Comparing Aztec and Inca Governments

9-12 Grade World History or AP World History

This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

45-60 minutes

Students work in small groups of 2-3 examining the document. What can we infer from each map? What additional questions do we have to investigate further?

Activity Goals

Focus Question: What were the governments of the Aztec and Inca Empires different? What details corroborate what we know already? Do any conflict with what we have learned? What details lead us to further questions?

Context: This lesson should follow instruction on the Aztec and Inca culture, society, and government. Students will need background knowledge to be successful.

Objectives:

Students will gain a deeper understanding of the structure and organization of the Aztec and Inca governments. They will evaluate European accounts of contact and conquest interpretations for accuracy and develop an argument to explain this perspective. Historical thinking skills addressed are sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and evaluate the historical narrative.

Virginia SOLS

WHI.11 The student will demonstrate knowledge of major civilizations of the Western Hemisphere, including the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan, by

a) describing geographic relationships, with emphasis on patterns of development in terms of climate and physical features;

b) describing cultural patterns and political and economic structures.

WHI.1 The student will improve skills in historical research and geographical analysis by

a) identifying, analyzing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources to make generalizations about events and life in world history to 1500 A.D. (C.E.);

b) using maps, globes, artifacts, and pictures to analyze the physical and cultural landscapes of the world and interpret the past to 1500 A.D. (C.E.);
c) identifying major geographic features important to the study of world history to 1500 A.D. (C.E.);
d) identifying and comparing political boundaries with the locations of civilizations, empires, and kingdoms from 4000 B.C. (B.C.E.) to 1500 A.D. (C.E.);
e) analyzing trends in human migration and cultural interaction from prehistory to 1500 A.D. (C.E.);
f) analyzing the impact of economic forces, including taxation, government spending, trade, resources, and monetary systems, on events to 1500 A.D. (C.E.).

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3
Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6
Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Assessment: Student mastery will be assessed through class discussion.
Task 1: In writing, students will explain the differences they detect in the portrayal of the Aztec and Inca capitals and political leaders. What inferences can they draw from those distinctions?

Task 2: In writing or using Explain Everything app, students will actively compare and contrast the structure and organization of the Aztec and Inca governments. Students will research specific points of contrast as needed.

Students could use documents from earlier lessons on the Aztecs and Incas and/or search the Library of Congress website or other sources for evidence.

Students should note the high degree of organization in the Inca Empire and include evidence such as the resettlement of colonists among newly conquered peoples, the spread of Quechua (the imperial language), division of the empire into four provinces, extensive road and bridge building, use of tambos, etc.
Views of Tenochtitlán and Cusco

“Mexico, regia et celebris Hispaniae novae civitas (Mexico, regal and reknowned state of New Spain)” and “Cusco, regni Peru in novo orbe caput (Cusco, capitol of the kingdom of Peru in the New World)” in Civitates Orbis Terrarum
Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg
1572
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/exploring-the-early-americas/urban-landscapes.html#obj9