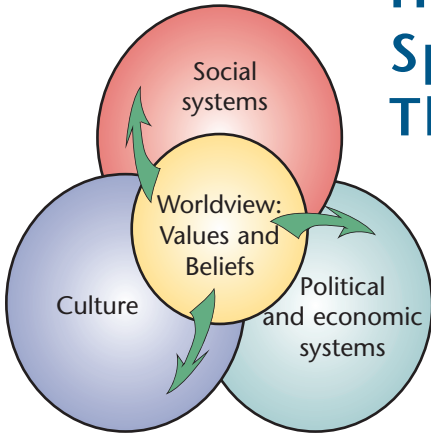


CHAPTER 8

How Did the Aztec and the Spanish Ways of Life Reflect Their Worldviews?



I wonder ... what other questions might be asked about their societies?

A society's way of life includes the three elements of worldview: social systems, economic and political systems, and culture. Learning about these elements gives a better understanding of the values and beliefs that make up the worldview of a society. These values and beliefs are reflected in the way a group of people lives.

Sometimes, it is easier to understand the worldview of a group of people by exploring the answers to some basic questions:

- What is the relationship between people? Is there a class system?
- What education is offered? Who is educated? Is education considered to be important?
- What type of government and judicial systems are in place?
- Is there a strong economy? How are goods and services produced and distributed?
- What are the religious beliefs? What are the spiritual beliefs? Do these beliefs affect how people conduct their daily lives?
- Are there common traditions?
- Are the arts valued and supported?

Looking for answers to these types of questions about a group's worldviews will help to understand Aztec and Spanish behaviour towards one another after the Spanish landed on the shores of the Aztec Empire.

In this chapter, you will explore answers to these questions:



How Did the Social Systems of the Aztec Reflect Their Worldview?

How Did the Spanish Social Systems Reflect the Spanish Worldview?

How Did the Political and Economic Systems Reflect the Aztec Worldview?

How Did the Political and Economic Systems of the Spanish Reflect Their Worldview?

How Did the Culture of the Aztec Reflect Their Worldview?

How Did the Culture of the Spanish Reflect Their Worldview?

Focus on Inquiry: In What Ways Were the Worldviews of the Aztec and the Spanish in Conflict?

Worldview Investigation

In the last chapter, your group created information that described the factors that influenced the worldview of the hypothetical society of beings from another planet. You saved the information in a shared class folder.

Now, you will describe how their society operates. Think about what you have learned from previous case studies about how societies operate. You may decide to use terms such as *expansionist*, *feudal*, *isolationist*, *humanist*, or other terms.

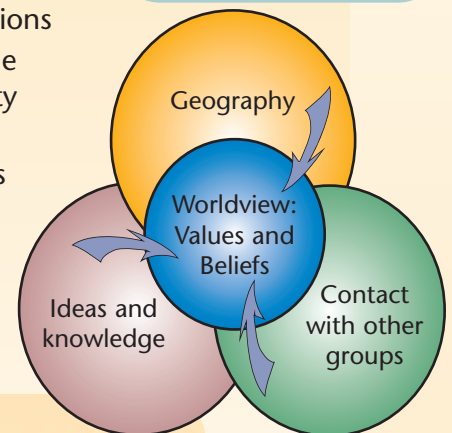
Use a computer to create and save files that show how this society operates, detailing the culture, social systems, and political and economic systems. Create one or more files such as these:

- a web or mind map, describing topics such as language, religion, education, trade, and government
- a spreadsheet or database of information, using a number of fields such as population, government centres, military, leaders, or celebrations
- a web page of information about the culture, combined with the web pages created by other groups, that will then show a variety of cultures
- artifacts such as a photo of a cultural event or a charter of rights

In this chapter, you will learn how the societies of the Aztec and the Spanish operated because of their worldviews. Imagine, as you have in this Worldview Investigation, how this might affect what happened when they met face to face.

This Worldview Investigation is a continuation of the one you began in chapter 7.

Think about the way of life of the beings from another planet and how their society operates — their culture, social system, and political and economic system. Are they really very different from us?



Spreadsheets

You can use a spreadsheet to organize data about the society you created. The numerical data in a spreadsheet can be used to create graphs. Practise using the spreadsheet program available at your school. Then, create your spreadsheet files.

- As a class, plan the fields you will use. Each field holds a certain type of information. For example, you may have a field that records the population of beings on their home world. The entry in the field would be a number. If the title of the field is Language, the entry would be a word. If the title of the field is Flag or Symbol, the entry could be a graphic.
- As a group, create the spreadsheet file using the fields that you chose as a class. Save the file in the shared group folder.
- Enter the data into the file. You may decide to share the work among the members of your group. If so, learn how to enter the data into a single file. You may need to take turns.
- Practise retrieving information from the spreadsheet file. If you pose a question that you wonder about, can you find an answer in the file? If not, perhaps you should include more fields or more data.

SKILLS CENTRE

Turn to **How to Organize Information** in the Skills Centre to review other ways to do this using charts and graphic organizers.

How Did the Social Systems of the Aztec Reflect Their Worldview?

Aztec society was highly structured, based on agriculture and trade, and guided by a religion that was part of every aspect of life. The Aztec worshipped gods that represented natural forces necessary to their agricultural economy. All of the Aztec cities were dominated by giant stone pyramids topped by temples where human sacrifices provided the gods with the human blood that the priests and people believed kept their world in balance.

The Aztec had a hierarchical system of authority divided into three social classes: upper, middle, and lower:

- The pipiltin, the upper class, were the ruling class made up of nobles, high-ranking warriors, and high-ranking priests.
- Commoners were divided into two classes: the macehualtin (*mah-say-WALL-teen*) or middle class, and the peasants or mayeques (*mah-YAY-kays*), the lower class. The commoners provided all the labour to keep the economy of the empire flourishing and made up most of the military.

An individual was born into a particular social class and generally remained a member of that class. Within each class, there were subgroups with different status.

From the Mexico City Museum. Everyone in Aztec society was born into a calpulli or clan. Most often, clans were made up of extended family members. However, as tradespeople and artisans became more prominent in the cities, they would often form their own calpulli. The illustration shows the division of clans: priests, warriors, and nobles on the upper level, commoners on the lower level.



I wonder ... was Spanish society a hierarchical society?

Nobility

The pipiltin, the upper class, were the ruling class. Members of this class occupied the top positions in government, the army, and the priesthood. The most revered noble was the emperor, referred to as the huey tlatoani, the great speaker. As well as being the political ruler, he was also considered to be the highest-ranking priest.

In rural areas, the pipiltin owned their own land that was worked by the commoners. The amount of land each noble family owned was based on their social position in society and the administrative positions they held in the community. In the cities, the pipiltin lived in separate areas from the commoners. They built luxurious homes and had many servants.

Members of the pipiltin were expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary way and follow a strict code of behaviour. They were expected to be role models for the commoners. When any pipiltin broke the laws of the empire, they were punished even more severely than a commoner. The nobility held the jobs of administrators, judges, and clerks. They were responsible for keeping records of newly conquered lands, the tribute held in warehouses, and what tribute was owed. Some noble warriors gained sufficient honour to join the two military orders reserved for the nobility, the Eagle Knights and the Jaguar Knights. The roles of the pipiltin were similar to those of the samurai of Japan.

Commoners

The macehualtin, the middle class, were able to improve their status by gaining recognition in the military or by becoming priests, merchants, artisans, or long-distance traders called pochteca (*poach-TAYK-ah*). A small number of macehualtin managed to become very wealthy, usually through trading, and were able to purchase their own land.

- Warriors were next in social status to the nobility, which reflected their importance in the Aztec worldview.
- Some macehualtin were allowed to become priests and fill the more lowly religious positions.
- Merchants and pochteca became wealthy from their trade in luxury goods.
- Macehualtin men could also distinguish themselves as fine toltecah (*tohl-TAY-kah*) or artisans. Artisans would often live in their own communities called calpulli (*cahl-POOL-lee*).
- Those who distinguished themselves as warriors or exemplary leaders might be appointed as judges for their calpulli. These judges had the authority to make decisions about petty crimes.

The title of the Aztec emperor, huey tlatoani, great speaker, suggests the importance of the oral tradition in their society.

The calpulli formed the basis of the Aztec social order, just as we consider the family as the core unit in Canadian society.

Moctezuma the Elder (r. 1440–1469) proclaimed a legal dress code for the social classes. Only the king and his chief advisor could wear sandals in the palace. Outside of the palace, nobles could wear sandals, garments of fine cotton with distinctive designs, and elaborate jewellery. Macehuallin could not wear cotton clothing; their clothing had to be made of coarser fibres from a cactus plant.

The poorest peasants, *mayerques*, worked the land of the nobles. They were also required to build and maintain temples of the cities and the palaces of the nobles. Although the land belonged to the nobles, the *mayerques* were guaranteed a piece of land that they could cultivate for life and even pass on to their children. They received a share of the produce after tribute and taxes were paid, but they were forced to pay heavy taxes. As the empire grew and more tribute came to Tenochtitlan from conquered societies, their tax burdens were reduced.

Lowest in status were the *tlacotin* (*tlah-KOH-teen*), the slaves. No person was born into slavery. An individual could sell himself or herself into slavery if unable to pay a debt. Sometimes, a person was made a slave as punishment for a crime. The owner of a slave did not own the person — only the work of the person. Slaves were able to own property and marry. Their children were free. It was possible for slaves to buy back their freedom.

Priests

Boys from all classes could study to become priests. However, the top-ranking positions in the priesthood were reserved for the *pipiltin*. These priests would advise the emperor and oversee important religious functions. Their most important job was to offer human sacrifices to the gods. Often parents would dedicate their children to the priesthood while they were still babies. Men in the priesthood did not marry.

Young women could enter the priesthood but were given specific roles to do with honouring goddesses.

The Everyday Life of the Mexicans, showing ceremonies performed by Aztec priests



Roles of Men and Women

Men and women had different roles in Aztec society. Women were expected to care for the household and family, though some did become fine artisans. Men did all other physical work and were forced to join the army when soldiers were needed. Although only men could hold positions of power, women could do crafts, run a business, and control their own property independently.

Children began to work beside their parents as early as age five. Girls married around the mid-teens; boys married in their late teens or early twenties.

Women enjoyed substantial legal protections, along with a high degree of freedom. Wives enjoyed legal protection from marital abuse. In the case of a marriage breakup, women had automatic custody of the younger children.

Education

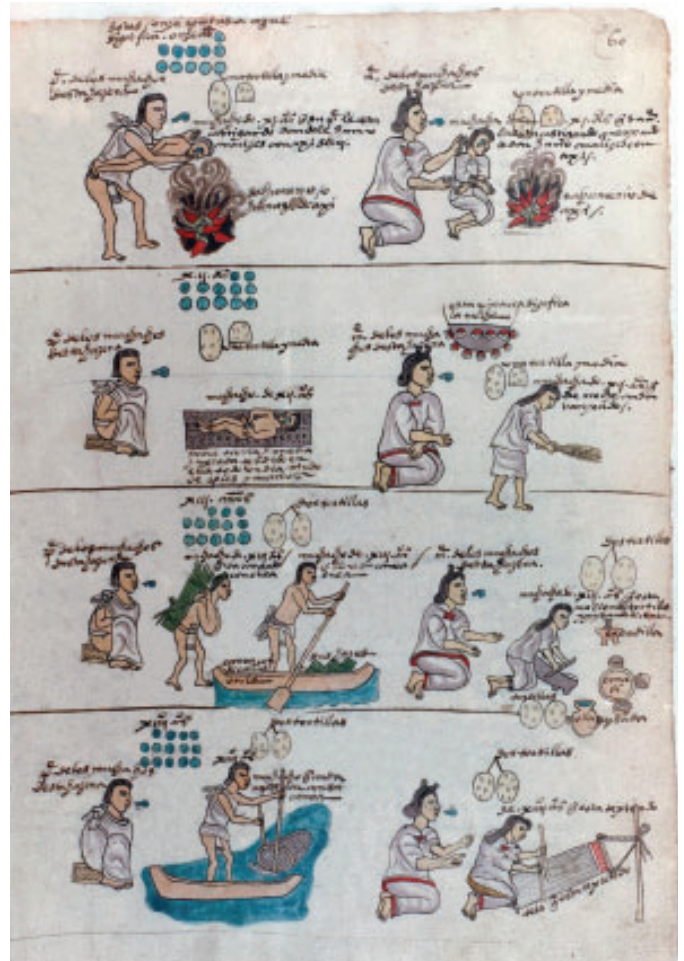
Education was free for all girls and boys. They were taught religious rituals and structured classes of singing, dancing, and music. All children learned the correct songs, poems, and dances for major religious ceremonies. They made and played drums, gongs, and ceramic flutes to accompany singing and poetry recitals. Singing and dancing was a way of passing on traditions and values from one generation to the next. Rhetoric and the ability to memorize long poems, stories, songs, and histories was also very important in Aztec schools. Most information was passed on through stories, songs, and poetry of the oral tradition.

There were separate school systems for children of nobles and those of the macehualtin. Schooling began in the early teens, and students attended classes until they married.

From the *Bodleian Codex*. Aztec education of boys (left) and girls (right). A father punishes his son by holding him in the smoke of burning chile peppers while speaking to him. The boy is then thrown into a mud puddle. He is taught to carry heavy loads, paddle a canoe, and fish. A mother punishes her daughter by having her breathe in the fumes of burning chiles while speaking to her. The girl is taught how to sweep, grind maize, and weave.

I wonder ... were the roles of women in the Aztec society similar to the roles of women in Spain?

I wonder ... were they similar to traditional roles of women in Canada's Aboriginal societies?



Aztec schools for children of commoners were called *telpochcalli* (*tale-poach-CAHL-lee*). Boys and girls were taught separately. The boys lived at the schools. There were no books or writing in the schools for the commoners. Some children might be sent to learn a craft from the *toltecah*, the artisans. The boys were taught occupational skills, history, religious practices, and the characteristics of good citizenship. Their primary tasks, though, were to learn the elements of warfare and how to be a warrior. Boys were also taught rhetoric and speech. A few with special abilities were sent to schools attended by children of nobles.

I wonder ... how were the expectations of the Aztec nobility similar to the code of the samurai?

Schools for children of nobility were called *calmecac* (*cahl-MAY-kahk*). Sons of noble families also lived at their schools. Their training to be warriors was even more difficult than the training for *macehualtin* boys. The sons of the *pipiltin* were trained for the high offices they would hold as adults. They were taught rhetoric, music, history, and traditions, how to govern and advance within the imperial bureaucracy, and how to live wisely. The curriculum emphasized self-control, humility, and unselfishness, highly valued qualities in Aztec society. It was expected that these boys would become the future leaders of their people.

Girls in both systems were taught how to manage the households of their future spouses. They learned how to spin and weave. Their curriculum also included subjects of morality, religion, history, and tradition.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Aztec society had laws governing how members of each class could dress. An individual's status or importance would be shown by the clothing he or she wore.
 - a. Do you believe individuals should have a choice in how they dress?
 - b. Do you think the way people dress today shows evidence of a class system?
 - c. Debate the following statement: Students should wear school uniforms. Consider how wearing a school uniform might affect students' worldview. Also consider how the worldview a student comes from would affect his or her response to this statement.
2. The ideals of good citizenship were taught in both Aztec and European societies. In small groups, discuss how citizenship is taught and practised in schools today. As a class, brainstorm how students can demonstrate good citizenship within their community.

How Did the Spanish Social Systems Reflect the Spanish Worldview?

In Spanish society, the feudal system remained in place longer than in most other European countries. This system was not officially abolished until 1486 and was then replaced with a seigneurial system of landholding. Under the seigneurial system, lands given to the nobles by the monarchy were operated as self-sufficient estates. Peasants were given sections of land by the lord of an estate to cultivate in return for money, goods, or services. Although the land was owned by the lord, the right to cultivate the land could be handed down from peasant father to peasant son. The lord of the estate did not have the right to withdraw the property or to increase the taxes.

By the beginning of the 16th century, nobles still made up the smallest percentage of the population, but owned the greatest amount of land. There were still many more peasants than urban business owners, although the merchant class was beginning to grow.

Nobility

In Spain, nobles were very powerful and ruled their estates almost like monarchs. Although King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella took back much of the land owned by the nobility, huge tracts of land were still in the hands of a small percentage of the population. These large tracts of lands were passed on to the eldest son. Traditionally, any other sons either studied to enter the clergy or tried to gain honour as a conquistador. Spanish nobility very much **disdained** manual labour and commerce, and judged an individual's worth by social position rather than by achievement through hard work.

The title of Spanish Grande was given to the highest class of nobility — the dukes, marquis, and counts. Lesser nobles were referred to as don. The class of minor nobles were referred to as the hidalgo. The hidalgo were expected to follow a code of behaviour based on courage in battle; many took part in the Reconquista.

Commoners

Commoners made up 90% of Spain's population. Among the commoners, the feudal peasant farmers or herders had the lowest status. Most peasants lived and worked on huge estates that belonged to the nobles. Only a tiny percentage of peasants eventually owned land or were able to save money.

disdain: to treat with contempt; to look down on

The seigneurial system, as practised in France, was used in New France until 1854.



Spanish nobility, mid-1500s

parish: a district that has its own Christian church and minister or priest

With the support of Ferdinand and Isabella, a middle class began to grow. Professionals trained in religion, law, or medicine, as well as independent merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and traders all had a higher social status than individuals who did any type of manual labour. Often these groups shared the same lifestyles as the nobility. Many of the wealthy merchant class were educated and owned property.

Priests

Roman Catholic priests became the religious leaders in local **parishes** or joined formal religious orders such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, or the Dominicans.

Priests who were members of religious orders were generally better educated and came from wealthier families than those associated with local parishes. The religious orders were well organized and functioned independently of one another. Although there were no provisions by the government to provide schools for commoners, the religious orders operated many basic schools for these children.

There were no formal orders or organizations for the parish priests. Often they would have to look for other work to earn money to support themselves. Some priests had the opportunity to advance through the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. The few priests who reached the upper clergy had great status and rank, similar to that of the nobility.

Roles of Men and Women

The roles of women in Spain were similar to the roles of women throughout Renaissance Europe. Women were expected to marry well and take care of the household. Divorce was forbidden by the Church. As in most European societies, however, there were women who became fine writers and artisans.

Men were expected to do the hard labour, although peasant women would cultivate the land when necessary. Only men could hold government positions and be involved in running a business.

Education

Spain in the Middle Ages, with much of it under Moorish control, was far more tolerant of different religions than any other area of Europe. Jews and Muslims served Spain and its monarchs well, providing an active commercial class and educated elite. These populations generally had not been tolerated in other European states. Before Spain evicted them, Jews and Muslims provided a highly respected education for the sons of the nobility. Now, education became tightly linked with the Roman Catholic Church.

Religious studies became important at all levels of education. Spanish scholars began to focus on religious studies rather than humanist pursuits.

In towns and cities, the Roman Catholic Church offered schooling at the elementary level for most children. Also, in some rural areas, it provided basic formal education to children of the peasants. Some parishes taught work-related skills, such as farming and carpentry, to the boys, and household skills, such as cooking and sewing, to the girls. Merchant and craft guilds also maintained some schools that provided training in specific crafts and trades.

Sons of nobles and wealthy families were mostly tutored at home and then went on to university. Spain had a history of university scholarship, since the first universities had been established by the Moors two centuries before Aragon and Castile were unified. The oldest university was at Salamanca, founded about 1212. By the end of the 15th century, there were several more universities. Although many European scholars benefited from the universities and libraries left behind by the Jews and Muslims when they were expelled, Spanish society benefited the most.

The daughters of noble families sometimes attended schools of the royal court, but more often received private lessons in their homes. They were traditionally taught subjects such as art, music, and poetry. Queen Isabella provided a formal education for her sons and daughters. She became a role model for other noblewomen who began to seek a broader education for themselves.



University founded at Alcala de Henares, near Madrid, by Cardinal Cisneros in 1486. In 1836, it was moved to Madrid and was named the Complutense University of Madrid.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. The Spanish did not provide free education for all boys and girls; the Aztec did. Both societies had an elite program of studies for children of nobles. What do these facts say about each of their worldviews?
2. The Aztec and the Spanish each had a formal hierarchical society. In Canada today, many people believe that anyone can gain wealth, power, and status through hard work, regardless of family history and finances.
 - a. What does this belief reveal about the Canadian worldview?
 - b. Do you hold this belief as well? Explain.
3. Consider the roles of women in Western societies today. How might the goals of a 13-year-old girl in contemporary Canada differ from those of a 13-year-old girl living in Tenochtitlan or Cordoba in 1500? How would these goals reflect a worldview?



Montezuma, Emperor of Mexico, engraving, Pierre Dufles, 1780

PROFILE

Moctezuma II (1480–1520)

Moctezuma II became huey tlatoani, or emperor, in the year 1502. He is the best known of the Aztec rulers. When he came to power, he dismissed many government authorities who had worked under the previous ruler, his uncle, Ahuizotl. He strengthened the power of the nobility by choosing his advisors from the aristocracy. He built a magnificent palace that was so large and luxurious that upon seeing it, the Spanish declared it was superior to any building in Spain. Because he was the emperor, his subjects were only allowed to look at him during special festivals. Anyone who looked at him at any other time was put to death. He was often carried by slaves so that his feet would not touch the ground where commoners walked.

Moctezuma was a priest, scholar, astronomer, and warrior. He believed the physical Earth and everything on it was completely dependent on the will of the gods. He was very religious and believed the stories and legends about gods, **omens**, and prophecies. Religion was always part of warfare, and he was not confident of an easy victory unless he consulted the gods to see if the battle should be fought.

Moctezuma did not believe in establishing relationships with the leaders in the city-states he conquered, but ruled with absolute power. His use of brute force and terror created a great deal of anger and resentment through parts of his empire. He often had to send his warriors to put down rebellions. He extended the empire, but could not defeat the powerful kingdoms of **Tlaxcala and Cholula**. These enemies later played an important role in the Spanish conquest of the Aztec.

omen: an event or item predicting future good or evil

You will often find different spellings of Moctezuma's name. For example, in many books published in English, Moctezuma's name is spelled with an *n*, as in Montezuma.

...the great Moctezuma was magnificently clad, in their fashion, and wore sandals...the soles of which are of gold and the upper parts ornamented with precious stones...there were many more lords who walked before the great Moctezuma, sweeping the ground on which he was to tread, and laying down cloaks so that his feet should not touch the earth. Not one of these chieftains dared to look him in the face...All kept their eyes lowered most reverently except those four lords, his nephews, who were supporting him.

— Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a lieutenant of Cortés in *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*



Moctezuma II, at top, in his palace, judges in centre, litigants at bottom, from *Bodleian Codex*, early 16th century

How Did the Political and Economic Systems Reflect the Aztec Worldview?

Aztec Political System

The Aztec emperor, the huey tlatoani, was elected by a Council of Wise Men made up of the greatest warriors and the wisest priests chosen by members of their calpullis. The huey tlatoani was the representative of the god Huitzilopochtli and no one could disobey him. He was head of the government and the highest priest in the land. In matters of law, the final appeal for sentencing a criminal would be his decision. If an emperor did not manage the empire wisely, the Council of Wise Men could dismiss him.

Often a son or nephew of one emperor would be elected as the next emperor. However, the position of huey tlatoani was not hereditary. The title was not automatically handed down to a family member. The man had to prove to the Council that he had the skills to be a good leader.

Altepetl

Each person throughout the Aztec Empire belonged to an altepetl, made up of a grouping of related calpulli (clans). An altepetl was similar to an Italian city-state during the Renaissance or a domain in Japan during the era of the shoguns. The society living in an altepetl practised its own customs and beliefs and prayed to its own patron god. Each altepetl had its own origin stories and recorded history. Although most of the altepetls spoke Nahuatl, each was a distinct cultural group.

The main city of each altepetl was supported by the countryside surrounding it. Every altepetl chose a ruler, called a tlatoani, from one of its noble families.

The Mexica were one of the three altepetls that formed the Triple Alliance. If an altepetl was defeated by the army of the Triple Alliance, it was forced to pay tribute.

Farming

The backbone of the Aztec economy was farming. Products were used for tribute and to pay taxes. Any products left over were used to trade for other goods and services. Technological innovations such as irrigation and dike systems increased agricultural productivity. Initially, most farming was done in the fields close to the farmers' homes. However, just south of Tenochtitlan, around Xochimilco (*shoh-chee-MEEL-koh*) and other cities, farming was done on chinampas (*chee-NAHM-pahs*), or floating gardens, in the freshwater areas built up from the swampy areas around the lakes. Once farmers began to plant on terraced hillsides and chinampas, food production increased.

Tenochtitlan and Area, 1519



Chinampas

To create the chinampas, plots were marked off with stakes and then enclosed by weaving vines and branches between them. Canals were dug between the plots, and the plots were filled with rotting aquatic plants and layers of mud dredged from the lakebed. Layers were added until the plots were higher than the water level. Around the edges of each plot, willow trees were planted so their roots would anchor it to the bottom of the lake.

You can visit the floating gardens of the chinampas in the Xochimilco district of Mexico City.



Construction of the Chinampas, 20th-century oil on wood, Jose Muro Pico



Today, in southern Mexico City, farmers still grow corn and flowers on the same chinampas built by the Aztec.

I wonder ... what other agricultural areas of the world are referred to as breadbaskets?

The Aztec had no large domestic animals, so the chinampas were fertilized with human waste collected from public latrine boats in the city. This was a common practice in many societies throughout history and even today. Farmers harvested as many as seven crops per year. The chinampas were considered to be the breadbasket of the empire. Produce grown on the chinampas supplied almost one-half of all the food for these cities, as well as the city of Tenochtitlan.

I wonder ... did the Aztec have the same concern with maintaining the balance of nature as Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit do in their traditional worldviews?

Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731–1787) was the first Spanish chronicler to write about the Aztec's concern about land conservation. He wrote that the Aztec

paid no less attention to the preservation of the woods which supplied them with fuel to burn, timber to build, and game for the diversion of the king

— Dobson, T.

cottage industry: an industry whose labour force consists of families or individuals working at home with their own equipment

Green lake scum was collected from Lake Texcoco and pressed into bars to form a nutritious food that tasted like cheese. It was sold at the markets.

Other Goods and Services

Marshland farmers worked full time on the chinampas. However, inland farmers often had the time to develop a part-time specialization. For example, they produced goods made from raw materials or they mined products such as salt or stone. Producing these local goods eventually developed into **cottage industries** that supplied products for neighbours and other citizens. Objects such as ceramic pottery, blades and other tools made from obsidian, and paper made from the inside of bark, were popular products. In the cities, there were other services such as those provided by barbers and herbalists and individuals who sold prepared food and drink.

Artisans developed highly specialized skills and worked at their craft full time. Some made elaborate jewellery from precious stones, gold, and silver. The most valued artisans were the feather workers who crafted vibrantly coloured capes, garments, and ceremonial items from tropical bird feathers. Any products not wanted by the nobles were sent to the marketplaces.

Marketplace

Goods that were not used for tribute or taxes went to the markets. There were many local regional markets, but the largest market was at Tenochtitlan. A wide selection of the finest crafts was always found in the big-city markets.

Marketplace exchange was based on barter or trade. Markets were divided into streets with each type of merchandise sold on its own street. Selling outside the marketplace was forbidden.

The greatest market was in the Tlatelolco (*tlah-tay-LOHL-koh*) section of Tenochtitlan, which the Spanish conquistador, Hernando Cortés (*air-NAHN-doh-kor-TESS*), described as being

... twice as big as that of Salamanca, [a Spanish city] with arcades all around, where more than sixty thousand people come...to buy and sell, and where every kind of merchandise produced in these lands is found; provisions, as well as ornaments of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, stones, shells, bones and feathers. They also sell lime, hewn and unhewn stone, adobe bricks, tiles and cut and uncut woods of various kinds. There is a street where they sell game and birds of every species found in this land...They sell rabbits and hares and small gelded dogs which they breed for eating. There are streets for herbalists where all the medicinal herbs and roots found in the land are sold...There are shops like barbers where they have their hair washed and shaved and shops where they sell food and drink. There are also men like porters to carry loads.

— Hernan Cortés in *Letters from Mexico*

Some articles were given a standardized value; cacao beans or large white cotton cloaks were used as currency. For example, one cloak was equal to 100 beans, and a person could live for an entire year on the value of 20 cloaks.

Hernan is a shortened form of the name Hernando.

A reconstruction of part of the great market at Tlatelolco, Tenochtitlan, Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City



I wonder ... how might having to use porters affect their worldview?

Pochteca

The Aztec had no draft animals such as horses or oxen, nor did they use the wheel as part of their transportation system.

All goods were transported by porters or by canoe along the waterways that ran down the Valley of Mexico. The porters worked for the *pochteca*, long-distance merchants, who organized caravans of porters all across the empire. The *pochteca* traded finished goods for the raw materials used to make clothing and jewellery for the nobility. The *pochteca* were sometimes called spying merchants because they often travelled to enemy territories and reported back to the emperor. The *pochteca* held a position of high status in society.

Pochteca and their porters brought basic goods and exotic luxury goods to Tenochtitlan from the far reaches of the empire. The prized goods included rare feathers, pelts of jungle animals, gemstones, precious metals, and cloth. *Florentine Codex*.



I wonder ... how did Aztec methods of transport compare to those of Canada's Aboriginal groups?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. How were the Aztec religious beliefs and practices and the Aztec political systems connected?
2. How did the Aztec adjust agricultural activities to the ecology of the area? What do these adjustments say about the Aztec?
3. Why might inland farmers have more time to develop artistic skills than those who farmed the chinampas? How do you think their worldview might have differed?
4. Think about how using money instead of bartering to obtain goods would affect a person's or a group's worldview.
 - a. What would become most important in a society that used money to obtain products?
 - b. What would be most important in a society that bartered or traded one kind of product for another kind of product?

How Did the Political and Economic Systems of the Spanish Reflect Their Worldview?

Spanish Political System

The king and queen were the highest political power in Spain. The Spanish believed in the Divine Right of Kings, a doctrine stating that only God could give someone the right to rule. Since God had appointed the monarch, no king or queen could be removed from power because of misrule. Therefore, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had near absolute power, although they were limited by custom and often the force of law.

In the newly united Spain, Castile was a wealthier and more powerful kingdom than Aragon. However, Queen Isabella of Castile decided she and her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon, would rule the two kingdoms together. Although there was a central authority, each kingdom maintained separate parliamentary and administrative institutions.

Spanish Parliament

The Spanish parliament was called the Cortes. Any new legislation was supposed to be approved by the Cortes to ensure that new laws would be in the best interests of the country. However, the king and queen could call and dismiss the Cortes whenever they wished. Still, the Cortes did have some power because it controlled the treasury.

Under the rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the powers of the Cortes were reduced. A weakened parliament meant that there was almost no opposition to requests of the monarchy. Although the nobles were given high-ranking administration positions in the government, they were given fewer opportunities to be involved in areas of important decision making.



Coca Castle, built in the town of Coca, northwest of Madrid, by Don Alonso de Fonseca, Archbishop of Seville, a major figure at the court of Castile. Coca Castle was built of brick in the Moorish style in the second half of the 15th century.



Cathedral in Segovia, capital of Castile-Leon. It was constructed by architect Juan Gil de Hontanón between 1522 and 1577.

Role of the Church in Government

Throughout many countries at this time, the Roman Catholic Church was often closely linked to the monarchy. The pope had the authority to ask members of the clergy to oppose royal actions or decrees. People who did not accept the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were often considered disloyal to the monarchy. In Spain, despite being devoutly religious, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella reduced the

powers of the Roman Catholic Church. They gained the right to place individuals of their own choosing, those who would not oppose them, in important positions within the Church.

Spanish Economy

In the kingdom of Aragon, the primary economic activities were agriculture and the manufacture of wool products. Along the Mediterranean coast, Barcelona and Valencia were major seaports for importing and exporting goods.

Like other areas of Europe, after the first cycle of the Black Death, the population of Spain decreased. This resulted in a decline in both agricultural and manufacturing output. The seaports also suffered from labour shortages. In addition, Barcelona could not compete with the Italian sea merchants for trade in southern Europe.

While under Moorish rule, between the 8th and 13th centuries, agriculture in Castile flourished. Olives, grapes, wheat, rice, and fruit were some of the main products. However, by the time Ferdinand and Isabella came to power, agricultural activities in Castile were limited. When the Moorish lands were conquered, most of the area was divided among a few noble families, many of whom had no interest in agriculture. As well, the sheep-farmers guild formed a powerful organization called the Mesta. In return for payments to the treasury, the monarchy gave large pieces of land to the Mesta. Sheep now grazed on lands that had previously been used for farming, reducing the amount of produce. The minimum of agricultural products created a lack of money to support the development of larger industries. Spanish industries generally remained as cottage industries, so Spain did not develop a strong manufacturing base. Spain imported more products than it exported.

Economic Problems

Manual labour, such as farming and running commercial businesses, was not held in high regard by the nobility or by anyone who wanted to gain social prestige. The nobility saw farming and business as something the lower classes did. Although they had no interest in agriculture, they liked to own land and used their money to purchase more land. This land would then remain uncultivated. In addition, small businesses purchased land when they had extra money, instead of creating more business. With little investment in agriculture or commercial efforts, the economy of Spain suffered.

Under King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Spanish economy did improve for a time, especially in Castile where the wool trade reached its peak between 1480 and 1500. Other merchant activity was also stimulated. However, when many European countries became involved in wars during the 1500s, Spain's economy suffered again since it was unable to sell its wool. The Europeans wanted guns and weapons, not wool.

The nobility did become involved in overseas trading when Spain established its colonies, but Spanish manufacturing could not produce enough products for both local use and export to the colonies. The colonies increased their own manufacturing production; the Spanish did not. Over time, huge amounts of gold and silver were exported back to Spain and it became one of the richest and most powerful countries in Europe. Unfortunately, rather than improving the Spanish economy, the large influx of gold and silver eventually caused massive inflation in Spain and other parts of Europe. With so much gold and silver, Spain had more money than the amount of goods available for sale, since it had not developed a commercial or manufacturing base. This caused an increase in the price of products.



Detail from *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, from the border of the Rich Missal of Cardinal Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros, Spanish School, 16th century

In Europe, horses began to be used for farming during the Middle Ages. Prior to that, they were used in warfare and in sport.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. What attitudes did the Aztec and the Spanish have about agriculture that illustrate a difference in their worldviews?
2. Compare the rights and freedoms of Aztec and Spanish citizens at this time. Discuss the following questions:
 - a. How were the Aztec protected from inappropriate actions or requests from the emperor?
 - b. How was the Spanish parliament supposed to protect the rights of the citizens?
 - c. How are the rights of Canadians protected?
3. The Spanish used currency to buy and sell their products. The Aztec, for the most part, used a barter system.
 - a. How would these two ways of obtaining products create different values about gold and silver for the Spanish and the Aztec?
 - b. Compare the political and economic systems of the Aztec and the Spanish. Which aspects of their systems may have led to misunderstanding and conflict?

Same Time, Different Place



Warriors, 1500s

During the 15th century, while Aztec Eagle and Jaguar warriors were helping build their empire, the Spanish conquistadors were conquering Muslim-held lands in Spain, and the Japanese samurai were still revered as honoured warriors in their daimyo.

Aztec Warriors

All able men in the empire, both commoners and nobles, were expected to go to war. The two elite orders of the military, the Eagles and the Jaguars, were made up of men from the pipiltin. The Eagles and the Jaguars wore special costumes on the battlefield. They were expected to demonstrate extraordinary courage in battle to inspire the common warriors.

Aztec warriors were seen as soldiers of the sun and were held in the highest esteem by the people. Their prestige remained the same whether they died in battle or as a sacrifice to the gods. They fought hand-to-hand combat with obsidian weapons. The role of the warriors was to capture their enemies for sacrifice and make sure defeated territories paid their tribute. They believed their destiny after death was to accompany the sun from the time it rose at dawn until it settled at sunset.

Spanish Conquistadors

The conquistadors were the soldiers who brought most of the Iberian Peninsula under Spanish rule. They also helped bring much of the Americas under Spanish rule between the 15th and 17th centuries. Many of them came from areas of Spain where wars against other societies had gone on for centuries, so fighting was a way of life. They engaged in hand-to-hand fighting during battle, but also used muskets and weapons made of steel. Their goal was to kill as many of the enemy as possible. The title *conquistador*, which relates to the English word *conqueror*, was chosen because of its similarity to the term *Reconquista*, the Christian reconquest of Moorish Spain. The conquistadors in the colonies followed the motto "For God, Glory, and Gold."

Japanese Samurai

Prior to the Meiji Period, the samurai were warriors who fought for the lord of their daimyo. They were skilled in martial arts and the use of the bow and arrow and the sword. They were excellent horsemen. Many of the elite samurai would blacken their teeth, apply powder to their faces, and tie their hair in a topknot before they fought. They did this so that if they were killed and beheaded, as was the practice of the time, they could keep their dignity even after they died. After a battle, a samurai would take the heads of those he had killed to his lord as trophies and proof of the number of enemy he had slain. If the samurai were defeated and left alive, they were expected to kill themselves through seppuku, ritual suicide.

How Did the Culture of the Aztec Reflect Their Worldview?

The everyday activities of the Aztec and the Spanish provide insights into their worldview. Their religious beliefs, their architecture, and the arts they supported all show what was important to them.

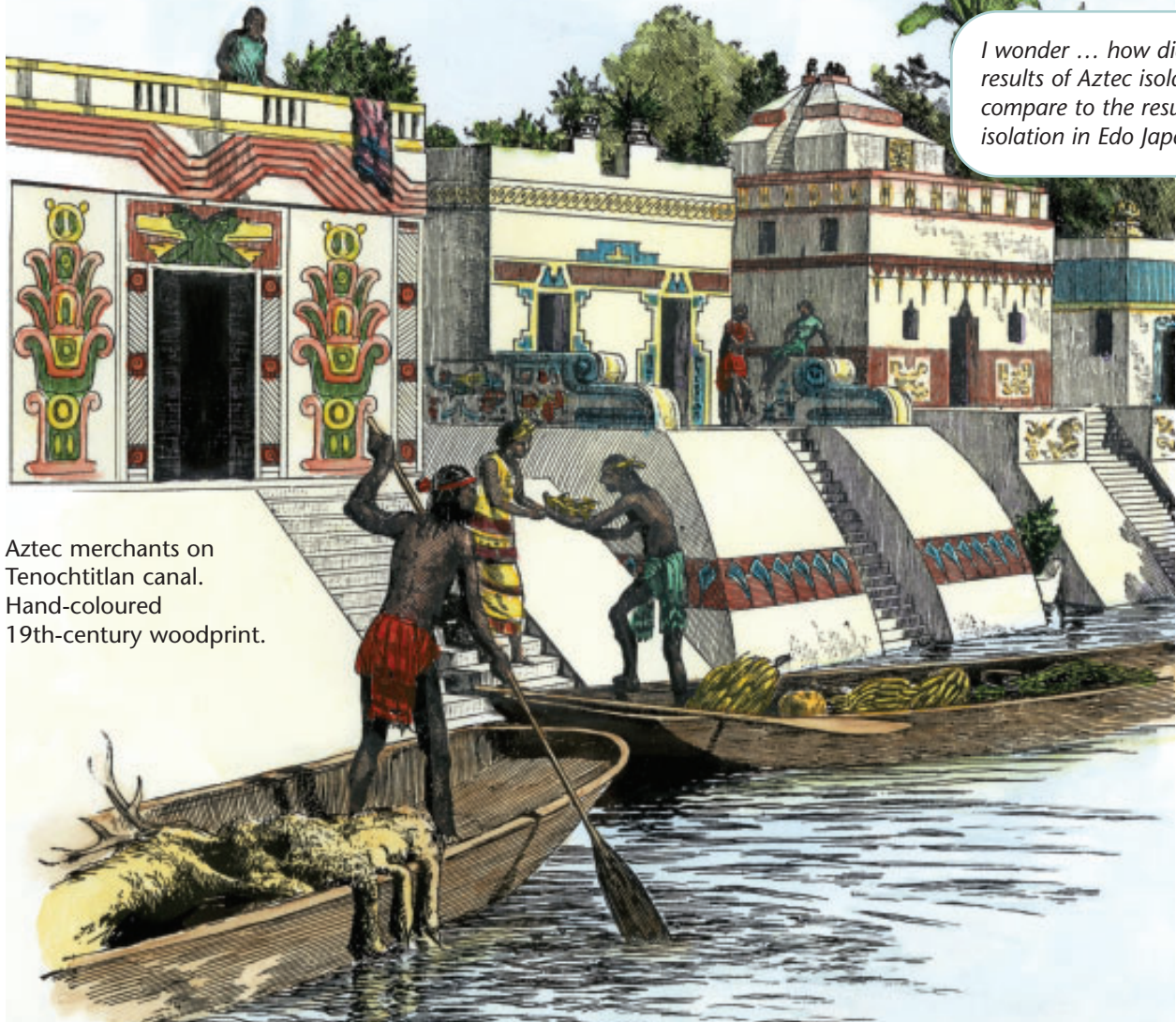
Spain's culture was rich and diversified because of its history and contact with many societies. Many different societies from other areas of Europe and North Africa had inhabited its lands. Spain was able to build upon the knowledge of all these societies, as well as the new scientific knowledge emerging from Renaissance Europe.

The experience of the Aztec was very different. Aztec worldview and culture evolved without knowledge of any societies in **Eurasia** or Africa. They were also isolated from societies north and south of their empire and believed Tenochtitlan was the centre of the universe. The other societies of Meso-America had very similar worldviews. As a result, the Aztec were unaware of much of the knowledge that cultures across Europe, Asia, and Africa shared.

By studying ancient paintings and sculptures, architecture, and written works, it is possible to get a glimpse into what life was like in a society during a certain era in history. From those glimpses and examples, historians can piece together some of the elements of that culture's worldview.

Eurasia: the combined continents of Europe and Asia

I wonder ... how did the results of Aztec isolation compare to the results of isolation in Edo Japan?



Aztec merchants on Tenochtitlan canal. Hand-coloured 19th-century woodprint.

impersonate: to pretend to be someone or something else, either to entertain or to deceive

Incense burner with representations of Tezcatlipoca known as Smoking Mirror, the god of night and sorcery. An image of Smoking Mirror is on the top of the handle. The turkey-claw handle also represents the god. He was a very powerful deity, a dark force who could forecast the future and a person's destiny.



Carving of Quetzalcoatl as the plumed serpent, from 1350–1521. Quetzalcoatl, the god of civilization and learning, had dozens of different roles. He was a great culture hero and equally at home on Earth or in the sky. He was often symbolized as a coiled plumed serpent. One story shows him as a light-skinned man disappearing across the sea, with promises to return in the future.



Religious Beliefs and Practices

In the Aztec worldview, humans played only a small role in the world. Their duty was to fight and die for the gods and to keep the world order in balance. They believed their futures were already determined by the gods, and that their life after death depended on the gods' decisions and living a balanced life. They believed everything in nature was divine.

The Aztec believed they were Huitzilopochtli's chosen people; it was their duty to make sure the sun never died and the Earth survived. They believed in many gods and goddesses, both male and female — those of life and death and those of creation and destruction. Each god or goddess was dual in nature, neither purely good nor purely evil. Each had a personality and a well-defined role. The gods could transform themselves into earthly beings or items.

Each of their gods had a physical image, often with both human and animal features. During religious festivals and ceremonies, many related to rain and fertility, individuals were chosen to impersonate the gods.

Three gods dominated the Aztec religion: Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca, and Quetzalcoatl. Among the hundreds of other deities, the rain god and the god of springtime and growth were among the most important. Other gods were those of maize and fertility. Each neighbourhood had their personal patron deities. Each house had a shrine where family members would ask the gods for help and make offerings of thanks.



Huitzilopochtli, Aztec carving of stone, white shell, and obsidian, 1500. Huitzilopochtli, the war and sun god, was the special guardian of Tenochtitlan and the Aztec. He was born every morning with the sunrise and died every evening at sunset. Human sacrifices (sometimes warriors, sometimes other selected victims) allowed him to return each morning.

Ritual and Sacrifice

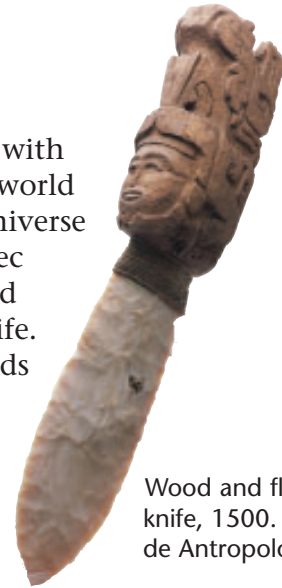
It was the Aztec practice of human sacrifice that most collided with the Western worldview of the Spanish. The Aztec believed the world was created through sacrifice; their role was to maintain the universe in balance through their rituals and sacrifice. According to Aztec belief, their world, the fifth era of the sun, occurred when a god sacrificed himself to change into the sun to maintain human life. Unfortunately, he was unable to move across the sky. Other gods sacrificed themselves to assist him. It was the Aztec view that human behaviour could affect the stability of the universe and that it was through their rituals and sacrifices that the universe could continue to exist. They believed their offerings actually kept the gods alive and the universe in balance.

Offerings often consisted of different foods, paper, liquid rubber, feathers, grasses, jewels, textiles, and the blood of animals, but the most important offering was human blood. The Aztec believed the gods prized human blood above all else. They were convinced that without human sacrifices, the Earth would dry up and the sun, moon, planets, and stars would not be able to travel across the sky. They believed their world would be destroyed.

Human sacrifices were performed on altars at the top of their temples. These were large public events with elaborate ceremonies. Most important were the sacrifices at the main temple in Tenochtitlan, the heart of the empire. Aztec priests believed that the best nourishment for the gods was the still-living hearts of the sacrificed warriors. Some records show that at times, thousands of warriors were sacrificed in a single day.

Medicine Bundles

Among the sacred objects of the Aztec were bundles containing items used in their rituals and ceremonies. The bundles contained objects such as blessed corn, feathers, rubber, and precious stones. Each object referred to an important sacred episode or event. Each *altepetl* had a sacred bundle, called the hearth of the *altepetl*, that was associated with its patron god. The Aztec believed the medicine bundle for Huitzilopochtli contained the essence, the power, of the god. The bundles were carefully guarded, treated with the utmost respect and ritual, and were carried safely with the people whenever they had to migrate. The medicine bundle for Huitzilopochtli was kept in its place of honour in the main temple of Tenochtitlan.



Wood and flint sacrificial knife, 1500. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City.



Priests of Tenochtitlan sacrifice victims to their gods.

Medicine bundles are important to many of Canada's First Nations. They are central to many traditional rituals and beliefs.

In 1552, Martinus de la Cruz, an Aztec physician, wrote the oldest known book on this continent about herbal medicine. It was later translated into Latin by another Aztec, Juannes Badianus. Both men had converted to Christianity.

I wonder ... how did Aztec healing knowledge compare to that of Alberta's First Nations?

Medicine

Aztec ideas about illness and medicine were a blend of religion, magic, and medicine:

- religion — Certain gods were thought to either send illnesses or heal them.
- magic — Certain illnesses were thought to be the result of black magic by some sorcerer. Anyone thought to be casting evil spells was condemned.
- medicine — The Aztec had a great deal of knowledge of the healing properties of plants and minerals. Sometimes, physicians were viewed as healing sorcerers.

The Arts

Books and Codices

Although the Aztec created hundreds of manuscripts, called codices, they had no alphabet. They used a form of picture-writing that included pictographs, ideographs, number symbols, and calendar symbols to record information. Scribes and priests recorded poetry, history, moral lessons, rituals, tribute lists, governmental records, and business records. Only the elite were taught to read these books or codices. The books were used to record the key ideas to help speakers remember information and stories told through the Aztec oral tradition. Codices were often written on deerskin, cloth, or ornate paper made from the fibres of the inner bark of fig trees. Information was painted on both sides of long paper strips. When a book was completed, it was folded accordion style so both sides could be viewed. The few codices that were not destroyed are almanacs and guides for living.



Codex Borbonicus, religious calendar, the gods Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl devouring a man, early 1500s.

Codex Fejervary-Mayer, pre-Conquest 1400–1521, partially unfolded, detailing the lore of the pochteca (merchants of the Aztec world). Liverpool Museum, Liverpool, Great Britain.



Sculpture

Most Aztec sculpture was religious in nature. Stone sculptures were often of gods and were placed inside and under temples. Smaller statues of animals, such as jaguars and snakes, highlighted the Aztec belief in the importance of maintaining a balance with the natural world. Some sculptures of people and everyday objects were also created.

Many of the Aztec stone sculptures of the gods were not displayed above ground or out in the open, as is customary in European or Asian societies. The Aztec shared a worldview with other Meso-American cultures that divided the universe into three general levels. Humans lived on the middle level, Earth, but there were levels both above and below the ground. Statues were often placed below ground level in recognition of the underworld. The main temple in Tenochtitlan was thought to be the centre of the universe and the connection between the underworld and the heavens.

Aztec stone sculptors used simple tools made from wood, stone, or fibre cords, yet their works were exquisitely detailed. None of the sculptures were signed by the sculptor. In Aztec society, artists and craftsmen passed their skills onto their sons who took up their trade when they became adults.

Architecture

The largest and grandest buildings in any city were the temples. The most magnificent of these were in the city of Tenochtitlan. Most of the architectural elements in these temples were borrowed from the earlier Teotihuacan and Toltec societies. However, the Aztec developed one distinct architectural design for their temples. The stepped pyramid form had been used by earlier societies, but the Aztec divided the pyramid at the top into two temples with two sets of stairs leading to them. The two halves of the **Templo Mayor** represented two sacred mountains.

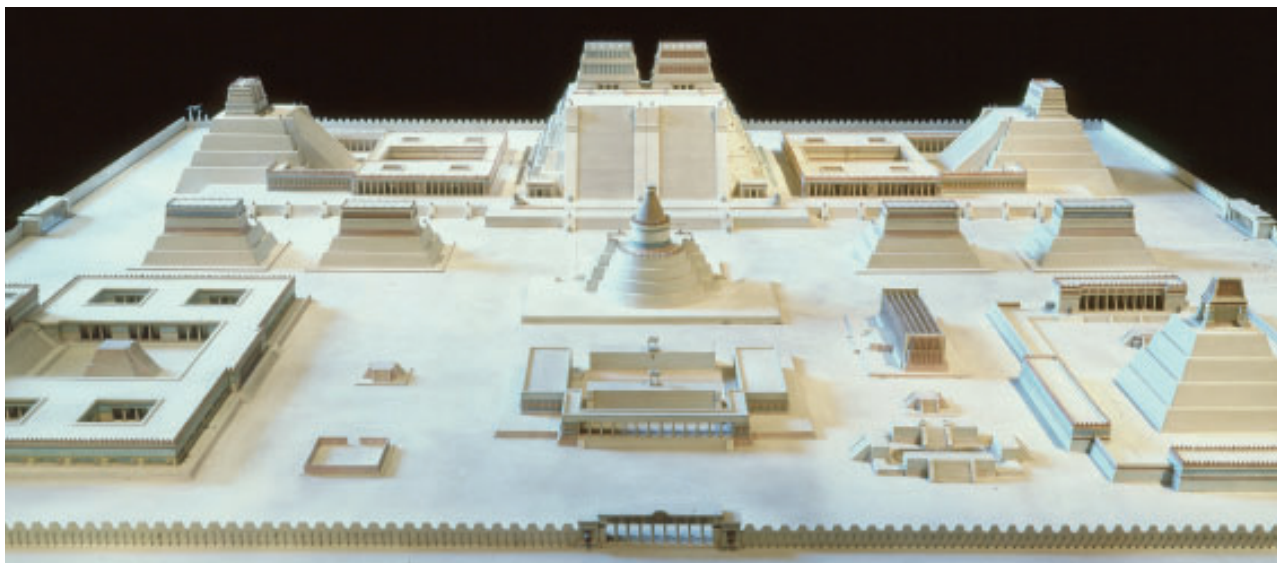
Templo Mayor: the major temple in the centre of Tenochtitlan, dedicated to the god Huitzilopochtli

I wonder ... how would believing that the centre of the world was my city affect my group's worldview?



Eagle vessel, 1502–1520. The hole on the back held the heart and blood of a sacrificial victim. Museo del templo mayor, Mexico City.

Model of the temple area of Tenochtitlan, National Anthropological Museum, Mexico City



equinox: the two times of the year, around March 21 and September 21, when day and night are equal

The front of the temple looked west so that those who climbed the two broad stairways to reach the twin temples would go upward and eastward. The sun, during **equinox**, rose between the two shrines. Enormous stone serpent heads with long upward-curling snouts sat at the bottom of the stairs. At the top of the stairs, the temple of Tlaloc, god of rain, stood on the north side, and the temple of Huitzilopochtli, the sun god, on the south. Inside the temples, the walls were covered with murals and paintings. The interiors were quite small because the ceremonies took place outside in front of the crowds that would gather at the base of the pyramid. At the bottom of the Tlaloc stairway was a stone altar of a reclining man to receive offerings for rain. The sacrificial stone, on which humans were sacrificed, was at the entrance to Huitzilopochtli's shrine.

Featherwork and Luxury Items

Aztec prized feathers more than gold. Feathers were rare, delicate, and brilliantly coloured. Featherworkers were held in very high esteem. Although they created wonderful feather garments and ornaments, their most prized works were of ceremonial costumes, headdresses, and warrior shields. During official state ceremonies, officials, rulers, warriors, and all statues of the gods were covered with feather garments.

Many luxury items such as jewels and ornaments had no religious importance but were created simply to satisfy the desires of the wealthy. Talented artisans created beautiful jewellery, ceramics, and mosaics. When he arrived in Tenochtitlan, the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortés wrote to King Charles V of Spain describing the luxury products he saw:

All these, in addition to their intrinsic worth are so marvelous that considering their novelty and strangeness they are priceless; nor can it be believed that any of the princes of this world, of whom we know, possess any things of higher quality.

Gold pectoral (chest protector) in the form of the fire god, Mixtec. National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City.



Brilliantly coloured feather headdress, sent by Cortés as a gift to King Charles V, Museum fur Volkerkunde, Vienna, Austria

The Importance of Time to the Aztec

Every aspect of Aztec life was coordinated by two calendars. Similar to modern day, the Aztec had a 365-day solar yearly calendar. This, their main calendar, was called the *xiuhtlapohualli* (*she-uh-tlah-poh-WAHL-lee*). The second important calendar was a ritual calendar called the *tonalpohualli* (*toh-nahl-poh-WAHL-lee*), based on a 260-day cycle.

The *xiuhtlapohualli* was made up of 18 months, each having 20 days (360) and 5 extra (or useless) days at the end of the year, referred to as *nemontemi* (*nay-mohn-TAY-mee*). This calendar was in place long before the Europeans recognized there were 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days in one year. Each month was named for a god and incorporated a religious festival dedicated to that god. Because this was a solar calendar, the festivals closely followed the seasons. The calendar regulated agricultural activities, such as planting and harvesting, and determined market days. Each year began with a festival to honour the god of rain, Tlaloc.

The *tonalpohualli* calendar was composed of 13 numbers and 20 signs that represented an animal, a natural element such as water or grass, or an abstract idea such as movement. They combined to produce 260 individually named days. The sign for one day, for example, might be 3 Rabbit or 7 Flint. People were named for the day on this calendar on which they were born. Each day was associated with a specific fate that was good, bad, or indifferent. The Aztec believed that the day on which they were born would affect their destiny. The Aztec used this calendar to determine when many of their religious rituals and sacrifices should be performed.

I wonder ... how did the Aztec develop such an accurate calendar before the Europeans?



This is the Aztec Calendar stone, or sunstone, one of the most famous symbols of Mexico. The original is a massive stone slab with a diameter of almost 3.5 metres. It was originally in Tenochtitlan's temple complex and was unearthed in the area of the main cathedral in central Mexico City.

The xiuhtlapohualli and the tonalpohualli calendars combined to form a third called the xiuhnolpilli (*she-uh-nohl-PEEL-lee*). This calendar had a cycle of 52 years, the time needed for the two calendars to go through their complete cycles and each reach their beginning on the same day. Each 52-year period was considered an era, somewhat equivalent to our century. The Aztec believed that at the end of each era, there was a possibility that the world would be destroyed if sacrifice and specific rituals were not carried out. All fires were put out throughout the land, statues made of wood or stone were thrown into the lakes, and houses were thoroughly cleaned. That evening, people climbed onto their rooftops, fearful that the world was going to end. Priests kindled a new flame on a freshly sacrificed human heart on the peak of a sacred mountain. The Aztec feared that if the flame could not be rekindled, the sun and their world would be destroyed. The flame from this holy fire was then carried to every home in the land to rekindle everyone's home fires.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. The Aztec believed that Tenochtitlan was the centre of the universe. What does this reveal about their worldview? How does this compare to the common European view of the universe before the Renaissance?
2. The end of the 52-year Aztec era was considered to be a time of great danger. For the Aztec, it was a key part of their religious belief. From our worldview, we might consider that to be a superstition. What are some superstitions we have in our worldviews? What do you think they say about our worldviews?
3. Aztec artists rarely showed any individual characteristics in their sculptures or paintings of humans. Most Aztec sculptures of people were very standard with few details to suggest any kind of individuality. What reasons might the artists have had for not depicting specific people?

How Did the Culture of the Spanish Reflect Their Worldview?

Until the 13th century, the culture of much of Spain was influenced by Moorish rule. Spain was one of the most cultured and literate societies in western Europe. Christian, Jewish, and Muslim scholars had all contributed to Spain's reputation as one of the learning centres of the then-known world. However, by 1265, only Granada in southern Spain remained under the control of the Moors. After the Reconquista ended in 1492, when Jews and Muslims were driven from Spain, the culture of Spain changed.

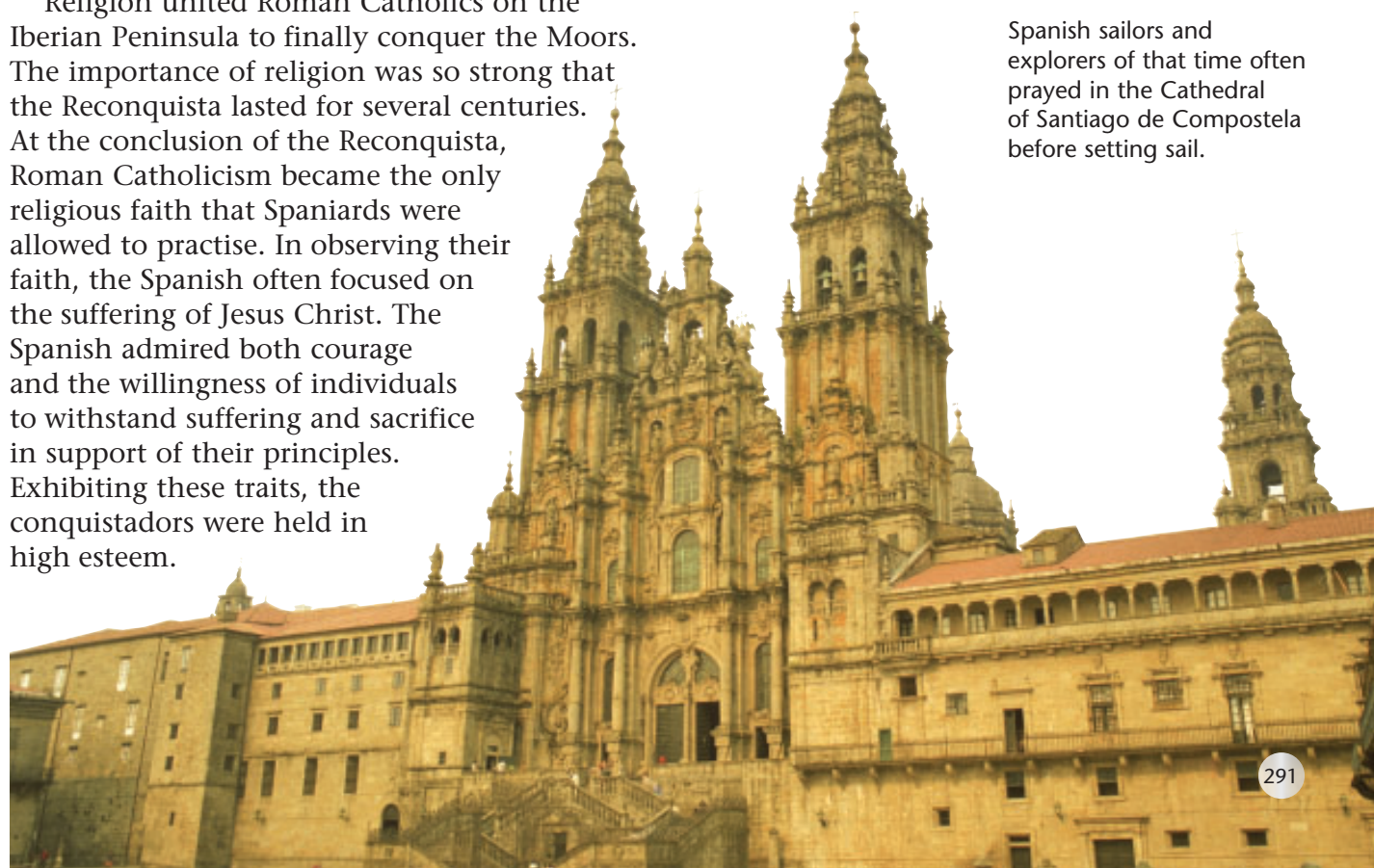
Religious Beliefs and Practice

In 1500, almost all Spaniards were Roman Catholics, sharing a religious worldview of one God, who was always present in their lives, and of an afterlife in either heaven or hell. They believed that their place in the afterlife depended on whether they had followed religious teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. This included leading lives according to the Bible and the confession of sins. Cathedrals, the grandest buildings in any city, were built as places of worship to honour God. The interiors of cathedrals were usually filled with many beautiful religious statues and paintings.

Religion united Roman Catholics on the Iberian Peninsula to finally conquer the Moors. The importance of religion was so strong that the Reconquista lasted for several centuries. At the conclusion of the Reconquista, Roman Catholicism became the only religious faith that Spaniards were allowed to practise. In observing their faith, the Spanish often focused on the suffering of Jesus Christ. The Spanish admired both courage and the willingness of individuals to withstand suffering and sacrifice in support of their principles. Exhibiting these traits, the conquistadors were held in high esteem.

I wonder ... how does believing in one God or believing in many gods affect worldview?

Spanish sailors and explorers of that time often prayed in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela before setting sail.





La Cartuja Monastery,
Granada, Spain

Records from the trials of citizens accused of heresy during the Spanish Inquisition show that they usually ended with an auto-da-fe. The auto-da-fe was a public ceremony during which the sentences of convicted individuals were read. The ceremonies, usually held in the city plaza, became very elaborate public spectacles. Often members of royalty attended. The ceremony began with a lengthy procession, followed by a religious service, an oath of obedience to the Inquisition, a sermon, and then the reading of the sentences. Generally, the sentences were carried out at a later time.

Those found guilty of heresy were often executed by burning at the stake.

The Arts

Literature

As in most of Europe, Latin was the language used by Spanish scholars and the clergy. However, each kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula had its own vernacular: Castilian in Castile, Aragonese in Aragon, and Catalan in Catalonia, along the Mediterranean coast. Once Isabella and Ferdinand united the two kingdoms of Castile and Aragon into Spain, Isabella made Castilian the official language. It later became known as Spanish. The nobles from across the country quickly switched to Castilian since it was the language of power. The common people in each area continued

speaking their own languages, but gradually began to use Castilian for their dealings with citizens of other regions. Having one language helped unify the country, developing a common sense of citizenship and nationalism.

El Cid came from the Arabic word *sidi*, meaning "leader."

One of the most famous works in Spanish literature is the epic poem "El cantar de mío Cid." The poem is based on a true story about El Cid, a Spanish hero during the Reconquista in the 11th century. El Cid married the cousin of King Alfonso VI but was banished from the kingdom when his enemies unjustly accused him of stealing from the king. To regain his honour, he participated in the battles against the Moorish armies and conquered Valencia. Through these heroic acts, he regained the confidence of the king and his honour was restored. His two daughters then married the princes of Navarre and Aragon.

Spanish literature by 1500 was rich and varied, reflecting its diverse population. During the Middle Ages, the **troubadours** wrote many lyrical epics, long poems that focused on the social and political situations of the day. Troubadours sang for the common people in village squares and for the nobility in castles and royal courts. During this same period, scholars and priests composed poetry about the natural and supernatural world, often with subjects that helped reinforce the goals of the Reconquista. By the end of the 15th century, the Reconquista was over and lyrical poetry became popular. Lyrical poems were shorter than the epic poems of the troubadours and focused on themes of courtly love. They were often about knights and their love for a woman. Tales about chivalry and romance and poetry that portrayed the quiet life in the country also became popular forms of literature.

troubadour: a travelling singer/musician

Architecture and Sculpture

Spanish architecture was greatly influenced by the Islamic Moors. They created unique architectural features that are still found in Spanish architecture. Many Spanish homes had beautiful mosaic decorations and inside courtyards modelled after Muslim buildings. The grandest structures in Spain were the mosques and churches. The architectural styles of many Spanish churches were modelled after those in France.

The most talented Spanish sculptors lived in Catalonia and Aragon. In other areas of Spain, most of the best sculptors came from other lands in western Europe. Many sculptors decorated civic buildings, but most master sculptors created works for the interiors of churches and cathedrals.

Jesus in the Tomb with the Apostles and His Mother, fresco, Ferrer Bassa, Monasterio de Pedralbes, Barcelona, Spain

Painting

Spanish artists absorbed influences from different cultures, traditions, and religions, but still developed their own artistic styles. Flemish and Italian artists had the greatest influence over Spanish artists. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, the most impressive Spanish art was beautiful murals and frescoes, most often found on the walls of churches. The first identifiable Spanish painter was Ferrer Bassa (1324–1348). He founded the Catalan school of art. At the time of the unification, Spanish paintings reflected influences of both the Moors and northern Europe. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were patrons of the arts.



solstice: either of the two times of the year when the sun is at its greatest distance from the equator. In the northern hemisphere, the summer solstice (around June 21) is the longest day of the year and the winter solstice (around December 22) is the shortest

The Spanish Measurement of Time

Until the year 1582, Europeans followed the Julian calendar that was introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE. The year equalled $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days, with the one-quarter day taken account of by adding an extra day to February every four years, a leap year. Each year was divided into 12 unequal months. When this calendar was first adopted, the **solstices** and equinoxes occurred on the 25th day of the month. By the late 1500s, they fell on the 11th day of the month. The calendar was not accurate enough, and over the centuries, the count was inaccurate that many days. This was a problem for Christians celebrating Easter around the equinox. If the equinox was now falling on the wrong date, then Easter, the holiest Christian holiday, was also falling on the wrong date. In 325, the Roman Catholic Church decided that Easter would be the first Sunday after the full moon following the spring equinox, which was then March 21.

The seven-day week was introduced by Emperor Constantine I in the 4th century.

I wonder ... what types of calendars were other civilizations using up until the 1900s?

I wonder ... why do the Christian Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar?

Gregorian Calendar

In 1582, the spring equinox fell in early April instead of March 20 or 21. To solve the problem, Pope Gregory XIII decreed that the date following Thursday, October 4, 1582, would be Friday, October 15. This would return the Spring Equinox to March 21. The new calendar was called the Gregorian calendar. It regulated the ceremonial cycle of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches and, in Europe, became the standard calendar for everyday use as well. It was quickly adopted by Spain, France, Portugal, Poland, and Italy. Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and a number of Catholic German states followed suit within a year or two. Other countries followed over the next centuries. By the early 1900s, the world was using the Gregorian calendar as its standard.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Compare the cultures of the Aztec and the Spanish. Which aspects may have led to conflict or misunderstanding?
2. Spanish troubadours travelled through the country singing their long epic songs.
 - a. What similar groups roamed Japan culture during the Edo Period?
 - b. Why would the troubadours have been so popular, especially in the towns and villages?
3. Spanish literary forms and themes changed during the 15th century. For example, romance novels became very popular. What do these changes reveal about changing attitudes among the Spanish?

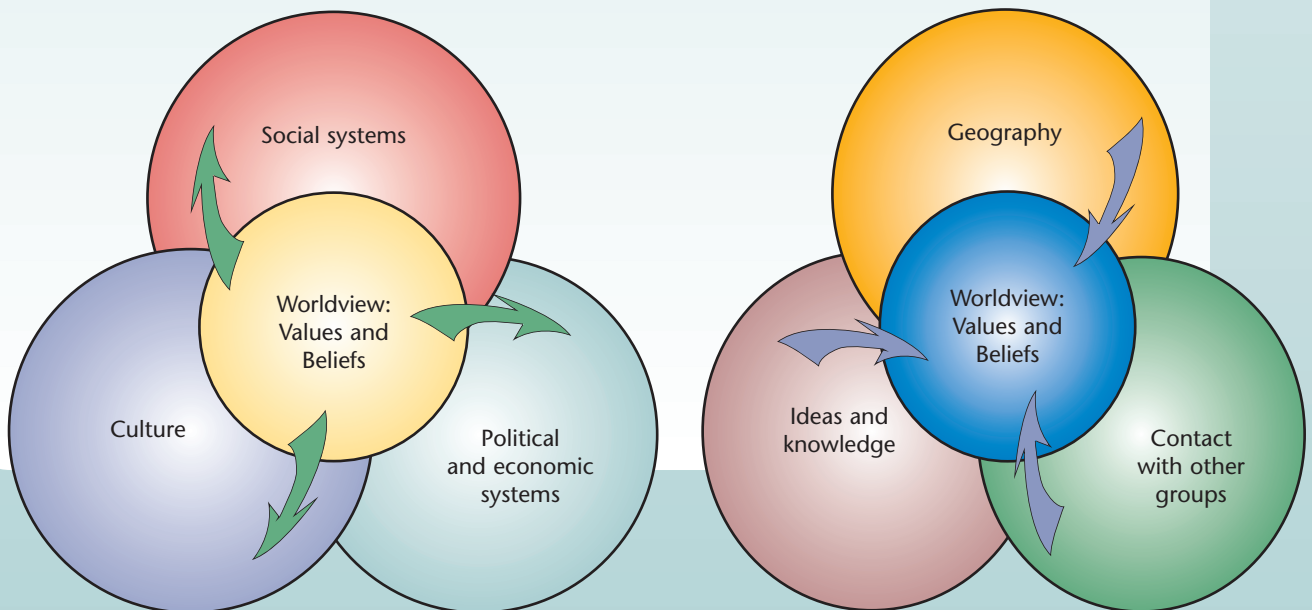
FOCUS ON INQUIRY

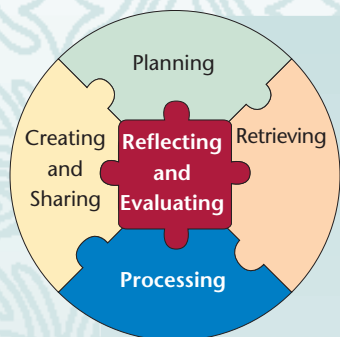
In What Ways Were the Worldviews of the Aztec and the Spanish in Conflict?

Historians are like detectives. In order to describe the worldview of a society, they must examine the factors that shaped it and the way the society operates. Once they have enough evidence, they can draw conclusions about the important values and beliefs that form the worldview of the society they are studying.

You have been following in the paths of many historians as you studied chapters in this text. From the content you have studied so far in chapters 7 and 8, you have enough information to be able to make reasonable **hypotheses** and comparisons about the worldviews of the Aztec and the Spanish. Then, you will be able to make predictions about what happened when these two societies came into contact.

hypothesis: an explanation that seems likely to be true; a possible explanation that has not been tested





Using Your Inquiry Skills

In this activity, you will focus on the Processing phase of the Inquiry Model. You will organize and **synthesize** the evidence, compare the values and beliefs of each society, and draw conclusions about what will happen when they meet.

In what ways were the worldviews of the Aztec and the Spanish in conflict?

Processing Phase

Step 1 — Organize and synthesize information

- Individually, locate all the information you have collected about the two societies. You have created maps, charts, mind maps, Venn diagrams, notes, and other things.
- In groups, synthesize this information by combining it into a single chart or spreadsheet. (An example is shown below.) Do not include every piece of information; summarize the most important facts and ideas.

SKILLS CENTRE

Turn to **How to Organize Information** in the Skills Centre to review other ways to summarize information using charts, technology, and graphic organizers.

Evidence of Worldviews		Aztec	Spanish
Factors	Geography		
	Ideas and knowledge		
	Contact with other groups		
Way Society Operates	Social systems		
	Political and economic systems		
	Culture		

synthesize: to combine parts or elements into a whole

Step 2 — Hypothesize about worldviews

- Individually, write a sentence that expresses one of the values or beliefs that was part of the worldview of either the Aztec or the Spanish societies. Be prepared to back up your hypothesis with reasoning that includes evidence and comparisons to other societies that you know.

- In groups, discuss each value or belief and revise it so that everyone agrees with the hypothesis. Then, combine all the values and beliefs into a single chart or spreadsheet, such as the following:

Comparison of Worldviews		Aztec	Spanish
Beliefs	Nature of the universe		
	Place in the world		
	Spiritual and religious beliefs		
	Other...		
Values	Purpose and value of life		
	Human relationships		
	Relationships of people to the natural world		
	Personal character		
	Other...		

Step 3 — Draw conclusions and predict

- Individually, examine the chart created by the group and identify similarities and differences in the beliefs and values of the Aztec and the Spanish.
- In groups, highlight the similarities and differences on the chart. Then, make a prediction about what happened when the Aztec and the Spanish met. Explain your reasoning.
- As a class, list the predictions of all of the groups. You can refer to this list as you begin to read chapter 9.

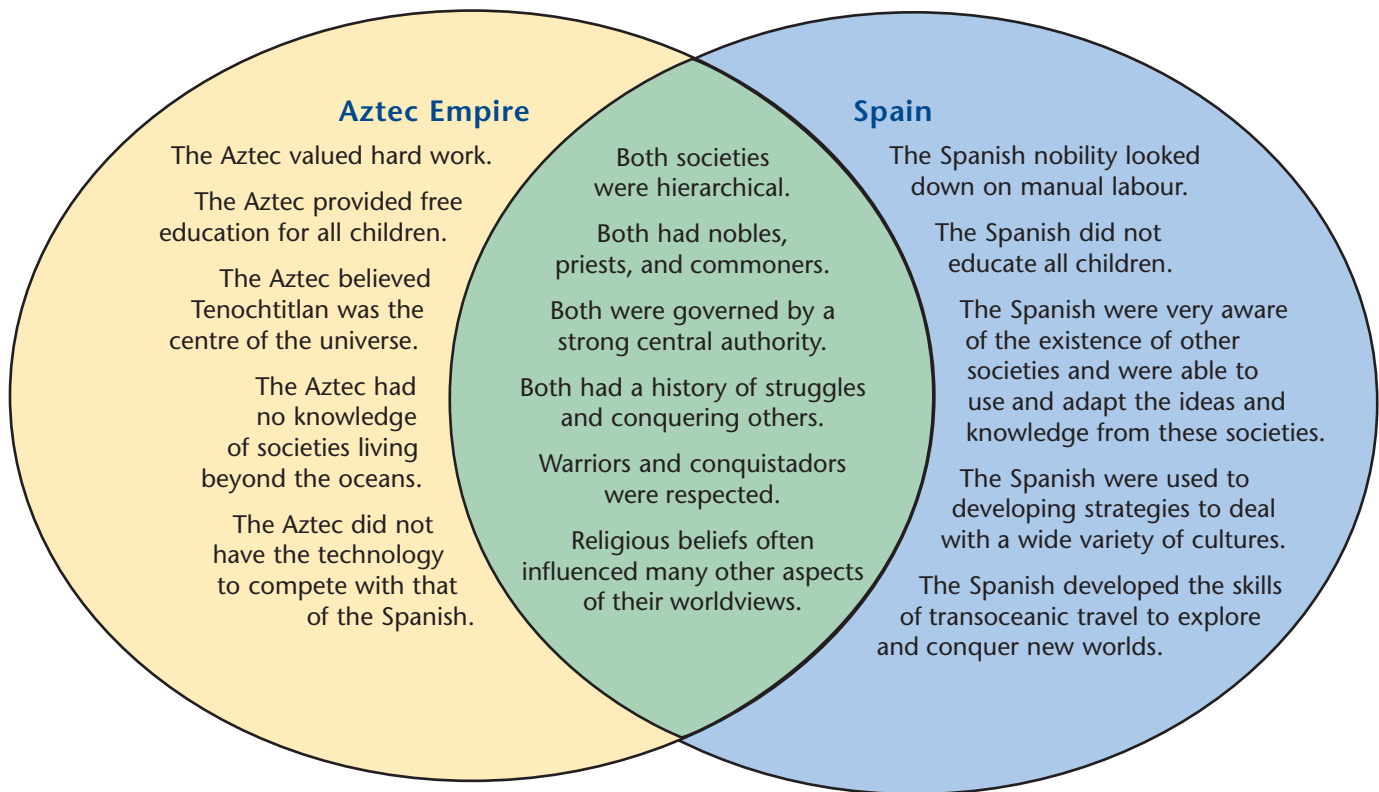
Reflecting and Evaluating Phase

- Think about how the work of historians and detectives is similar. What techniques might they share?
- Think about the values and beliefs that all societies have in common.
- Think about what you would have done if you were in the shoes of an Aztec or Spanish person at this time.
- Think about what you have learned about your own worldview from this activity.
- Think about what you have learned about inquiry from this activity.

End-of-Chapter

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted how the worldview of the Aztec and the Spanish societies affected and were affected by their social systems, political and economic systems, and culture. Many elements of society were similar, but there were also significant differences.



Review and Synthesize

1. Tell a story about a day in the life of one of the Aztec or Spanish people. Work in a group to share the stories, either orally, pictorially, or in writing. Be sure to include authentic details about the culture, social systems, and political and economic systems from the perspective of this person. Compare the experiences of the different people that have been portrayed by your group.
2. Select one aspect of the Aztec way of life that would have surprised or shocked the Spanish. Then, select one aspect of the Spanish way of life that would have surprised or shocked the Aztec. Explain what each would have thought of the other.
3. Continue the Worldview Investigation from the beginning of the chapter. Complete the files that you have been making to describe the way the beings from another planet live. Then, create a chart or spreadsheet to summarize their way of life: culture, social systems, and political and economic systems.

Inquiry

4. In what ways have the worldviews of Canadians changed over time? Explain your reasoning.

Show What You Know

5. Compare the social systems of the Aztec and the Spanish. How were they similar and how were they different? Use a graphic organizer to depict each one.
6. Describe the nature of power and decision making in Aztec society from two different perspectives: the people in authority and the common people.
7. Select one key value or belief that was part of the worldview of the Aztec. Explain how the way of life of the Aztec was affected by it.

Closure

8. **Share:** As a class, create a computer presentation that tells the story of the Aztec and the Spanish up to the time that they had contact. Share the work by dividing the key aspects of the presentation among the groups. Then, bring the pieces together into a single presentation. You can add the conclusion after you have completed the next chapter.
9. **Discuss:** Should Western medicine be based upon religious and cultural practices as well as scientific practices? What can we learn from the Aztec?
10. **Reflect:** Spend a few minutes in personal reflection. Think about your reactions to certain aspects of the way of life of the Aztec and of the Spanish. What do you do when you encounter someone with a different worldview and a different way of life? How can you learn to accept the differences among the peoples of the world?