

World History & Geography

Medieval & Early Modern Times

Grade 7B



Lesson Plans

“The Mayan Civilization”

Subject:

World History and Geography: Medieval and Early Modern Times: 7B

Level:

Grade 7

Abstract:

Students will study the Mayan Civilization by first learning the geography of the region and determining how it influenced the everyday lives and cultural advancements of the people. Students will then research the ancient Mayan culture, technology, religion, and economic and political systems, and identify key contributions. They will also examine today’s descendents of the Mayans. Finally, students will share their learning with the class by giving an oral presentation.

Invitation:

The Mayan civilization flourished for about 600 years with sophisticated cities and technology. Then the cities were suddenly abandoned and their civilization declined. What happened? A local movie company is making a documentary film on this subject and the producer has asked your class to research the topic and create the film’s “storyboards.” A storyboard is a visual script, that helps the producer, director, and camera people see the scenes they are going to shoot. To create your storyboard, your class will research information about the Mayan people, including their pyramids and palaces, writing and mathematical number system, calendar, religion and social classes, economic system, as well as the state of the Mayan people today. You will record your research and design your storyboard using computers and then deliver your proposal to the producer as a formal presentation.

Situations:

Where: The lesson will take place primarily at school using the library and computers in the classroom or computer lab. Optionally, some of the research may occur outside the school if students have access to a computer.

When: This lesson will take place during Social Studies class when the class is studying other civilizations of the Americas and after students have studied the Age of Exploration.

How Long: This lesson will require two weeks to complete.

Tasks:**Task 1:**

Students will listen to the invitation to this lesson.

Task 2:

The teacher will introduce the lesson with a mini-lesson on where the Maya lived, why they settled where they did, and when archeologists believe they lived. The teacher will also show a video about the Mayan Civilization, if available.

Task 3:

Students will read about the Maya in their textbooks and/or other available material supplied by the teacher.

Task 4:

Students will reinforce their understanding of the reading by creating an outline or logical notes.

Task 5:

The teacher will divide the class into seven groups, each having a different focus topic. The topics are: Mayan art and architecture, writing and mathematical number system, calendar, religion, economic system and trade, political organization, and the Maya people today. (See the "Handout: Storyboard Guidelines for Documentary Film on the Mayan Civilization" attachment.)

Task 6:

The teacher will further divide each group of students into pairs/partners as "content developers." The teacher will assign each content developer pair a set of different research tasks or questions to be answered. (Collectively, the research tasks for all content developers represent the complete topic assigned to the group.)

Task 7:

Each pair of student content developers conducts their assigned research. Students will gather pictures (photos, drawings, or other graphics) to represent each point or key fact, and compose brief paragraphs or captions to describe the picture. They use a "storyboard organizer" template in Microsoft Word to collect and arrange the pictures and captions. (See the "Step Sheet: Creating and Using a Storyboard Organizer in Word" and "Step Sheet: Inserting Pictures Copied from Web Pages into Microsoft Word" attachments.)

Note: the pictures and captions from the content developers will be used as input to a later step for preparation of the group's overall storyboard and presentation.

Task 8:

Each pair of students will share their storyboard organizer with another pair of students who will critically read and offer corrections and suggestions.

Task 9:

Students will respond to peer feedback by revising their storyboard organizers to incorporate suggestions and improve clarity, organization, and flow.

Task 10:

The content developer pairs will assemble as a group. Each group will select one of their members to be the "instructional designer" who will lead the group in creating a master storyboard for their topic. The instructional designer will extract key facts from each content developer's storyboard organizer and place them on a PowerPoint slide. (See the "Step Sheet: Putting the Slide Show Together" attachments.)

Task 11:

Each group will review their master storyboard in PowerPoint's "Slide Sorter View." The group will agree on the preferred flow of the slides to assure that their story is well organized. They will need to be sure that the movie audience can clearly understand the information, and that the movie critic (the teacher) will give the scene good reviews. The instructional designer will re-sequence the slides per the group consensus.

Task 12:

Each group will select one of their members to be the "project manager" who will be in charge of the group's formal presentation. The project manager will assign presentation responsibilities for each slide to a content developer. Every student content manager in the group should have equal presentation responsibilities.

Task 13:

The project manager will conduct a "dress rehearsal." The storyboard slides will be presented on a computer screen, and the assigned content developers will narrate their points. The teacher will monitor the rehearsals and offers suggestions. Final presentations will be limited to 10 minutes.

Task 14:

The class will assemble as a whole to see and listen to each group's presentation. The teacher will judge and evaluate each presentation. (See the "Storyboard Organizer and Presentation Rubric" attachment.)

Task 15:

Students will submit individual research notes, and storyboard organizer print out to the teacher for evaluation.

Interactions:

Full Class: The teacher will introduce the lesson with a mini-lesson and present a video if available on where the Maya lived, why they settled where they did, and when archeologists believe they lived. The teacher will initiate a full-class discussion after the mini-lesson. The teacher will aid students in their research and encourage pairs to discuss information collected. The teacher will help guide students through the organization process of their storyboards and creating and presenting their multimedia presentations.

Partners: Partners will research assigned topics, review and organize information using a storyboard organizer, peer review other partners organized information, and participate in the multimedia presentation to the class.

Groups: Groups will choose their instructional designer and project manager. Groups will review their storyboard presentation and reach consensus regarding selection and organization of slides. Groups will rehearse their presentation and deliver their storyboard as a multimedia presentation to the class.

Individual: Each student will participate in class discussions; listen to the teacher and other students; read assigned materials; complete (with partner) a storyboard organizer with key facts and pictures; and participate in group review, rehearsal, and formal multimedia presentation to the class.

Standards:

History-Social Science: Grade 7 Medieval and Early Modern Times

7.7: Students compare and contrast the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Meso-American and Andean civilizations

1. Study the locations, landforms, and climates of Mexico, Central America, and South America and their effects on the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan economies, trade, and development of urban societies.
2. Study the roles of people in society, including class structures, family life, warfare, religious beliefs and practices, and slavery.

3. Explain how and where each empire arose and how the Aztec and Incan empires were defeated by the Spanish.
4. Describe the artistic and oral traditions and architecture in the three civilizations.
5. Describe the Meso-American achievements in astronomy and mathematics, including the development of the calendar and the Meso-American knowledge of seasonal changes in the civilizations' agricultural systems.

English-Language Arts: Grade 7

Reading

Structural Features of Informational Materials

- 2.1 Understand and analyze the differences in structure and purpose between various categories of informational materials (e.g., textbooks, newspapers, instructional manuals, signs)
- 2.2 Locate information by using a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents.
- 2.3 Analyze text that uses the cause-and-effect organizational pattern.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

- 2.4 Identify and trace the development of an author's argument, point of view, or perspective in text.

Expository Critique

- 2.6 Assess the adequacy, accuracy, and appropriateness of the author's evidence to support claims and assertions, noting instances of bias and stereotyping.

Writing

Organization and Focus

- 1.1 Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.
- 1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.
- 1.3 Use strategies of notetaking, outlining, and summarizing to impose structure on composition drafts.

Research and Technology

- 1.4 Identify topics; ask and evaluate questions; and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, and research.
- 1.5 Give credit for both quoted and paraphrased information in a bibliography by using consistent and sanctioned format and methodology for citations.
- 1.6 Create documents by using word-processing skills and publishing programs; develop simple databases and spreadsheets to manage information and prepare reports.

Evaluation and Revision

1.7 Revise writing to improve organization and word choice after checking the logic of the ideas and the precision of the vocabulary.

Listening and Speaking

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.4 Organize information to achieve particular purposes and to appeal to the background and interests of the audience.

1.5 Arrange supporting details, reasons, descriptions, and examples effectively and persuasively in relation to the audience.

1.6 Use speaking techniques, including voice modulation, inflection, tempo, enunciation, and eye contact, for effective presentations.

2.3 Deliver research presentations:

b. Convey clear and accurate perspectives on the subject.

c. Include evidence generated through the formal research process (e.g., use of a card catalog, *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, computer databases, magazines, newspapers, dictionaries).

d. Cite reference sources appropriately.

Assessment:

- "Data and Storyboard Organizer Rubric:" To be used by the teacher to determine the student's quality and depth of research and information collection and the student's ability to organize in a clear and logical sequence.
- "Presentation Rubric:" To be used by the teacher to determine the student's ability to deliver a focused, coherent presentation that conveys ideas clearly and relates to the background and interests of the audience.

Tools:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Microsoft Internet Explorer (or other comparable Internet browser)

Project Tips and Alternatives:

Tip #1:

Remind student to record sources of information used.

Tip #2:

When editing and revising work using computer applications, remind students to save work often.

Tip #3:

Remind students to compose all written work using own words.

Tip #4:

In Task 10, the teacher may assist the instructional designer by copying the storyboard organizer Word files from each content developer onto a common diskette.

Tip #5:

Student work can be posted to class web page if available.

Attachments:

- "Handout: Storyboard Guidelines for Documentary Film on the Mayan Civilization"
- "Step Sheet: Creating and Using a Storyboard Organizer in Word"
- "Step Sheet: Inserting Pictures Copied from Web Pages into Microsoft Word"
- "Step Sheet: Putting the Slide Show Together"
- "Storyboard Organizer and Presentation Rubrics"
- "Sample: Storyboard Organizer"
- "Sample: PowerPoint Presentation"

Web Resources – Content:

A list of [linked web resources](#) related to the content of this lesson can be found on the Lesson Page.

Web Resources – Word:

A list of [linked web resources for Word](#) can be found on the Word Resources page.

Assistive Technology:

Please refer to the [Assistive Technology section](#) for information on methods and devices to help ensure that all students have access to the curricula in the least restrictive environment.