

Name of Culture	Aztec
Origin of Culture	<p>The collapse of the Toltec empire and the shift of power to the valley of Mexico & the chain of lakes helped foster an environment in which a group of about 10,000 migrants could build the foundations of a the Aztec empire. The Aztecs were originally nomadic mercenaries; they were both feared and respected and had fanatical religious beliefs. These religious beliefs lead them on a journey that would last until 1325 when they would settle on a marshy island in Lake Texcoco. Their origins pre-Tenochtitlan are debated. Some sources say that they inhabited the central valley called Aztlan; while others claim that the Aztecs were simply a group of people who took advantage of the effects of the fall of the Toltecs. It was on this island where the Aztecs settled after having supposedly seeing a sign from the gods. As the years past, the Aztecs expanded their empire & power base so much so that they would become the dominant regional power and leave a lasting mark in history.</p>
Key Events Key Dates	<p>1150 Fall of Tula (the capital of the Toltec empire) and the Toltec Empire is broken</p> <p>1325 Aztecs established in Central Mexico & found city of Tenochtitlan</p> <p>1440-1469 Life of Moctezuma I</p> <p>1502-1520 Moctezuma II</p>
Women's Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peasant women worked in fields, primary duties were at home ▪ Marriages were arranged ▪ Skills in weaving highly valued ▪ Virginity very important ▪ Nobility-polygamy ▪ Peasants-monogamy ▪ Could inherit land and could leave property to heirs ▪ Subordinate to men in both social & political arenas ▪ Because of lack of milling technology, women spent much of their time doing physical & often tedious labor to provide food for their families ▪ Women who die during child birth thought to be ensured entry into the highest heaven ▪ Expected to bare & be very attentive to their children and place her needs below those of others, serve and nurturing children, and be constantly at work ▪ Mothers expected to set standard of high morals, more specifically those of obedience, respect and conformity ▪ Older women of calpulli expected to train young girls
Science/Technology Borrowed? Adapted? From Who?	chinampas- floating artificial islands that made it possible to harvest a lot of different crops
Social Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hierarchical ▪ Divided into 7 calpulli (clans, that later evolved into residential groupings) that together, formed an empire. Calpulli distributed land, organized labor gangs, military units, maintained schools and temples. Councils of family heads controlled the calpulli. Equality between families and calpulli alike, did not exist. Originally, calpulli could only come from anywhere, but gradually, as the Aztecs became more developed people, that system was replaced by one in which nobility began to hold of political power. Nobility was determined by lineage, marriages, military achievements and or service to the

	<p>state. Eventually, however, the definition of nobility began to become more exclusive to nobility of military and administrators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although moving up on the social ladder was certainly possible, many nobles were born noble. Nevertheless, nobles remained an integral part of society, controlling both the priesthood and military leadership. As more expansion occurred and more conquests took place, the status of nobility (pipiltin) was often justified by military virtues. ▪ One trend that emerged and continued to become more pronounced as the empire grew was one of the widening of the gap between nobility and commoners. Commoners were restricted & distinguished by their hair styles, clothing, uniforms set forth by the restrictions of the noble class. ▪ Another trend that emerged was the need for more workers. These workers were lower on the social ladder than commoners and often worked on the privately owned lands of the calpulli. These people were called serfs. ▪ Slaves made up the lowest part of the social ladder. They were often war captives, criminals or people who sold themselves to avoid hunger. ▪ Scribes, artisans and healers existed in cities and were higher than slaves, serfs and commoners, but were lower than nobles. They lived in large cities. ▪ Merchants (pochteca) held much of the control over the daily markets. They did a lot of long-distance trade of luxury items. ▪ “Flower people-“people of unconquered lands that helped provide for the greater need for human sacrifices(tribute) to the gods
Environmental Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the surrounding Lake Texacoco made irrigation easier for farming ▪ 3 largest lakes and marshes created a rich land ▪ 400 of 3000 square miles in the basin of the valley was under water ▪ depending on who controlled the lakes, one group, or another would be the most powerful
Economic Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State controlled mixed economy ▪ The state controlled tribute, markets, commodity use and distribution
Political Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Divided into city-states that were ruled by a speaker of nobility ▪ The great speaker (emperor) considered a living god who was rich and had a great deal of power and expected his subjects to treat him as such ▪ Prime minister- usually a close relative of the ruler ▪ Governing council- helped advise the prime minister ▪ Ruler & chief advisor were the most powerful ▪ Local rulers- tax collectors ▪ Chose not to integrate conquered people because they were inferior
Decline Cause? Replacement?	<p>The decline of the Aztecs can be attributed to a number of factors. First and foremost being the increasing social strains brought forth by the noble classes. Another factor was the Aztec’s fanatical religious beliefs. These are beliefs that lead them to harvest people to “satisfy” their gods. All of these factors created an internal weakness. The Aztecs did not disappear; they merely evolved over time so much so that what were formerly their distinctive characteristics became less significant and or</p>

	were forced to change to go with the ever changing world. The European invasions only furthered the push for change.
Human Agents	<p>Tlacaelel- prime minister & advisor to rulers from 1427-1480 who was a key figure in the evolution of the Aztec social history. He is a man who helped rewrite history to clearly state how the how and whys of the conquests. He helped establish a way to accommodate the Aztec's rapid expansion with its' strict religious beliefs by leaving a few unconquered lands so that they could be harvested periodically for human sacrifices.</p> <p>Montezuma II- the last independent Aztec emperor who was killed during Hernan Cortes' conquest of Tenochitlan</p>