Chapter 1: Early History of the Americas, Answer Key

Chapter Opener

Page 12-13

1. The Incan civilization was located in South America.
2. The answer to this question is a matter of opinion. Students are asked to speculate, or guess, and their answers should articulately reflect an appropriate explanation of what the student thinks happened when the Spanish arrived in the Americas.

Section 1 –

Page 14

Early Mayans made use of their physical environment in many ways:

- Areas were cleared for farmland, a variety of crops were grown
- Forest animals were used as sources of food
- Trees and other forest plants were used as building materials

Page 15

1. Two resources found mostly in the lowland region were cotton and cacao.
2. Obsidian was valued for it sharp edges and was considered sacred. Jade was also considered a valuable stone.

Page 16

An empire unites many cities or places under one leader. Because the Mayan civilization was a series of separate cities, each with its own leadership and way of life, it was not considered an empire.
There are many possible answers to this question. Student answers may be similar, but are not limited to the following examples. The people of Palenque found many ways to capitalize on their location. They built flat terraces to make more land usable for farming. Being located on the border between the highlands and lowlands could possibly be problematic in a larger area that was not unified by one ruler. A city such as Palenque was not offered any sort of protection by an emperor or common ruler.

Page 18

In this picture, someone is practicing bloodletting, an example of the Mayan belief that their gods needed blood to prevent disasters or the end of the world.

The king held the highest position in Maya society. The upper class consisted of merchants, priests and noble warriors. The lower class was made up of farming families, servants and slaves.

Page 19

There are many theories about the end of the Maya civilization. Among them are:

- The burden on the common people may have caused a rebellion and abandonment of the cities
- Increased warfare may have disrupted trade and cost many lives
- An increased demand for food, coupled with weakened soil and fierce competition for new land may have resulted in great food shortages
- Droughts and other climate changes

Section 2 –

Page 21

1. Tenochtitlan, Texcoco and Tlacopan were all cities located on Lake Texcoco.
2. Student answers to this question may vary. Answers should articulately explain why he or she thinks the area around Tlaxcala was not part of the Aztec Empire.

The Aztec rise to power included many factors. Among these were fierce warlike practices, established trade routes, and merchants who acted as informants.

Page 22

The Great Temple is the most important building in this drawing. It is the highest point in the city and the location of shrines to important gods.

Page 23

Some features of Aztec art shown in this image are masks, decorated with jewels and feathers. Symbols such as snakes and skulls were also used in Aztec art worn during religious ceremonies.

Aztec religious practices included the sacrificing of battle captives or slaves to the gods in bloody ritual ceremonies in the hope of influencing warfare in their favor.

Page 24

The Aztecs believed Cortes to be the god Quetzalcoatl. When king Moctezuma was killed, the Spanish attacked and won, with help from peoples in the region who resented the Aztecs' harsh rule. The Spanish also had the advantages of having better weapons, horses and the introduction of diseases, such as smallpox.

Page 26

1. The Inca Empire stretched approximately 2400 miles from north to south.
2. While the answer to this question is a matter of opinion, student answers should include the idea that Cuzco was a better location than Quito for the Inca capital because of its central location within the empire.

The Incas maintained control of their empire by teaching younger conquered leaders' children about the ways of the Inca and by teaching all the official Inca language, Quechua. The Inca also controlled their empire through strict economic control and through the regulation and distribution of goods in the mita.

Page 28

Some features of Inca art seen in the pictures on page 28 include gold and silver, used in offerings to the gods and in objects such as masks, as well as textiles made of cloth from cotton and llama wool.

Page 28, continued
Upper class Incas lived in stone houses and wore the best clothing. Members of the upper class did not have to pay the labor tax and enjoyed many privileges. In stark contrast, lower class Incas grew crops and raised llamas, dressed in plain clothes and lived simply.

Page 29
After the Spanish killed the Incan emperor, Atahualpa, Pizarro defeated the last of the Incas and Spain took control of the entire Inca Empire.
The answer to this question is a matter of opinion. Student answers should articulately explain how he or she thinks the Spanish viewed non-Christians in a manner that accurately reflects the material in the passage on page 29.

The answer to this question is a matter of opinion. Student answers should articulately explain what he or she thinks might have happened if Pizarro had not found the Inca Empire in a manner that accurately reflects the material in the passage on page 29.

Geography and History

pages 30-31
1. The Osage lived in the Great Plains region.
2. Native Americans in the Far West relied on the sea for food.

Social Studies Skills: Critical Thinking/Study

PRACTICE
1. Main Idea: "The Maya developed an advanced for of writing that used many symbols." Supporting details include that information was recorded on large monuments and that books were also made using paper made from the bark of fig trees.
2. Some information in this paragraph that is unnecessary to the main idea includes the second sentence telling that our writing system uses 26 letters, and that other early civilizations drew pictures on cave walls. Finally, the last sentence in the paragraph, explaining that fig trees need a lot of light is also not important to the main idea.

APPLY

1. The main idea of the second paragraph is that the Maya believed in many gods and goddesses.
2. Some details that support this main idea are that there are more than 160 gods and goddesses named in a single Maya manuscript and that some of these gods included a corn god, a rain god, a sun god and a moon goddess.
3. The final sentence in the paragraph (The early Greeks also worshipped many gods and goddesses) is unnecessary and unrelated.