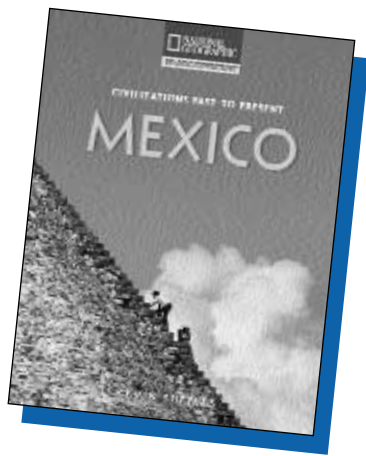


Overview

Summary

Mexico

By Kevin Supples



How were the ancient Maya similar to and different from the Maya people today? This book compares the cultures of these two civilizations. Topics such as communities, celebrations, and inventions help students understand how communities change over time and how past cultures influence modern cultures. The tropical and mountainous environment influenced life in Mexico. In the hot, moist weather, the Maya wore light cotton clothing and farmed varied crops. Religion was important in the Maya culture. After the chiefs, the priests were the most powerful leaders. Music, prayers, and stories created the fabric for religious festivals and ceremonies. Maya inventions, including a written language and a calendar, have influenced cultures around the world.

Background Information

The first Maya farming settlements date back to around 2000 B.C. This book describes Maya culture around A.D. 300, during a period referred to as the Classic Period. During this time, the Maya shaped one of the most remarkable civilizations of ancient times. The Maya had a sophisticated society that included farmers, nobles, and skilled craftsmen. Their inventions, an alphabet, and mathematical advances—including the concept of zero—make them a fascinating society to study. In 1521, the Spaniards conquered the Maya. This marked the start of the Colonial Period. Today, the Maya are the largest group of native Americans north of Peru. Nearly four million Maya live in an area about half the size of Texas.

Learning Objectives

Genre/Text Features

- expository
- photographs, illustrations, and artifacts
- captions
- maps
- sidebars
- contents, glossary, and index

Reading Skills

Skill Focus

- compare and contrast
- use specialized words

Supporting Skills

- summarize
- recognize cause-and-effect relationships
- draw conclusions
- paraphrase

Writing Skills

Writing Focus

- write a skit (narrative)

Supporting Skills

- prewrite
- respond to others' writing
- conduct research

Speaking and Listening

- give oral presentation

Social Studies Skills

- describe ways the Maya use art, music, and stories as expressions of culture
- use vocabulary associated with time such as *ancient, past, present, long ago, B.C., A.D.*
- compare and contrast the ancient Maya and Maya today
- give examples of specialized workers in ancient Maya society
- use maps

Focus on Reading

Before Reading

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students to think about Mexico and jot down one fact about this country's people, history, artworks, or landforms. Have students share what they know. Begin a K-W-L chart for the class, writing the information students share under the K (What We Already Know about Mexico) column. Then ask students what they would like to know about Mexico. Write their responses in the W column.

Tell students that they will learn about the Maya, a group of people who created a civilization a long time ago in Mexico. Students can add to the third column of the chart as they read and study this book.

K (What We Already Know)	W (What We Would Like to Know)	L (What We Learn)

Preview

Give students time to preview the book. Have them read the chapter titles and pay attention to the illustrations. Ask:

What will this book be about?

What kinds of things will you learn about Mexico?

Will you be reading about Mexico today or long ago?

Have students turn to page 8 and point out the words in bold-faced type: ***In ancient times*** and ***Today***. Explain that the book follows a pattern of comparing ancient Maya culture in Mexico to Maya in Mexico today.

Set Purpose

Set the purpose for reading.

Let's read to find some of the answers to our questions about the Maya.



Vocabulary Strategy:

Use specialized words

Activity Master, Page 100

Have students turn to page 4. Read the introduction to the class. Point out the word *culture*. Ask:

What do you think culture means?

Have a volunteer use the glossary to check the definition and then use the word in a sentence. Explain to students that they will be reading about the Maya culture of ancient times and of today. Explain that the vocabulary words all relate to the Maya culture in some way. Have students use *Mexico*, the glossary, and a dictionary to write how each word relates to Maya culture. Students will be using these words:

archaeologist	patio
headdress	tomb
mural	tortilla

Correlation to National Standards

Language Arts

- read to understand cultures of the world
- apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend and interpret texts
- use spoken and written language to communicate
- apply the knowledge of genre
- conduct research

Social Studies

- culture
- time, continuity, and change
- people, places, and environments
- production, distribution, and consumption

Geography

- places and regions (6)
- human systems (10, 11)
- environment and society (15)

State/Local

See Standards Chart on pages 282–287.

During Reading

 **Read Strategically:**
Compare and contrast
Activity Master, Page 101

Assign each chapter of the book as independent reading. As students read, have them use the Activity Master on page 101 to take notes on ways life is the same and different for the ancient Maya and the Maya today. Point out that the author used a “then and now” text structure to write *Mexico*. Tell students to look for the words *in ancient times* and *today* as they read. After reading, students can use their notes to compare and contrast life in ancient times and today. You might work through a portion of the chart together. (See sample responses below.)

Strategy Tip: Paraphrase

If students have difficulty understanding a sentence or group of sentences in the book, suggest that they retell (paraphrase) the part in their own words. Explain that paraphrasing helps identify what parts of the text they don't understand.

If students continue to have difficulty understanding certain passages after paraphrasing them, they can ask for help during the class discussion.

Meeting Individual Needs

For specific strategies on meeting individual needs, see pages 264–269.

After Reading

Responding

Initiate a class discussion to assess reading comprehension with such questions as:

Where did the ancient Maya live? Where do the Maya live now? (details)

Do Maya people today live and work more like the ancient Maya or more like modern people? (compare and contrast)

Why was religion important to the ancient Maya? (cause and effect)

How did or does the land and location affect life in Mexico? (draw conclusions)

What kinds of artwork do Maya people create today? (summarize)

Writing and Research: **Write a skit**

Activity Master, Page 102

Tell students they live in ancient Mexico. They are to write a skit for their community's harvest celebration. Remind students how important religion was to the Maya, and that Maya music, dances, plays, and costumes were all related to the nature gods. Students can use the Activity Master on page 102 to help them organize their ideas. They can use information in *Mexico* and in reference books. Provide a model for dialogue:

Daughter: *Our crops have been good this season.*

Mother: *Yes, we should thank the sun and rain gods!*

Communicating: Speaking/listening

Give oral presentation

In pairs, small groups, or independently, students can perform their skits.

Students acting out their skits should

- ✓ speak clearly
- ✓ be in character
- ✓ adapt speech as appropriate

Listeners should

- ✓ determine the main ideas of skit
- ✓ listen politely
- ✓ ask questions to clarify ideas they didn't understand

Category	Maya in Ancient Times	Maya Today
Community Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People lived in simple houses made of vines, mud, and wood; they had thinking mats. • People made their own clothes. • People grew their own food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some houses still have thatched roofs; people still have thinking mats. • People wear modern clothes. • People grow some food but also buy food at grocery stores.

Focus on Social Studies

Learn About Mayan Art

Students can work in pairs or independently to create art in the Maya style. Students can choose a member of ancient Maya society, such as an artist, a farmer, a mathematician, or an astronomer and draw this person at work. Or students might select an art form to recreate, for example, pottery, wood carving, or weaving that includes an image of a person.

To provide models, refer students to pages 20 and 21 for an example of Maya art. When students complete their artwork, have them write a few sentences explaining what role that person had in ancient Maya society and what tools he or she used.

If you have students complete their artwork on large pieces of paper, you can post them next to each other to create a “mural” in your classroom to resemble murals created by the Maya thousands of years ago.



Map Activity

Activity Master, Page 103

Students can locate and label important places in ancient Mexico on the map. Students then use the map and the student book to answer questions.

Assessment Options

Use the following assessment options to assess students’ understanding of *Mexico*.

Questions

Ask the following questions during individual conferences or ask students to write the answers independently in their notebooks:

- 1 In what ways is the community life of present-day Maya people like that of the ancient Maya? In what ways are the two ways of life different?
- 2 What games did the Maya play long ago? Do we play anything like those games?
- 3 What would you say is remarkable about the palaces and pyramids the ancient Maya built?
- 4 What ideas developed by the Maya do we all use in our modern life?
- 5 What can you learn about Maya life and culture from studying their art?

Assessment Activity

Ask students to write a book review of *Mexico*. Remind students that while they can include their opinions, they should support their opinions with examples from the book.

Students should include

- ▶ two favorite parts of the book
- ▶ part of the book least liked
- ▶ three facts learned
- ▶ an illustration that was most helpful in understanding how ancient Maya lived
- ▶ a recommendation for or against the book

Book reviews should

- ✓ include the required information
- ✓ present information clearly and succinctly
- ✓ be accurate
- ✓ support opinions with facts

Multiple-Choice Test

Use the multiple-choice test in the Assessment Booklet.

Cross-Curricular Connection

Science

The ancient Maya were accomplished astronomers and knew a great deal about objects in the sky. Students can learn more about objects in the sky, such as solar eclipses and the Milky Way. Encourage students to conduct research about the topic they choose. How do we study these objects today? What have we learned that corroborates the ideas of the ancient Maya? Ask students to show their ideas by writing a report or creating a poster. Provide time for students to share their work.

Home-School Connection

Celebrations were important to the ancient Maya. Students and parents can choose their favorite holiday and compare their own traditions with ancient Maya traditions. Does the student’s favorite holiday have a basis in culture or religion? What are the parts of the celebration? Who takes part? Students might want to share their responses with others in the class.

Vocabulary: Use Specialized Words

The words below are from *Mexico*. Each word has something to do with the Maya culture. In the boxes, write a meaning for each word. Include a sketch for each word. Use *Mexico*, a dictionary, and any other resource you might need to help you.

headdress

mural

patio

archaeologist

tomb

tortilla

Reading: Compare Mexico, Then and Now

In many ways, the Maya live today as they did in ancient times. In other ways, Mayan life is very different from life in ancient times. As you read *Mexico*, take notes on how the Maya in ancient times lived and how the Maya live today.

Category	Maya in Ancient Times	Maya Today
Community Life		
Celebrations and Games		
Buildings and Inventions		
Temples and Tombs		

Writing: Prewriting

A Skit

You are an ancient Maya, and you must write a skit for your community's harvest celebration. Your skit will be written as dialogue. (Dialogue is what people say to each other.) Through dialogue, the listeners will learn about your topic. For example, you might write a skit about a family preparing for the harvest celebration. From what the people say to each other, we can learn about the foods people ate, the clothes they wore, and the reasons for the celebration.

You might want to use other resources in addition to *Mexico* to gather information for your skit. Use the writer's notebook to plan your skit.

Project: Skit for Harvest Celebration

Setting (Time and Place) Where and when in ancient Mexico will the skit take place?
In the mountains? At the beach? In someone's house?

Main Characters

"Extras"

Plot (What is the problem?)

How will the characters solve it?

Social Studies: Label a Map of Mexico

Use *Mexico* and other resources to locate and label the places listed below. Then use the scale and compass rose to answer the questions that follow.



Label these places



- | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Gulf of Mexico | Palenque | Sierra Madre Occidental |
| Yucatan Peninsula | Bonampak | Sierra Madre Oriental |
| Chichén Itzá | | |

Choose two places from the list shown above. Write a sentence for each explaining the importance of that place or how it influenced the ancient Maya.

1. _____

2. _____

3. In what direction would you travel if you went from Bonampak to Tulúm? _____