

The First Americans

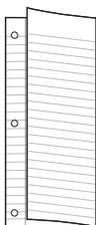
TOPIC SUMMARY

By 1500, millions of Native Americans, belonging to more than 2,000 different groups, lived on the two continents of North America and South America. Over time, the different groups developed their own cultures. The great civilizations of the Olmec, the Maya, and the Aztec arose in present-day Mexico and Central America. The Inca Empire developed in the western highlands of South America. The Hohokam, the Anasazi, and the Mound Builders of the Ohio River valley were among the earliest and most advanced cultures in North America. These early North American cultures developed ways of life that were well suited to their environments.

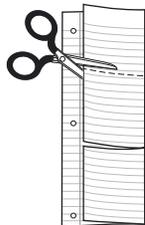
FOLDABLES[™]
Study Organizer

Organizing Information This Foldable will help organize what students learn about the first Americans.

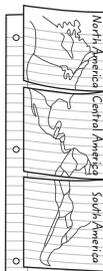
Step 1 Fold a sheet of paper in half from side to side.



Step 2 Turn the paper and fold it into thirds. Cut the top layer only to make three equal tabs.



Step 3 Draw and label your Foldable as shown.



Reading and Writing On the front of the Foldable, diagram early migratory routes; label sites of the Mound Builders; show the empires of the Aztec, Inca, and other ancient civilizations; and include other visual information about the people of the Americas.

TOPIC ACTIVITY IDEAS

Creating Visuals

Complete the Foldable activity, as instructed above, including the Reading and Writing activity. Then, organize students into groups and ask them to create a poster of the American continents with a drawing of the migratory routes of the first Americans. Have students label the areas of the earliest civilizations and then add the names of present-day countries and major cities to their maps. Display each group's work in the classroom.

ANALYZING

This Foldable will help students investigate how archaeology helps us learn about earlier times. Have students label the three tabs with the early civilizations: Olmec, Maya, and Aztec. Instruct students to research and describe what remains of each of these civilizations, and then record the information under the appropriate tab. Student research should also focus on identifying how archaeologists interpret these historic sites and artifacts. Facilitate a class discussion on what the historic sites and artifacts tell us about each of these civilizations.



DESCRIBING

Have students write “roads,” “Quipus,” and “Terraces” on the labels of their Three-Tab Foldable. Ask students to describe these terms under the appropriate tab. Instruct students to then write a paragraph explaining how the terms are related to the successful growth and expansion of the Inca Empire.

Student Study Tip

Have students take notes after they have read long paragraphs rather than at the end of a chapter. This will help them focus on important ideas and details and prevent them from losing track of the flow of information. Remind students that they should not spend a long time taking notes. Students should read, think, write, and move on.