UNIT 6 STUDY GUIDE:
The Civilizations of Central and South America

LESSON 1: The Geography of Central and South America (handouts)
Terms to Learn:
- Beringia/Bering Land Bridge
- chinampas/“floating gardens”
- maize
- nopal
- maguey/agave

Study Questions:
1. Be able to identify the location of the Aztec, Maya and Inca civilizations on a map. With which modern day countries is each civilization associated?
2. Briefly describe the theories (land bridge, Pacific migration, Atlantic migration) that may explain the origin of the peoples of the Americas. What evidence supports each theory? What problems make the theory hard to prove conclusively?
3. Describe the two geographical zones of the Maya world.
4. To a large degree, the prosperity of the Aztecs was dependent on nature. List specific examples of how the Aztecs adapted to their environment in beneficial ways.
5. List and explain two reasons why Andean geography makes the Inca Empire an impressive accomplishment.
6. How did each civilization adapt to its dry climate? In particular, how did they obtain the water they needed to sustain life?

LESSON 2: Historical Overview: The Maya (handouts, notes)
Terms to Learn:
- Olmec
- Toltec
- theocracy
- halach uinic
- Council of State
- satellite city-state/colony
- batab
- war captain

Study Questions:
1. Describe the achievements of the Olmec In what ways did they likely influence the Maya and other Central American civilizations?
2. Describe the 4 periods of Mayan history. What achievements and challenges did they Mayans face in each period?
3. How did the Maya govern themselves? In what ways were the Maya united? In what ways were they separate?
4. Describe the Mayan view of crime. How were criminals punished?
5. Describe the various theories that may help to explain the decline of the Mayan civilization.

LESSON 3: Historical Overview: The Aztec (handouts)
Terms to Learn:
- Mexica/Aztec
- Tenochtitlan
- Teotihuacan
- Montezuma II
Study Questions:
1. Explain the connection between the Toltec and Aztec cultures.
2. Describe how the Aztec came to power in the valley of Mexico.
3. What role did human sacrifice play in Aztec culture? Where did this need to sacrifice human beings come from?

LESSON 4: Historical Overview: The Inca (notes, handouts)
Terms to Learn:
- Manco Capac
- Cuzco
- Pachacuti
- Sapa Inca
- Coya
- welfare state
- Council of Prefects
- Supreme Court
- hiwaya

Study Questions:
1. Describe how the Inca came to power in the Andean region.
2. Describe the differences between the different periods of Incan history: origins, Period of Consolidation and Empire.
3. Describe the Inca army. What advantages did they have over their enemies?
4. Describe the steps taken by the Inca to help them administer a newly conquered territory. What steps were taken to ensure the loyalty of the newly conquered people?
5. Describe the Incan legal system. To what extent was it similar to our modern justice system? Give examples of some crimes and punishments.

LESSON 5: Social Structure and Daily Life (handouts, notes)
Key Terms:
- primogeniture
- mit’a
- puric

Study Questions:
1. Compare the social structures of the Maya, Inca and Aztec. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they unique?
2. How was slavery different under the Maya than under the Aztec?
3. Compare the clothing and adornments worn by the Maya, Aztec and Inca. How did social status affect the way people dressed?
4. Discuss the family life of the Maya, Inca and Aztecs.
5. Describe how children were educated in Mayan, Aztec and Incan culture. How were boys and girls treated differently? How were the children of nobles educated differently?
6. Describe the diet of the Maya, Aztec and Inca.

LESSON 6: Indigenous Religions (handouts)
Terms to Learn:
- oracle
- divination
- polytheism
- pantheon
- Quetzalcoatl
- huaca
- Binding of the Years/New Fire Ceremony
- cenote
- Sacred Well
- skull rack
- ullamaliztli
- ceques
- Temple of the Sun
- Coricancha
Study Questions:
1. Describe Mayan beliefs about the world. Explain the importance of the calendar to Mayan religious beliefs.
2. Why did sacrifice play such a big role in Aztec religion?
3. Describe Incan religious beliefs and the role of priests in their society.
4. Give examples of some of the important gods to the Maya, Aztec and Inca. Explain the Incan concept of a huaca.
5. Describe some of the important religious festivals of the Maya, Aztec and Inca. Why do you think so many of their festivals focused on agriculture?
6. What role did human sacrifice play in the religions of Central and South America? To what extent can we consider a culture civilized if it practices human sacrifice?
7. Describe the religious buildings of the Maya, Aztec and Inca. In what ways were they similar? In what ways were they unique?
8. Describe Central and South American beliefs about death and the rituals that accompanied death.

LESSON 7: Writing, Record Keeping and Literature (notes)
Terms to Learn:
- hieroglyphs
- ideograph
- pictograph
- phonetic
- codex
- quipu
- quipu-mayoc

Study Questions:
1. Describe the writing systems of the Maya and the Aztec. Identify some similarities.
2. Describe the literary achievements of the Aztec and the Inca.

LESSON 8: The Art of Central and South America (notes)
Terms to Learn:
- mural
- lost-wax method
- House of Song
- quena

Study Questions:
1. In what areas were Mayan, Aztec or Incan artistic achievements unique? In what areas were they similar?
2. What were popular subjects of Central and South American art?
3. To what extent did the Maya, Aztec and Inca create art for practical purposes?
4. What instruments were used to make music? In what situations would music be performed?

LESSON 9: Achievements in Science and Time Keeping (handouts)
Terms to Learn:
- calendar
- abacus

Study Questions:
1. What, if anything, is known about Mayan medical practices?
2. What knowledge is required to create an accurate calendar? Why is a calendar a significant scientific undertaking? What benefits do calendars provide for a civilization?
3. Describe Mayan mathematic achievements. What was the numerical system used for?
4. How did the Aztecs treat illnesses believed to have natural causes? How did they treat illnesses with supernatural causes?
5. How were the Aztec solar and ritual calendars different?
6. How was the Incan lunar calendar different from its solar calendar?

LESSON 10: First Contact (handouts)
Terms to Learn:
- conquistador
- jimenta
- Francisco Pizarro
- Ataxalpa
- arquebus
- rapier
- Hernan Cortez
- smallpox
- llama

Study Questions:
1. Describe the Incas’ reaction to seeing the Spanish for the first time.
2. Compare the Incan Empire with the Spanish Empire at the time of First Contact.
3. Identify ways in which geography gave Europeans an advantage over the Incas.
4. Explain how writing gave the Spanish an advantage over the Inca.
5. Identify some of the disadvantages that came from the Incas’ geographic isolation.
6. Explain how a combination of guns, germs and steel helped a small group of Spanish conquer thousands of Incas.