

Ideas That Endured

How Aztec, Inca, and Songhai achievements served their societies

9.8c "Complex societies and civilizations made unique cultural achievements and contributions."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one achievement for each empire. Circle its purpose or effect. Label your examples A (Aztec), I (Inca), and S (Songhai).

Three Ways to Build a Society

- ① The Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, stood in central Mexico's lake system. Farmers used chinampas, raised fields in shallow freshwater areas, to grow food for urban populations. Canals supported transport around the fields. Builders raised temples and stone monuments for ceremonies and gatherings. Painted codices recorded tribute, history, and religious ideas through pictures and symbols. These folding books preserved knowledge and beliefs. Aztec society developed these practices from earlier Mesoamerican traditions.
- ② In the Andes, Inca leaders connected distant communities with roads, bridges, and stairways. Runners called chasquis relayed messages so officials could share news and orders. Terraces created farmland on slopes and helped reduce erosion. Farmers used different elevations for different crops. Specialists kept records using quipu, colored cords with knots, including counts of people and stored supplies. These systems helped rulers manage resources and govern across difficult terrain.
- ③ Songhai grew around the Niger River and West African trade routes. Gao was an important trading and political center. Taxes on commerce helped support government. Timbuktu's Islamic scholarly tradition flourished before and during Songhai rule. Scholars taught subjects including law and astronomy, while scribes copied manuscripts by hand. Learning communities around mosques such as Sankore attracted students. Their work preserved and developed knowledge and connected scholars across the region. These achievements were contributions of people and communities, not only rulers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Choose one Aztec achievement or contribution from the passage. How did it serve Aztec society?

2 How did the Inca road network help rulers govern a large empire? Use one detail from the passage.

3 What was one contribution of Timbuktu's learning community, and what effect did it have beyond the city?

4 What shared purpose did Inca roads and Songhai taxes on trade serve? Explain how each supported the empire.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label for codices, terraces, or quipu. Name the society, describe how the contribution worked, and explain why it mattered, using passage evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one achievement for each empire. Circle its purpose or effect. Label your examples A (Aztec), I (Inca), and S (Songhai). Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose one Aztec achievement or contribution from the passage. How did it serve Aztec society?	Answers may include: Chinampas helped feed the crowded capital; temples and stone monuments supported religious ceremonies and public gatherings; codices preserved information and expressed Aztec beliefs.
2	How did the Inca road network help rulers govern a large empire? Use one detail from the passage.	Chasquis carried messages on the roads, bridges, and stairways, so officials could share news and orders quickly across the empire.
3	What was one contribution of Timbuktu's learning community, and what effect did it have beyond the city?	Scholars taught subjects and scribes copied books. This scholarship spread knowledge and strengthened ties among Muslim communities.
4	What shared purpose did Inca roads and Songhai taxes on trade serve? Explain how each supported the empire.	Both supported government over a large territory. Inca roads moved messages quickly, while Songhai trade taxes supported a government that controlled a large territory.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Aztec codices were folding books containing painted pictures and symbols. They recorded tribute, history, and religious ideas. These records helped preserve information and beliefs across generations. Accept passage-supported achievements and their purposes. The museum label should identify the society, explain how the chosen contribution worked, and explain its importance.