Early History of the Americas

COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

1. Maya: collected crops, cloth, and salt from the lower-class, who constructed pyramids and other buildings, and served in the army. Aztec: collected tributes of cotton, gold, or food from the lower class, who paid taxes in the form of labor.
2. Similarities: social divisions, use of sacrifice, and collection of taxes; Differences: types of sacrifices, writing systems, and architectural structures.
3. The Spanish were able to destroy the empires because they had superior weapons and carried disease.

SECTION 1

Call-Out Boxes

1. Mesoamerica extends from central Mexico to the northern part of Central America.
2. crops, wood, jade, obsidian
3. blood
4. soil erosion, competition and war between cities, rebellion against the king

Challenge Activity

Students' drawings should include details about life in the 21st century.

SECTION 2

Call-Out Boxes

1. They were poor farmers.
2. war and trade
3. He was in charge of law, trade, tribute, and warfare.
4. Aztecs believed blood was necessary to keep the gods happy.
5. The Spanish allied with other tribes, used guns, rode horses, and carried disease.

Challenge Activity

Answers should include an opinion about whether Cortés was justified in his actions, supported by reasonable arguments.

SECTION 3

Call-Out Boxes

1. South America
2. the Andes
3. The government distributed goods through the labor tax system.
4. the sun god
5. stonework

Challenge Activity

Advantages: ease of administration; jobs can be filled; defined place in society; and central control of production. Disadvantages: inability to advance; no easily transportable currency; and workers under rulers' control.

Mexico

COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

1. oil, scenic landscapes, silver
2. silver; Silver is in Mexico's mountains; it was one of the reasons the Spanish conquered Mexico, and Mexico is the world's leading producer of silver.
3. oil, scenic landscapes, subsistence farming, silver, maquiladoras, unemployment

SECTION 1

Call-Out Boxes

1. Baja California, Yucatán Peninsula
2. in the Valley of Mexico
3. It is mostly flat.
4. Sonoran and Chihuahuan
5. silver

Challenge Activity

Students' paragraphs will vary but should draw upon the information in the section to support their predictions.

SECTION 2

Call-Out Boxes

1. Olmec: temples and statues; Maya: cities, astronomers, written records
2. two years
3. people of Spanish ancestry
4. helped the hacienda owners take land from peasants
5. It follows native traditions.

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