

Previewing Themes

POWER AND AUTHORITY The first civilizations in the Americas arose as people came together to create more powerful and structured societies.

Geography *What geographical feature do most of these early American civilizations share?*

CULTURAL INTERACTION From their art to their technology, the early Mesoamerican and South American civilizations influenced the better-known empires that followed them.

Geography *Why is it likely that the Nazca and Moche civilizations were aware of each other?*

INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT The Olmec in Mesoamerica took advantage of their surroundings, while the groups in South America carved societies out of rough terrain.

Geography *How were geographic conditions different for the Olmec and Chavin peoples?*

Chapter 9: The Americas: A Separate World, 40,000 B.C.–A.D. 700

Essential Question

How did early American civilizations influence future societies and cultures?



What You Will Learn

In this chapter you will learn about the complex cultures that arose in Mesoamerica and the Andes.

SECTION 1 The Earliest Americans

Main Idea The cultures of the first Americans, including social organization developed in ways similar to other early cultures.

SECTION 2 Early Mesoamerican Civilizations

Main Idea The Olmec created the Americas' first civilization, which in turn influenced later civilizations.

SECTION 3 Early Civilizations of the Andes

Main Idea In the Andes Mountains, various groups created flourishing civilizations.

The Effects of Agriculture

Before Agriculture

- People hunted or gathered what they ate.
- Families continually moved in search of big game.
- Groups remained small due to the scarcity of reliable sources of food.
- Humans devoted much of their time to obtaining food.

After Agriculture

- People enjoyed a more reliable and steady source of food.
- Families settled down and formed larger communities.
- Humans concentrated on new skills: arts and crafts, architecture, social organization.
- Complex societies eventually arose.

VISUAL SUMMARY

The Americas: A Separate World

The Earliest Americans

- Hunted big game and later fished and gathered berries and plants
- Lived in small groups, as they had to move continually in search of food
- Eventually developed farming and settled down into large communities
- Developed various new skills, including arts and crafts, architecture, and social and political organization
- Gradually forged more complex societies

Early South American Societies

The Chavin

- Established powerful religious worship centers
- Created influential artistic styles

The Nazca and Moche

- Developed extensive irrigation systems for farming
- Crafted intricate ceramics and textiles and other decorative art

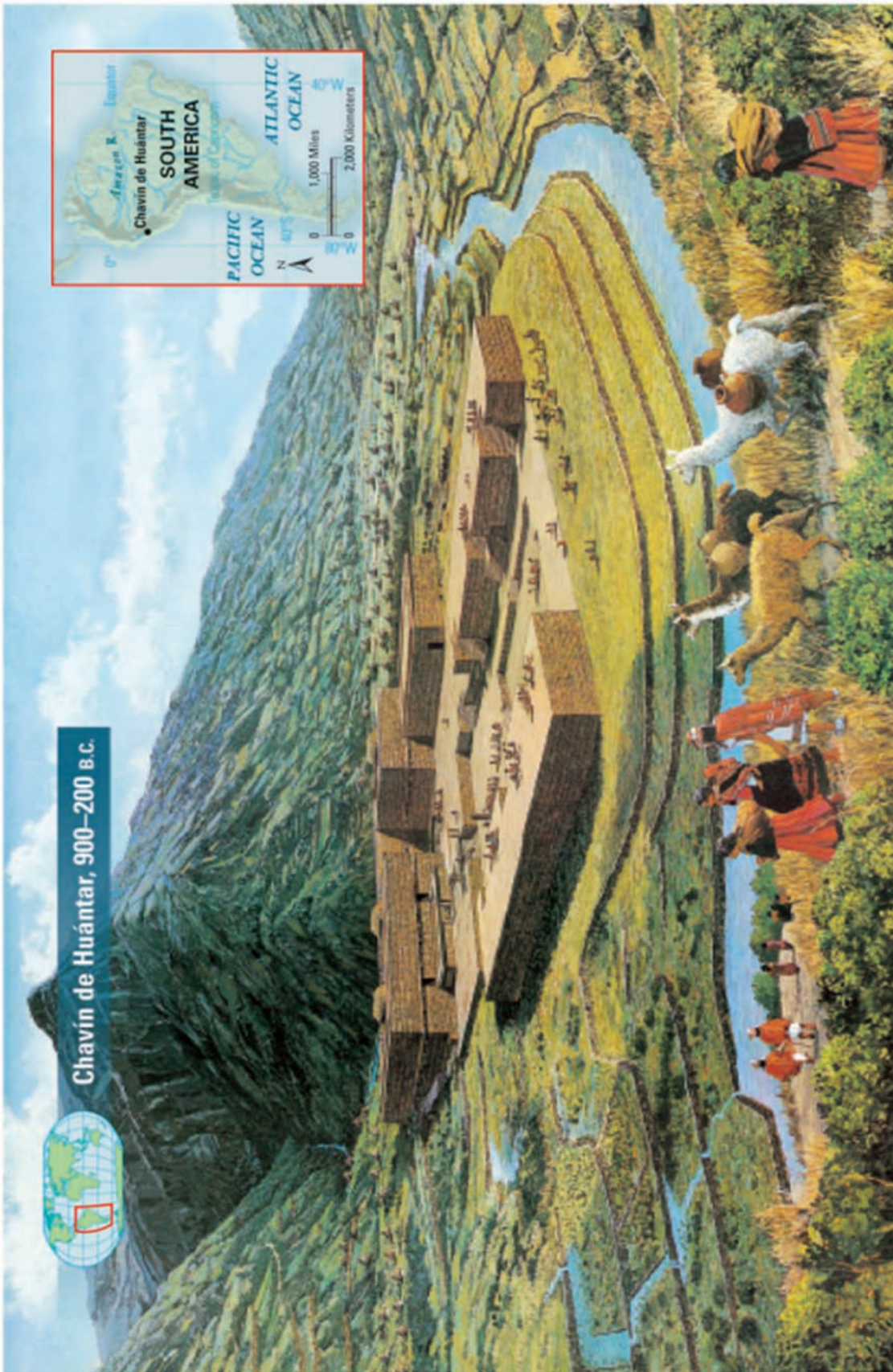
Early Mesoamerican Societies

The Olmec

- Designed and built pyramids, plazas, and monumental sculptures
- Developed ceremonial centers, ritual ball games, and a ruling class
- Directed a large trade network throughout Mesoamerica

The Zapotec

- Built a magnificent urban center at Monte Albán
- Developed early forms of hieroglyphic writing and a calendar system



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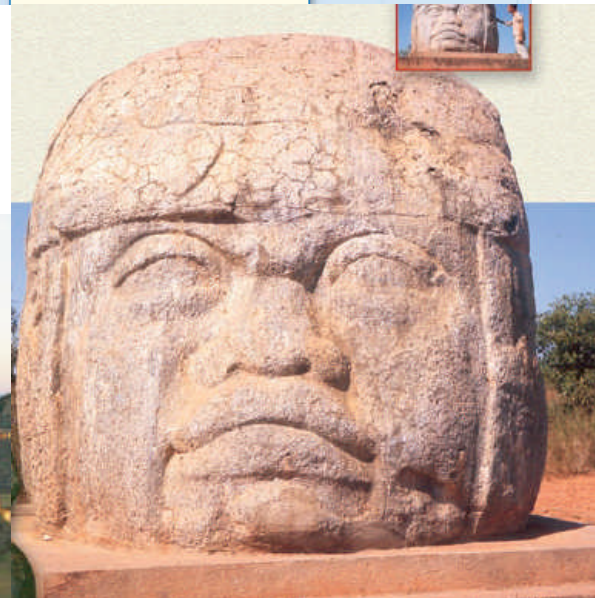
Pyramids

A number of ancient peoples used pyramids for temples, tombs, and observatories. The Egyptians built pyramids as tombs. Their pyramids had smooth sides and came to a point. In contrast, the pyramids built by the Zapotec at Monte Albán (shown below) have stepped sides, with flat tops that served as platforms for temples.



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INTERNET ACTIVITY Go online to research and make a poster about the different kinds of pyramids in Egypt and Mesoamerica.



The Americas: A Separate World**Section 1****The Earliest Americans****Terms and Names****Beringia** Land bridge between Asia and the Americas**Ice Age** Time when sheets of ice covered large portions of North America**maize** Corn; the most important crop of the Americas**Before You Read**

In the last chapter, you read about African civilizations.

In this section, you will read about the Americas' first inhabitants.

As You Read

Use a chart to list causes and effects of the development of the Americas.

A LAND BRIDGE (Pages 235–236)**How did the earliest people come to the Americas?**

North and South America form a single stretch of land. It stretches from the Arctic Circle in the north to the waters around Antarctica in the south. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans separate the Americas from Africa, Asia, and Europe.

But that was not always the case. From around 1.6 million years ago until about 10,000 years ago, the earth went through an **Ice Age**. During this time, huge sheets of ice called glaciers spread south from the Arctic Circle. The level of the world's oceans went down. The lowered oceans exposed land that is today again covered by water.

One strip of land, called **Beringia**, connected Asia and North America. Wild animals crossed this rocky land bridge and entered North America for the first time. Some of the Asian people who hunted these animals followed them. The people became the first Americans.

No one knows for sure when these first people arrived. Some scholars say the

people came to the Americas as long ago as 40,000 B.C. Others say as late as 12,000 B.C. A discovery in Chile suggests that people were well-settled in that part of the Americas by 10,500 B.C. Since Chile lies far south of the land bridge, some experts say that people needed many thousands of years to travel that far. For this reason, they think that the first people must have crossed the land bridge in about 20,000 B.C.

1. Where did the first Americans come from?

HUNTERS AND GATHERERS**(Page 236)****How did early Americans live?**

These first Americans lived as hunters. One of their favorite hunting targets was the huge mammoth. Over time, however, all the mammoths died. People were forced to look for other food. They began to hunt smaller animals and to fish.

Section 1, *continued*

They also began to gather plants and fruits to eat. They no longer had to roam over large areas to search for the mammoth, so they settled for part of the year in one spot.

Between 12,000 and 10,000 B.C., the climate changed. The Ice Age ended, and the world warmed up again. The huge sheets of ice melted, and the oceans rose again to cover the land bridge that connected Asia to the Americas. By this time, though, people lived from north to south in the Americas. They lived in many different environments and found ways of life suited to the place where they lived.

2. What kinds of prey did the first Americans hunt?

AGRICULTURE CREATES A NEW WAY OF LIFE (Page 238–239)

How did agriculture change ways of life?

About 7000 B.C., the people living in central Mexico started a quiet revolution—farming. It was the same kind of radical change that had happened in several spots in Asia and Africa. By 3400 B.C., they had several foods that they grew, including squashes, beans, chilies,

and the most important one—**maize**, or corn. Corn grew so well that a family of three could, in four months, grow enough corn to feed it for two years.

Over many centuries, farming spread throughout the Americas. In what is now the eastern United States and in the region of the Andes, people may have discovered the idea of farming on their own. In central Mexico, farmers became so skilled at growing corn that they could enjoy three harvests each year.

Farming had the same results in the Americas that it did in Asia and Africa. Growing food gave people a larger and more reliable food supply. As more people could be fed, they were healthier and lived longer. As a result, the population grew.

Because farmers produced so much food, some people could concentrate on other ways of making a living. They began to work in different arts and crafts and learned new skills. Some people became rich. They owned more than others and enjoyed a higher position in society. Some people became rulers. Others became their subjects.

3. Why was maize so important?

The Americas: A Separate World**Section 2**

Early Mesoamerican Civilizations

Terms and Names

Mesoamerica Area that stretches south from central Mexico to the northern part of modern-day Honduras

Olmec People who flourished along the Mesoamerican coast of the Gulf of Mexico from 1200 B.C. to 400 B.C.

Zapotec Early Mesoamerican civilization that was centered in the Oaxaca Valley of what is now Mexico

Monte Alban First urban center in the Americas, built by the Zapotec

Before You Read

In the last section, you read about the first inhabitants of the Americas.

In this section, you will read about the first civilizations in America.

As You Read

Use a Venn diagram to compare Olmec and Zapotec cultures.

THE OLMEC (Pages 240–241)**Who were the Olmec?**

The story of American civilizations begins in Mesoamerica. This area stretches south from central Mexico to the northern part of present-day Honduras.

The earliest known American civilizations arose in southern Mexico, an area of hot rain forests. The people are called the Olmec. They flourished from about 1200 to 400 B.C. Their culture had a great influence on their neighbors and on peoples who lived long after them.

The Olmec lived along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in a land of dense forests and heavy rains.

The land gave them many benefits. It had good clay that could be used for pottery. Wood and rubber could be taken from the forest. The mountains to the north had stone for building. The rivers

could be used to move people and goods. The soil was excellent for growing food.

Archaeologists have found earthen mounds, courtyards, and pyramids built of stones. On top of the mounds were many monuments made of stone. Some of these stone structures are very large. They weigh as much as 44 tons.

Researchers are not sure whether the Olmec sites were monuments to rulers or areas important for religious reasons. They do think that the Olmec had many gods who stood for important forces of nature. The most important god, it seems, was the jaguar spirit. Many stone monuments show figures that are half-human and half-jaguar.

The Olmec traded goods and their culture with other people in the region. In return for the products they made, they received iron ore and different kinds of stone.

Section 2, *continued*

For some reason, the Olmec disappeared around 400 B.C. Historians still do not understand why. But their influence lived on.

1. What evidence of Olmec civilization has been found?

2. What evidence of Zapotec civilization has been found?

ZAPOTEC CIVILIZATION ARISES
(Pages 242–243)

Who were the Zapotec?

Another important early culture of Mexico was that of the **Zapotec** people. Their home was to the southwest of the Olmec in a valley that had excellent soil for farming and plenty of rainfall. By about 1000 B.C. the Zapotec built stone platforms and temples. A few hundred years later, they developed a kind of writing and a calendar.

Around 500 B.C., the Zapotec built the first city in the Americas. The city was called **Monte Alban**. As many as 25,000 people lived there. The city lasted as late as A.D. 700. Monte Alban had tall pyramids, temples, and palaces made out of stone. It had an observatory that could be used to look at the stars. But the Zapotec culture collapsed. As with the Olmec, historians do not know why.

THE EARLY MESOAMERICANS' LEGACY (Page 243)

How did the early Mesoamericans influence later peoples?

Both of these cultures left their mark on later cultures. The jaguar figure of the Olmec continued to appear in the sculpture and pottery of people who came later. Also, the look of Olmec towns—with pyramids, open space, and huge stone sculptures was repeated in later times. The ritual ball games of the Olmec continued to be played.

The Zapotec also shaped the lives of later peoples. Their way of writing and their calendar were used by other groups. The city of Monte Alban also influenced later peoples, who built their own cities in similar ways. These cities combined religious purposes with the needs of the common people who lived in them.

3. How did the Zapotec influence later peoples?

The Americas: A Separate World**Section 3****Early Civilizations of the Andes****Terms and Names**

Chavín First influential culture in South America, which flourished from around 900 B.C. to 200 B.C.

Nazca Culture that flourished along the southern coast of Peru from around 200 B.C. to A.D. 600

Moche Culture that flourished along the northern coast of Peru from around A.D. 100 to A.D. 700

Before You Read

In the last section, you read about the first Mesoamerican civilizations.

In this section, you will read about the civilizations of the Andes.

As You Read

Use a chart to record important information about early Andean civilizations.

SOCIETIES ARISE IN THE ANDES

(Pages 246–249)

What geographic factors made it unlikely for a civilization to arise?

Other interesting civilizations arose in the Americas far to the south of the Olmec and Zapotec peoples. These civilizations grew in a very harsh environment—the Andes in South America. This mountain range has many peaks that are more than 20,000 feet high.

Toward the northern part of South America, along these mountains, lies the modern country of Peru. In this area, the mountains are steep and very rocky. Ice and snow cover the tops of the mountains during the entire year. Travel is hard.

The climate changes quickly from being hot during the day to bitter cold at night. The soil is poor.

It was in the mountains of this difficult land that a new civilization arose. That culture is called Chavín. It takes its name

from a major ruin, Chavín de Huántar in the Andes. At this site, researchers have found pyramids, open spaces, and large mounds made of earth. The Chavín culture was at its height from 900 B.C. to 200 B.C. It is considered the first influential civilization in South America.

Scientists have found objects that suggest that the Chavín culture helped shape other cultures to the north and south of this site. At these other sites are the art styles and symbols of religion found at Chavín. Scientists think that the main site was not the center of a political empire but was the chief site of a spiritual or religious movement. People from other areas may have made trips to the main site to pay their respects. The Chavín culture, like the Olmec in Mexico, may have been a “mother culture,” one that gave the first form to the ideas and styles of the area.

Section 3, *continued*

1. What theories do scientists have about the Chavín culture?

OTHER ANDEAN CIVILIZATIONS FLOURISH (Pages 247–249)

What other Andean civilizations developed?

Two other important cultures arose in Peru. The **Nazca** culture developed along the coast of the Pacific Ocean in the south of Peru. It lasted from 200 B.C. to A.D. 600. The Nazca people built large and complex systems to bring water to their farmlands. They made beautiful cloth and pottery.

The Nazca are most famous for the Nazca Lines. They are huge pictures scraped on the surface of a rocky plain. The drawings include a monkey, a spider, some birds, and other creatures. The pictures are so large that they can be seen and appreciated only from high in the air. Some experts think that the Nazca drew these pictures for their gods to see.

The other culture of early Peru arose along the Pacific Coast but far to the north. This was the **Moche** culture. It

lasted from A.D. 100 to A.D. 700. The Moche tapped into rivers that flowed down from the mountains. They built ditches to bring water to their fields. They raised corn, beans, potatoes, squash, and peanuts. They also fished, caught wild ducks and pigs, and hunted deer.

Archaeologists have found some tombs of the Moche people. They show that the culture had great wealth. They have found objects made of gold, silver, and jewels. The Moche people made beautiful pottery that showed scenes of everyday life. So, even though they never had a written language, it is possible to learn much about how they lived.

Eventually, the Moche culture also fell. As with the other peoples of the Americas, the reason for this fall is not known. For the next hundred years, other cultures would rise and fall in the Americas. But most of them remained separate from one another.

2. Name three characteristics of the Moche people.
