

# The Americas

## TOPIC SUMMARY

The first people in the Americas arrived thousands of years ago. It is believed that they came from Asia during the Ice Age. The invention of farming led to the growth of civilizations in what is now Mexico, Central America, and Peru. The Maya, Aztec, and many other Native American cultures developed in North and South America. Spanish explorers and soldiers were drawn to the riches of the Native American civilizations. They used superior technology to defeat the Aztec and Inca empires in the early A.D. 1500s.

**FOLDABLES**<sup>™</sup>  
**Study Organizer**

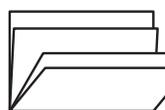
**Organizing Information** This foldable will help students organize information about the history and culture of the Americas.

**Step 1** Collect two sheets of paper and place them about 1 inch apart.



Keep the edges straight.

**Step 2** Fold up the bottom edges of the paper to form four tabs.



This makes all the tabs the same size.

**Step 3** When all the tabs are the same size, crease the paper to hold the tabs in place and staple the sheets together. Label each tab as shown.



Staple along the fold.

**Reading and Writing**

Write facts about the first Americans, life in the Americas, and the Aztecs and Incas on the appropriate tabs.

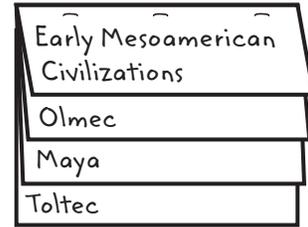
## TOPIC ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Writing

Have students create the Study Foldable above, including the Reading and Writing activity. Have students use their completed Foldables to write three paragraphs describing different Native American groups, how they lived, and how and why their civilizations were defeated. Suggest they use the Internet or library to conduct further research. After they write the paragraphs, have them use transitional words to combine the paragraphs into an essay about the first Americans.

## CATEGORIZING

Have students record information about the *Olmec*, *Maya*, and *Toltec* under the appropriate tabs of their Foldables. Remind students to mention their locations, lifestyles, and other facts about them. When their Foldables are complete, organize the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the peoples from their Foldables. Ask students to use the Internet and library to find additional information about their assigned people. Have the groups share their findings in an oral presentation.



## ORGANIZING

Have students use three sheets of paper to create this Foldable. Have students ask themselves questions as they read about early life in each region of North America. Tell them to record those questions and their answers on the appropriate Foldable tabs. Then work together as a class to organize a quiz show using the students' questions and answers from their Foldables. Decide how many points to award for each correct answer, what happens when a guess is incorrect, and so on. Hold the quiz show to review information about this topic.

### Student Study Tip

In the age of the Internet, still encourage students to spend some time becoming familiar with using library resources. Students should explore these various types of reference books: encyclopedias, biographical dictionaries, atlases, and almanacs.