

Belief Builds Power

Trace how local religious traditions shaped public life and political authority.

9.8b "Local traditional religions influenced the development of complex societies and civilizations in Africa and the Americas ca. 1325–1600."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three statements that show a religious belief or practice influencing how a society organized people, labor, or political power.

Sacred Ideas, Public Power

- ① Religious traditions across Africa and the Americas varied greatly. Many communities honored ancestors or spiritual powers connected with rain, rivers, animals, or the sun. The term animism can describe beliefs in spiritual beings or powers in the world, but it does not name one shared religion. Ceremonies could mark farming seasons, seek health, or honor sacred relationships. Such practices helped organize public gatherings and shared responsibilities. Their meanings must be understood in each society's own context.
- ② Aztec rulers linked authority with devotion to Huitzilopochtli, a deity associated with warfare and the sun. Temples in Tenochtitlan stood at the center of public life. State ceremonies displayed rulers' responsibility to maintain cosmic order. Conquered communities supplied tribute, some of which supported ceremonies and the capital. Imperial worship reinforced political power, although local religious traditions also continued. Religion was one source of authority alongside warfare, tribute, and alliances.
- ③ In the Inca Empire, the Sapa Inca claimed a special relationship with Inti, the sun god. This sacred status supported his authority. Officials organized festivals, offerings, and labor connected with huacas, sacred places or beings. Linking local sacred relationships to imperial ceremonies helped connect communities to the state. Many local huacas remained important. As in the Aztec example, religion influenced public duties and loyalty without making all local traditions identical.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What kinds of spiritual forces did many communities in Africa and the Americas honor?

2 What did Aztec state-sponsored ceremonies show about the ruler's role, and how could this support political power?

3 How did Inca practices involving huacas help connect villages to the imperial center?

4 State one similarity between the Aztec and Inca examples and one difference in the religious ideas used to support rule.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Use the Aztec or Inca example. In 3-4 sentences, connect a religious belief, a public practice, and political authority. Explain how the practice could strengthen a ruler's position.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three statements that show a religious belief or practice influencing how a society organized people, labor, or political power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What kinds of spiritual forces did many communities in Africa and the Americas honor?	They honored ancestors, spirits connected to places, and natural forces such as rain, rivers, animals, or the sun.
2	What did Aztec state-sponsored ceremonies show about the ruler's role, and how could this support political power?	They showed that the ruler had a duty to maintain cosmic order and protect the empire. This linked the ruler's authority to religious responsibility.
3	How did Inca practices involving huacas help connect villages to the imperial center?	Officials organized festivals, offerings, and work connected to huacas, tying villages to the imperial center while allowing local huacas to remain important.
4	State one similarity between the Aztec and Inca examples and one difference in the religious ideas used to support rule.	Both linked religious belief to political authority and organized public life. The Aztecs emphasized devotion to Huitzilopochtli and ceremonies in the capital, while the Incas connected the Sapa Inca to Inti and incorporated local huacas.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Inca ruler claimed a special relationship with Inti. Officials organized offerings and festivals connected with sacred places or beings. These duties linked communities with imperial ceremonies. The ruler's sacred status and public rituals could reinforce loyalty to his authority.

Accept evidence-based links between belief, public practice, and political authority. For the final response, use a passage example rather than treating different societies as sharing one religion.