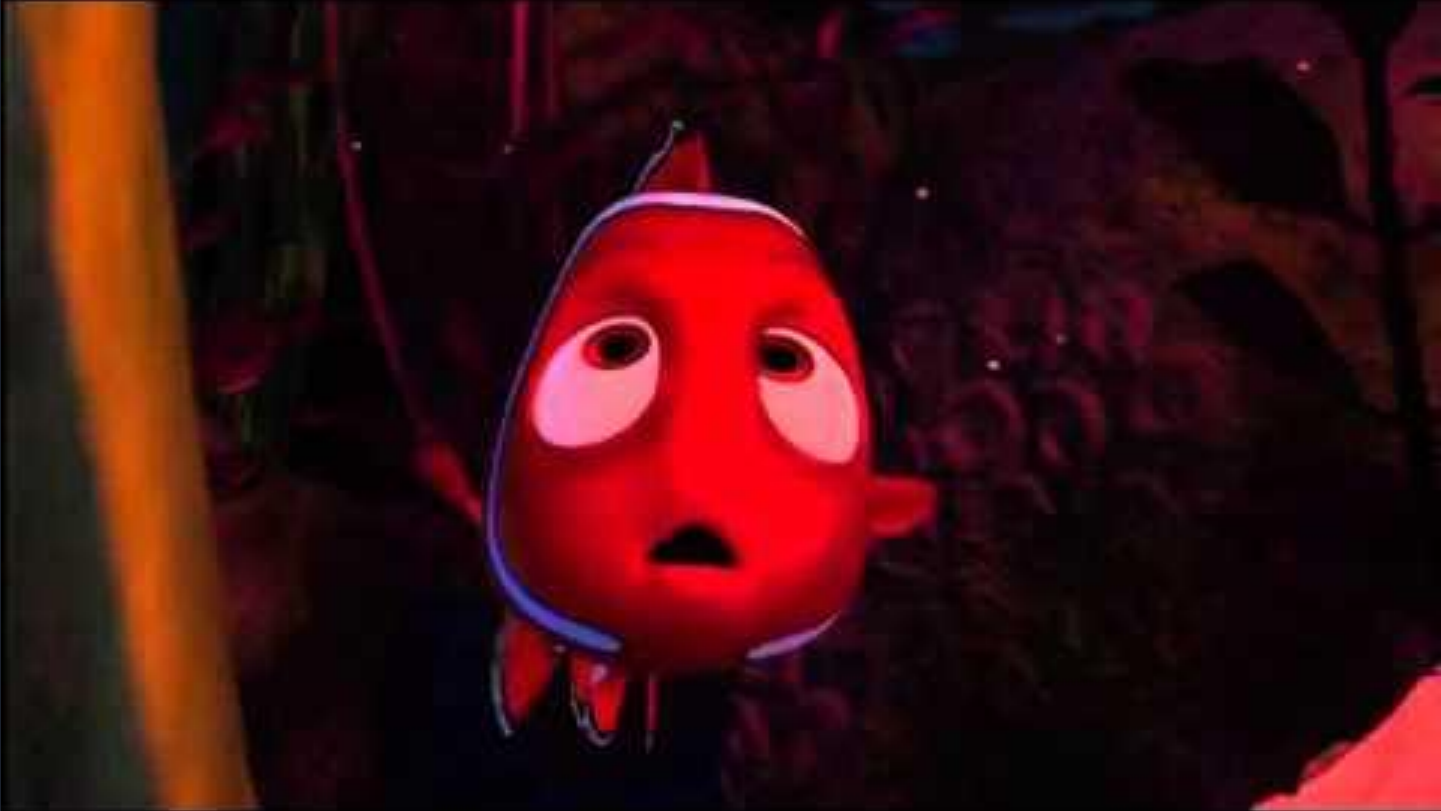
Aztecs would sacrifice humans to their gods - they believed blood nourished the gods.

Aztecs believed their gods would get sick and die if they were not fed blood.

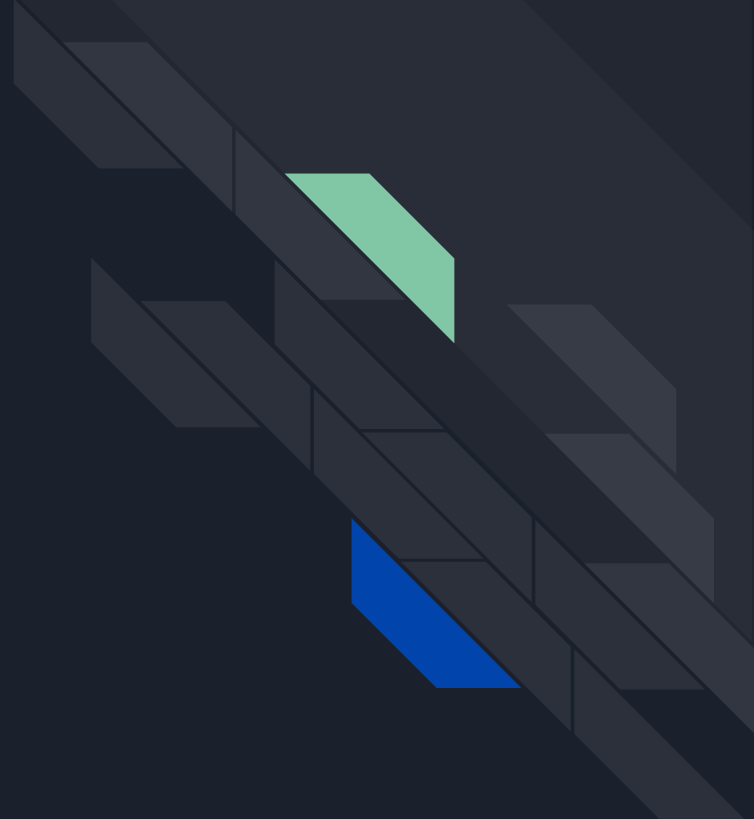
If the gods die, the world ended.

Human sacrifices were usually prisoners of war captured by the Aztecs in their military conquests.





Spectrum Debate on Human Sacrifice

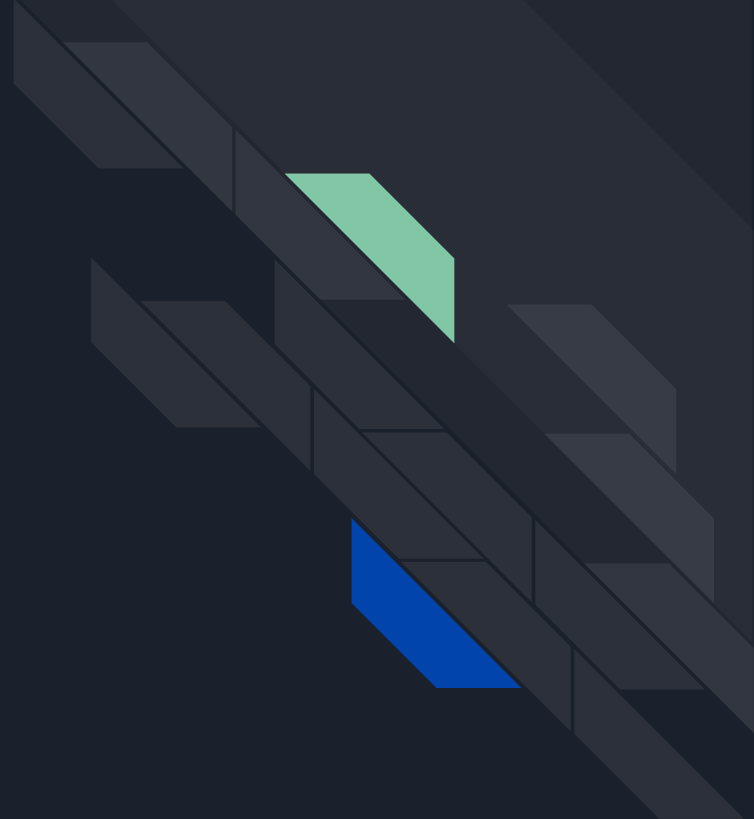




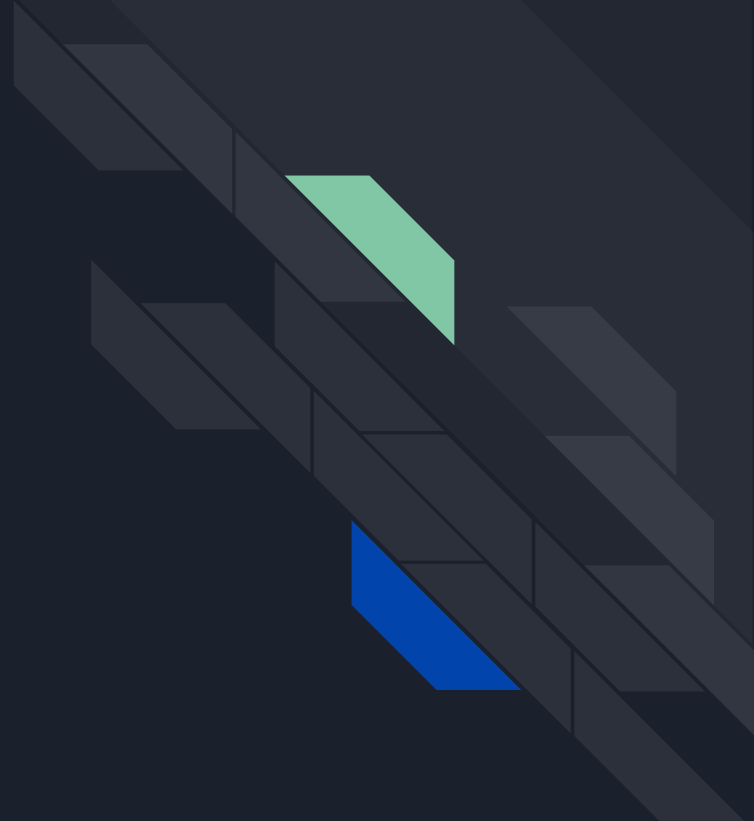
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Forced Perspective Debate: Spanish vs. Aztecs



Expanding the Aztec Empire





Daily Outcomes

1. Explore different perspectives on certain controversial issues.
2. Analyze the complex relationships the Aztecs had with neighboring tribes.

Res fuerat quondam prestans, & Gloria summa
 Orbis subiectus Cæsaris Imperio,
 Hic longe prestat, cuius nunc Orbis Eous,
 Et Nouus, atq; alter panditur Auspitijs.



Quilibet punctus magnus continet leucas duodecim cum dimidia, ita quod duo magni puncti continent viginti quinque leucas, Ceterum autem leuca quatuor Italica miliaria, ita quod omnes puncti qui hic conspiciuntur

Expanding through Trade

Why do Aztecs need to trade if they were so resourceful?

Goods they did not have:

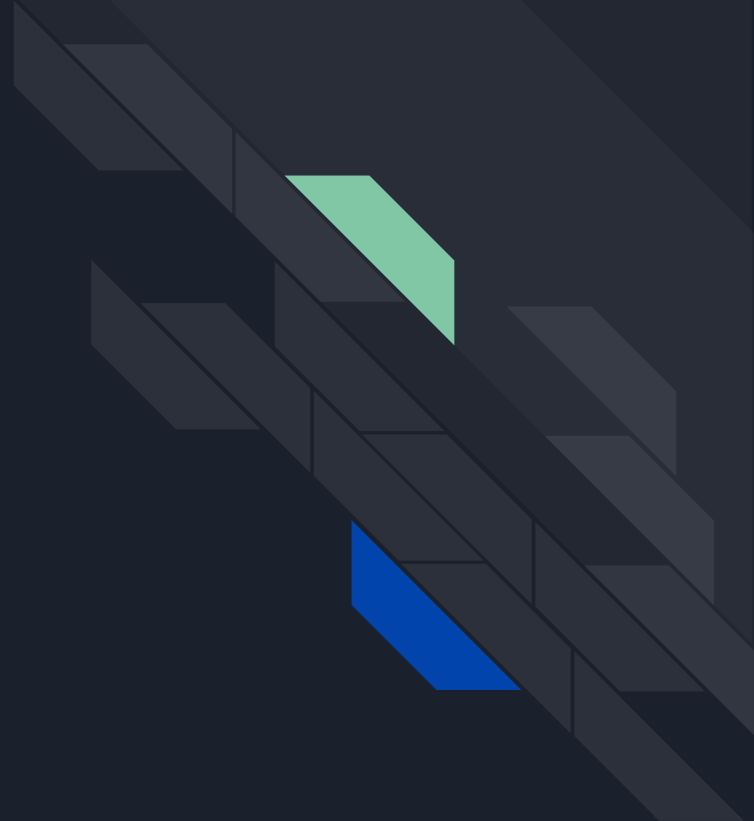
- Fruits: Avocados, Papayas, Cacao
- Brightly coloured feathers: Tropical birds
- Deposits of Gold and Silver

Merchants also acted as spies!



“We shall conquer all
the people in the
universe. I will make you
lords and kings of every
place in the world,”

- ancient prophecy from
Huitzilopochtli



Expanding through War

Largest Empire in North America at the time (1519)

*** Aztecs believed that the group was more important than the individual - every Aztec was prepared to sacrifice themselves for the group.

Military service was compulsory!

Male babies were given a tiny bow and shield to symbolize their commitment to protection.

Tribute - Valuable gifts or taxes paid to the Aztecs from the conquered group.



Visual Metaphor - Aztec Foreign Policy

