

Civilization Clues

Find shared features in three American civilizations.

5.2a "Civilizations share certain common characteristics of religion, job specialization, cities, government, language and writing systems, technology, and social hierarchy."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail for each civilization characteristic in the passage. Number your underlines 1 through 7 in this order: religion, job specialization, cities, government, language and writing systems, technology, and social hierarchy, so you can compare the evidence.

Three Complex Societies

- ① The Maya, Aztec, and Inca built complex societies in the Americas before European conquest. Each society had crowded cities or major urban centers, governments that organized people, and social ranks. Rulers and nobles held more power than farmers and laborers. Many people lived in nearby villages, but city centers included plazas, temples, markets, and places where leaders made decisions.
- ② Religion shaped public life. Priests led ceremonies, and people honored gods connected to rain, the sun, and farming. The Maya recorded ideas with glyphs. Aztec scribes made pictorial books, and Inca officials used knotted cords called quipu to keep records. Each society also used spoken languages. Workers specialized as farmers, builders, traders, soldiers, artists, or religious leaders.
- ③ Technology helped these societies use their environments. Maya farmers managed water and grew crops in different landscapes. Aztec engineers built chinampas, raised fields in lake shallows. Inca engineers built long roads, bridges, and terraces on mountain slopes. These tools moved goods, produced food, and linked communities. Although their achievements differed, all three societies show the main characteristics of civilizations.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What detail in paragraph 1 shows government, and what detail shows social hierarchy?

2 Which civilization characteristic is shown by workers having different jobs? Name two jobs from the passage.

3 How did the Maya, Aztec, and Inca each record information? Which shared characteristic do these methods show?

4 Choose one technology from paragraph 3. How did it help people in that society?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a community. Choose three different civilization characteristics from the passage. For each row, name one characteristic and give a concrete detail showing it in your invented community.

CIVILIZATION CHARACTERISTIC	DETAIL FROM MY CIVILIZATION

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail for each civilization characteristic in the passage. Number your underlines 1 through 7 in this order: religion, job specialization, cities, government, language and writing systems, technology, and social hierarchy, so you can compare the evidence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What detail in paragraph 1 shows government, and what detail shows social hierarchy?	Government: leaders made decisions. Social hierarchy: rulers and nobles had more power than farmers and laborers.
2	Which civilization characteristic is shown by workers having different jobs? Name two jobs from the passage.	Job specialization. Answers may include farmers, builders, traders, soldiers, artists, or religious leaders.
3	How did the Maya, Aztec, and Inca each record information? Which shared characteristic do these methods show?	The Maya used glyphs, Aztec scribes made pictorial books, and Inca officials used quipu. These show language and writing or record-keeping systems.
4	Choose one technology from paragraph 3. How did it help people in that society?	Answers may include chinampas produced food, or Inca roads and bridges moved goods and linked communities, or terraces helped grow food on mountain slopes.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

CIVILIZATION CHARACTERISTIC	DETAIL FROM MY CIVILIZATION
Religion	People gather at a river temple for seasonal ceremonies.
Job specialization	Farmers grow food while potters make storage jars.
Government	A council creates rules and settles disputes.

Accept other passage-based examples for the shared characteristics and technology question. For the open table, accept three distinct characteristics with logical invented details. If social hierarchy is chosen, its example should show ranked levels or unequal status and power.