

## TOPIC: PRE-COLUMBIAN CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS

### I. Pre-Columbian Civilizations (c. 300-1500s AD)

#### A) Introduction

- 1) The pre-Columbian civilizations are the societies that developed in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans.
- 2) The 3 main pre-Columbian societies were the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca. They were all very organized, developed, and advanced civilizations.

#### B) The Maya

- 1) They lived in the lowland region of Mesoamerica (Mexico and Central America).
- 2) Achievements:
  - a) They developed a calendar and a form of writing.
  - b) Math- They invented the use of zero in math (like the Gupta of India).

#### C) The Aztec

- 1) They lived in Mesoamerica (Mexico) and established a large empire.
- 2) Tenochtitlan- Capital city of the Aztec Empire.
- 3) Achievements:
  - a) They used a calendar and a form of writing.
  - b) Chinampas- These were “floating gardens” that the Aztecs built in lakes in order to farm since there was a shortage of fertile land.

#### D) The Inca

- 1) They lived in the Andes Mountains of Peru (in South America) and established a large empire.
- 2) Machu Picchu- Most famous site of the Inca.
- 3) Achievements:
  - a) **NOTE:** In order to improve trade and transportation, the Inca developed a vast (large network of roads) (like the Romans) and footbridges in the Andes Mountains.
  - b) Terrace Farming- Since the Inca lived in the mountains, they learned to farm by cutting flat areas (called terraces) into the sides of mountains.**NOTE:** The Japanese used a similar technique in order to farm.

E) **NOTE:** The Regents wants you to know that both the Aztecs and the Inca used creative agricultural techniques (chinampas and terrace farming) in order to adapt to their geographic environments.

F) The Aztecs and the Inca were both conquered by the Spanish when they arrived in the 1500s:

- 1) The Aztecs- Conquered by Hernan Cortez in 1521.
- 2) The Inca- Conquered by Francisco Pizarro in 1532.

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## TOPIC: THE AGE OF EXPLORATION AND ENCOUNTER

### I. Introduction

- A) The Age of Exploration and Encounter was the period in history when the Europeans began sea voyages of exploration. During this period, Europeans reached the Americas and began to colonize (take over) areas in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.
- B) The two European countries that first began voyages of exploration were Spain and Portugal.

### II. The Age of Exploration and Discovery (1400s-1600s)

#### A) Causes of (reasons for) the Age of Exploration:

- 1) Europeans wanted greater access to the spices and other products of Asia.

- 2) Europeans wanted to find sea routes to Asia since land routes were controlled by Muslims.
  - 3) Improvements in navigational (sailing) technology made long sea voyages possible. These improvements include the compass and astrolabe, cartography (the science of making maps), and the lateen sail for ships.
- B) Key Explorers include:
- 1) Bartholomeu Dias- First explorer to round the Cape of Good Hope (southern tip of Africa).
  - 2) Vasco da Gama- First explorer to reach India by going around Cape of Good Hope.
  - 3) Christopher Columbus- First explorer to reach the Americas.
  - 4) Ferdinand Magellan- First explorer to circumnavigate (sail around) the globe.
- C) Effects (results) of the Age of Exploration:
- 1) The Americas
    - a) The Spanish and Portuguese colonized (took over) land in the Americas. Lands controlled by the Spanish and Portuguese were called colonies.
    - b) Encomienda System- A labor system in which the Native Americans were forced to work on Spanish farming plantations (growing sugar) and in Spanish mines (getting gold and silver). Spanish landowners had total control over the Native Americans.
    - c) Millions of Native Americans died due to the diseases (such as smallpox) brought over by the Europeans.
  - 2) Africa
    - a) Europeans took slaves from Africa to the Americas to work on farming plantations.
    - b) The voyage of slaves from Africa to the Americas was called the Middle Passage.
  - 3) Mercantilism
    - a) Mercantilism is the idea that colonies exist only to make the Mother Country (i.e.- Spain and Portugal) wealthy.
    - b) Spain and Portugal tightly controlled trade with their colonies in the Americas in order to make money. Europeans would take raw materials (like cotton) from their American colonies and sell finished products (like clothing) back to the colonies.
  - 4) Triangular Trade- This was the trade route taken by Europeans in the Atlantic Ocean. Europeans traveled to Africa to get slaves, brought the slaves to their colonies in the Americas, and then returned to Europe with goods from the Americas.
  - 5) Columbian Exchange- This is the term used to describe the exchange of people, plants, animals, ideas and technology between the “Old World” (Europe) and the “New World” (North and South America) that took place as a result of exploration and colonization.
    - a) Items sent from Europe to the Americas include: Wheat, sugar, bananas, horses, chickens and diseases (like smallpox and measles).
    - b) Items sent from the Americas to Europe include: Maize (corn), potatoes, beans, squash, chili peppers, cocoa, and tobacco.
    - c) The Columbian Exchange is the ultimate example of cultural diffusion (the exchange of goods and ideas between civilizations).

### III. Commercial Revolution (1500s-1600s)

- A) The term Commercial Revolution refers to the new forms of business that were introduced during the Age of Exploration. These new forms of business included:
- 1) Joint-stock companies- Investors would combine money to help pay for trading projects.
  - 2) The expansion (growth) of banking.

3) Capitalism- Form of business in which profits from one project are reinvested in other projects in order to make more money.

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## **TOPIC: THE TRAVELERS OF GLOBAL I**

### **I. The Travelers of Global I**

A) The Regents likes to ask questions about 3 men who each traveled thousands of miles. They are:

- 1) Marco Polo- Italian merchant who traveled to China (over the Silk Road) when it was ruled by the Mongols.
- 2) Ibn Battuta- Arab/Muslim explorer who traveled a total of 75,000 miles and visited lands in Africa, Asia, and Europe.
- 3) Zheng He- Chinese explorer of the Ming Dynasty who sailed the Indian and Pacific Oceans to lands that included Southeast Asia, India, the western coast of Africa.

B) **NOTE:** These three individuals are important for several reasons:

- 1) They wrote extensively about their travels. These writings are valuable primary sources that teach us about lands that they visited.
- 2) The contacts they made with other lands helped stimulate (increase) trade between different regions of the world

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## **TOPIC: THE AGE OF ABSOLUTISM**

### **I. The Age of Absolutism (1600s-1700s)**

A) The Age of Absolutism was the period in European history when nations were governed (ruled) by absolute monarchs.

B) The term “monarch” means “king.” Absolute monarchs were kings who had total control over the nations that they ruled.

C) Key characteristics/features of absolute monarchs:

- 1) Absolute monarchs centralized political control, which means that they did not share power with anyone else.
- 2) Absolute monarchs believed in Divine Right, which was the idea that kings received their power to rule directly from God.
- 3) Absolute monarchs believed that their power was unlimited. They made laws without the consent (approval) of the people.

D) Some important absolute monarchs include:

- 1) Peter the Great- He was the absolute monarch of Russia. He also westernized Russia, which means that he imitated the customs and traditions of countries in Western Europe in order to strengthen his nation.
- 2) Louis XIV- He was the absolute monarch of France.
- 3) Philip II- He was the absolute monarch of Spain.
- 4) Henry VIII- He was the absolute monarch of England.
- 5) Suleiman the Magnificent- He was the absolute monarch of the Ottoman Empire.
- 6) **NOTE:** In addition to knowing that these men were absolute monarchs, the Regents also wants you to know that Peter the Great, Louis XIV, and Suleiman the Magnificent helped expand (enlarge) the territory of their nations by taking over neighboring lands.