**The Aztecs**

**I. Introduction**

The Aztecs were the rulers of what is now Mexico between about 1300 and 1500 A.D. According to Aztec legend, at the beginning of the 12th century until the 13th century, the Aztec peoples came south to the Valley of Mexico in search of a place to live. Their capital was at Tenochtitlan (Ten-oc-tit-lan). Soon, the Aztecs created one of the strongest Empires in the Americas. Some of their cities at that time were as large as any in Europe. Aztec peoples practiced a religion that was important for every part of their lives. To honor their gods, they built great temples, huge sculptures, and held ceremonies that included bloody human sacrifices. In 1521, the Spaniards destroyed and took over the Aztec empire. The Aztecs are a very important part of Mexican culture.

**DIRECTIONS: Actively read (highlight/underline important information and circle words you do not understand) the various contributions of Aztec civilization. Then, evaluate if the various action and achievements below benefitted the Aztec civilization and analyze if it was an advanced civilization or not.**

**Tenochtilan**

*“The city has many squares where markets are held and trading is carried on. There is one square… where there are daily more than 60,000 souls, buying and selling, and where are found all kinds of merchandise produced in these countries, including food products, jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, zinc, bones, shells, and feathers.”* **(Source: Hernán Cortés on seeing Tenochtitlan, 1519)**

According to Hernán Cortés, the city of Tenochtian **benefited/did not benefit (circle one)** the Aztec Empire because **(state and explain one reason)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Causeways**

*The capital city (Tenochtilan), which may have had a population as high as 200,000 to 300,000 in the early sixteenth century, was a superb example of planned growth. By building the city out into the lake, the Aztecs consolidated and enlarged the original two islands which in turn were linked to the mainland by three large* ***causeways.*** *Fresh water was brought to the city from the mainland by aqueduct.* (**Source: Jeremy A. Sabloff, The Cities of Ancient Mexico: Reconstructing a Lost World, Thames and Hudson, January 2014 Global Regents examination)**

According to Jeremy A. Sabloff, causeways **benefited/did not benefit (circle one)** the Aztec Empire because **(state and explain one reason)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Chinampas**

*…* ***Chinampas*** *added both living and agricultural space to the island city. Houses could be built on chinampas after they were firmly in place, and the plots were used to grow a great variety of products, from maize (corn) and beans to tomatoes and flowers. The Mexica [Aztec] built chinampas all around Tenochtitlan, like their neighbors in the freshwater lakes to the south. They were, however, constantly faced with the danger of flooding, which brought salty water across the chinampas and ruined the land and crops. Lake Texcoco accumulated minerals from the river water running into it, which caused the water to be brackish [mix of fresh and salt water]. In the mid-15th century, this problem was solved; a dike (a wall to hold back water) was built, separating the western section of the lake where Tenochtitlan was located and protecting the city from salty water and some flooding.* **(Source: Frances F. Berdan, The Aztecs, Chelsea House Publishers, January 2014 Global Regents examination)**

According to Frances F. Berdan, the chinampas **benefited/did not benefit (circle one)** the Aztecs because **(state and explain one reason)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Human Sacrifice**

*The prisoners taken at Teuclepec were brought out. The ceremonial priests began to sacrifice them, slicing open their chests and extracting their hearts. First, they raised the hearts to the sun, then they threw them into the shrine before the gods to receive rain, sun, and other blessings from the gods to make life possible. This sacrifice began at midday and ended at nightfall. Aztec practice as the intentional manipulation and expansion of a widespread phenomenon that had long existed among many American peoples. In other words, the Aztec rulers, priests, and nobility used war and human sacrifice for political purposes to terrorize their neighbors and subdue (control/dominate) the lower classes.* **(Source: Peter N. Stearns et al., World Civilizations: The Global Experience, AP Edition, New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc., Longman, 2003)**

According to Peter N. Stearns, human sacrifice **benefited/did not benefit (circle one)** the Aztec Empire because **(state and explain one reason)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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