

The Americas

Unit Throughlines

How do the spaces and places people build represent their values?

EU 1. Geographic features can create both opportunities and challenges for the people who live in a given region. The development of megacities requires populations to develop ways to grow sustainably, responsibly, and inclusively.

EU 2. Natural resources can be used by societies to innovate, address challenges, and enhance daily life.

EU 3. A city's design and features can reveal the values and beliefs of the people who created it. It can also reflect the exchange of ideas between societies through trade systems.

EU 4. Creation myths can reveal how people in a society viewed themselves and the world around them. A society's rituals often reflect its core values and beliefs.

EU 5. Migration and cultural exchange shape societies over time. A society's legacy and impact can endure over centuries.

Learning Progression

Human Geography and Regional Geographical Systems of the Americas | 5 Lessons

What challenges and opportunities does geography pose in different regions of the Americas?

- L 1. Investigate the people and places of Latin America by engaging with multimedia sources and identifying key aspects of diversity.
- L 2. Draw on geographic concepts to explain how people in different Latin American regions have faced environmental challenges and created opportunities by adapting to and using natural resources over time.
- L 3. Explain how physical geography and natural resources influence human activity in different Latin American regions through collaborative map annotations.
- L 4. Analyze the human geography of Latin American cities by identifying key urban challenges and innovations to explain how people are working to create healthier, more equitable communities.
- L 5. Use various sources to explain the challenges and opportunities that geography creates for people in different regions of the Americas.

The Americas' Earliest Complex Societies | 4 Lessons

How did early complex societies in the Americas solve problems using natural resources?

- L 6. Analyze how the Caral-Supe civilization innovated with natural resources to solve problems and create a cooperative way of life.
- L 7. Evaluate the credibility of various sources to learn about the ancient Olmec people through the identification of a source's creator and the presence of facts and opinions.
- L 8. Identify how the Olmec used natural resources like rubber to solve problems or enhance daily life.
- L 9. Explain how the Olmec and Caral-Supe used natural resources like rubber to solve problems or enhance daily life.

Key Practice Standards

PS 3. Identify various types of primary and secondary sources that could be relevant to a particular inquiry.

PS 5. Determine the credibility of sources using distinctions among fact and opinion as well as information regarding maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience.

PS 7. Draw on disciplinary concepts to explain the challenges people have faced, and opportunities they have created, in addressing local, regional, and global problems

Key Literacy Standards

SLCA.6-8.5. Integrate multimedia components and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

WCA.6-8.1b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

WCA.6-8.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

WCA.6-8.8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and

Mesoamerican Societies: The Teotihuacan | 5 Lessons

How did the Teotihuacan society shape their land and buildings to match their culture?

- L 10. Locate major Mesoamerican civilizations in time and place, exploring how Teotihuacan's geography and architecture reflect cultural values.
- L 11. Research how the features of the ancient city of Teotihuacan reveal its people's values and beliefs.
- L 12. Evaluate how features of Mesoamerican cities reflected cultural beliefs and values by analyzing visuals and video evidence from Teotihuacan.
- L 13. Analyze Teotihuacan's influence through trade and cultural exchange using information from a text.
- L 14. Evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources to explain how Mesoamerican societies shaped their buildings and cities to reflect cultural values.

Mesoamerican Societies: The Maya | 7 Lessons

How did Maya rituals and practices showcase their beliefs?

- L 15. Identify major features of past and present Maya society using an interactive website in order to engage in inquiry about Maya beliefs and values.
- L 16. Generate and evaluate questions about Maya beliefs and practices using visual and textual sources to make inferences about how rituals reflected their values and responses to challenges.
- L 17. Analyze a Maya creation myth to identify connections between mythology, nature, geography, and spiritual values.
- L 18. Analyze how and why the ancient Maya observed celestial phenomena by explaining the cultural significance of skywatching in Maya society.
- L 19. Use sources to identify how the Maya ball game reflected and reinforced Maya values and beliefs.
- L 20. Analyze ancient murals to determine important aspects of Maya culture and experiences.
- L 21. Synthesize knowledge about how Maya rituals and practices reflected their beliefs and values.

Taíno Culture and the Ancient Caribbean | 5 Lessons

How did migration and geography shape the unique cultures of the ancient Caribbean?

- L 22. Analyze cultural artifacts from the ancient Caribbean to make inferences about how geography and migration shaped Taíno daily life and culture.
- L 23. Analyze how migration and geography shaped Taíno culture by examining language, artifacts, and daily life practices using primary and secondary sources.

conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- L 24. Analyze how elements of Taíno culture have survived and continue to shape identity and traditions in the Caribbean today.
- L 25. Synthesize information about how migration and geography shaped the unique cultures of the ancient Caribbean.
- L 26. Use the Know and Wonder and Inquiry Charts to identify important takeaway learnings from each cluster of the unit.

Summative Assessment | 2 Days

In Unit 4, students explored how ancient American cities were designed with intention, reflecting the beliefs, rituals, values, and environmental knowledge of their people. Astronomy, ecology, and daily life were deeply connected in these urban centers, which also served as places of competition and collaboration among neighboring communities.

For the Summative Assessment, students will apply their learning by creating an illustrated codex about a city of their choice from the ancient Americas. Their work will answer this Unit 4 Essential Question:

How do the spaces and places people build represent their values?

This codex will serve as a culminating artifact that integrates research, interpretation, and reflection. Students will:

- Identify and analyze a variety of primary and secondary sources to gather meaningful information about their chosen city
- Evaluate the reliability of sources, considering when and where they were created, who made them, and whether they present facts or opinions
- Explain a challenge or problem the city or its people faced, and describe how they addressed it, highlighting human agency in responding to civic, environmental, or regional concerns

This project reinforces not only historical understanding but also civic learning. It builds on students' previous work from earlier units, such as their study of community and belonging in Unit 2 and their research skills and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals in Unit 3. By communicating their findings to classmates and contributing to a collective learning celebration, students are engaging in civic practice that echoes the meaning of citizenship in ancient cities and today.