

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each).

NOTE: Because students were required to do outside research on these two cultures, they may not have studied everything we ask about in the short answer or essay questions below. Please have your student do only the questions that are appropriate for him, based on his research and your teaching emphasis.

1. What was Tenochtitlan?

Tenochtitlan was the capital city of the Aztecs, built on a lake.

2. Name two of the four Aztec social classes.

Any two of these would be correct:

- Nobles
- Commoners
- Serfs
- Slaves

3. True or False: Aztec weapons were designed to capture, not kill.

True

4. True or False: Incas had excellent temple schools for both boys and girls.

False. The Incan civilization had no schools at all; children learned from their parents.

5. In the Aztec culture, boys became men at the age of 14, and married soon after.

6. Aztecs and Incas both practiced a polytheistic form of religion, though it was the Aztecs who emphasized human sacrifice, believing that their gods needed to feed on such sacrifices in order to remain strong.

7. Cuzco (Cusco) was the capital and center of the Inca Empire.

8. The Incas were skilled in crafts, weaving fine cotton and woolen cloth, some with elaborate geometric designs.

9. True or False: Neither the Aztecs nor the Incas used plows.

True

10. Hernan Cortes conquered the Aztecs in 1521, and Francisco Pizarro conquered the Incas in 1532.

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions. (60 points)

1. Compare and contrast the Aztecs and the Incas, focusing on the government of their empires, their daily occupations, and their religions. NOTE: Think about the ways geography affected these civilizations and made them different.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Aztecs

- Militant society; frequent wars to capture the human sacrifices demanded by the gods
- Emperor chosen from royal family by council of nobles
- Tight, oppressive control over subject peoples—their subjects eagerly joined the Spaniards at the prospect of overthrowing the Aztecs
- Ingenious reclamation of swamp and lake land, producing fertile silt gardens called *chinampas*
- Owned land in extended family groups called *calpollis*
- Land-owning nobles, with serfs working for them
- Priests highly influential
- Women occupied with family weaving and cooking
- Bloodthirsty polytheistic religion, with gods sustained by the fresh hearts of regular human sacrifices, usually prisoners of war

Incas

- Left local officials in charge after conquests, uniting their empire loosely by loyalty
- “Divine” emperor, the Inca, who married his sister
- Agricultural society; terraced mountains, irrigated deserts
- Owned land in extended family groups called *ayllus*
- Rank determined by birth
- Women occupied with family weaving, often alpaca or llama wool
- Priests, who performed daily divination for even the smallest decisions, highly influential
- Polytheistic nature religion
- Occasional human sacrifice

Sample Answer

The Aztecs and Incas both had advanced societies, as seen in the government of their empires, their daily occupations, and their religions. They were similar in many ways, but they also had differences due to their different locations.

Both the Aztecs and the Incas administrated large empires, but the Aztecs relied more heavily on the use of force. The Aztecs were a warlike society who created and maintained their empire through frequent fighting. They kept their people in subjection by force, creating discontent. The Incas preferred to leave local rulers in charge after they had conquered an area. Their peoples tended to be much more loyal. The Aztecs ruled a more unified empire with a tighter fist; the Incas had a more loosely connected but more content empire.

Aztec and Incan daily occupations were similar, though influenced by their locations. Aztecs farmed plots of land recovered from the lakes on which their cities were built. Incas farmed the mountainsides and deserts of their empire with similar ingenuity. Both societies involved land-owning nobles and influential priests. In both societies the women worked primarily at weaving.

The Aztecs and Incas both had polytheistic religions that greatly influenced their daily lives. The Aztec religion was dark and bloodthirsty, centering on frequent human sacrifices. Priests would present the fresh hearts of human victims to the gods, who supposedly could not survive without human hearts to feed on. The Incas focused on divination, although they, too, occasionally practiced human sacrifice. Daily divination determined all decisions in Incan society, no matter how minor. Both the Aztec and Incan peoples were bound by oppressive, superstitious religions.

The Aztecs and Incas had similarly advanced civilizations. Both administered large empires, with similar occupations and polytheistic religions.

2. The Spanish and the Aztecs were not very far apart in their respective degrees of cruelty. From a biblical perspective, compare and contrast the Spanish Inquisition practices and ambitious desire to rule natives of other lands with the human sacrifice, idolatry, and warlike culture of the Aztecs.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Aztecs

- Gained their empire through conquest
- Maintained their empire by frequent fighting
- Ruled the people they conquered with an iron fist, causing them to gladly join the Spaniards at the prospect of overthrowing their Aztec taskmasters
- Used prisoners of war as victims in their human sacrifices, feeding their hearts to the gods
- Believed that the gods needed to be fed human hearts to maintain their power
- Worshipped stone idols fashioned according to their cruel ideas of the divine

Spanish

- Gained their empire by force and deception, overpowering the natives
- Exploited and enslaved their subject peoples
- In Europe, set up the Inquisition, torturing people cruelly on the slightest suspicion of heresy
- Sometimes people were turned over to the Inquisition by someone jealous of their wealth
- Misrepresented the loving character of God by trying to advance His kingdom by force and terror

Sample Answer

The Aztecs are remembered in history as a cruel and warlike people, with their oppressive domination of neighboring peoples and their bloody human sacrifices. However, the Spaniards, with their Inquisition and imperialism, were not much different. Both were cruel, idolatrous people in God's sight.

The Aztecs were indeed a cruel people. After they conquered their neighbors, they maintained their empire through frequent fighting. Prisoners of war supplied victims for human sacrifices. Priests cut the hearts from the chests of living victims. The Aztecs believed that the gods could not stay strong without being fed human hearts. They misunderstood the nature of the divine, worshipping instead cold stone idols who could demand such grisly sacrifices. All of Aztec society was tainted by this warlike cruelty.

Despite their "Christian" civilization, the Spanish were remarkably similar to the Aztecs in their cruelty. The Spaniards of the Age of Exploration were similarly obsessed with the idea of building an empire. Like the Aztecs, they were willing to trample on any indigenous people to do so. The Spanish did not believe in human sacrifice, but they did practice the Inquisition, in which people were cruelly tortured on even the suspicion of heresy. Sometimes they were handed over to the Inquisition just so jealous officials could get their land. The Spaniards knew the religion of the one true God, and yet they, too, badly misrepresented His character, believing that they could extend His kingdom by force. In these ways the Spanish were hardly different from the Aztecs they conquered.

Although the Aztecs were a pagan culture and the Spanish were reputedly Christian, they looked remarkably similar during the Age of Exploration. Both cultures built themselves an empire by cruelty to other peoples, and both committed atrocities in the name of religion, showing that they had misunderstood the nature of God.