Unit 4/Week 1

Title: Lost Temple of the Aztecs

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes a day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.4; W.6.1, W.6.4, W.6.9; SL.6.1; L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.5

Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

**Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Sometimes a superstition or belief can shield you from reality and even cause serious danger.

Synopsis

The Lost City of the Aztecs is about the demise of the Aztec Empire and how Montezuma, the last Aztec emperor, reacted to the arrival of the Spaniards at Tenochtitlan in 1519.

2. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.

3. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Students who may have difficulty reading the text can be strategically paired, or may read in small group with teacher guidance).
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Evidence Based Answers** |
| Why does the professor call his find the “discovery of a lifetime”?  | * They found the great temple of the Aztecs, the cornerstone of what was once the most powerful empire in North America.
* (inference after reading) The Aztecs had a great and powerful empire. He was finding artifacts related to their history.
 |
| Compare and contrast the type of information in the text boxes and sidebars to the information in the main text. How and why are they alike and different?  | * The information on the sidebars is shaded and set off from the main text.
* The sidebars give information, rather than continue with the story.
* The sidebars provide facts rather than fictional events.
 |
| What evidence supports the statement that the Aztecs were a strong empire?  | * Tenochtitlan was a city of 250,000 when the Spaniards arrived
* “…where their conquered enemies brought gifts and tributes”
* Tenochtitlan was a mighty nation of warriors.
* what could his mighty nation of warriors have to fear...
* (text box) Later they expanded, creating an empire by defeating their neighbors in war.
* Cortes states, “They say that one Aztec warrior can overpower twenty men.”
 |
| The author describes Tenochtitlan as a remarkable city. What vivid language does the author use to describe it as remarkable?  | * The first Europeans who saw Tenochtitlan found the city so beautiful, they thought it was enchanted.
* Tenochtitlan was built on an island in the middle of a sparkling blue lake.
* Canals crisscrossed the city between blocks of spotless white buildings and lush green gardens.
* Long causeways led to the mainland.
* Snow-capped mountains loomed in the distance.
 |
| What events led to Moctezuma’s beliefs that Quetzalcoatl had come back?  | * After hearing the news of the strangers arrival, Moctezuma thought “Quetzalcoatl has appeared! he thought. He has come back to reclaim his throne. It was happening, just as the ancient prophecy has foretold...But, he promised to come back, and this was the predicted year of his return.”
* “Moctezuma knew there had already been signs that things were not well with the gods...”
* “Moctezuma was filled with fear and confusion at these unnatural happenings. Maybe the gods must be looking unfavorably on the richest and most powerful empire in the land.”
* “And now, it seemed, one of the gods had returned. Quetzalcoatl had arrived.”
 |
| List the gifts the Aztecs give to Cortes. Based on these types of gifts, what did the Aztecs think about Cortes?  | * a serpent mask made of turquoise
* a headdress of shimmering blue-green Quetzal feathers
* (picture caption) a pendant of a two-headed snake which was a symbol of the god Quetzalcoatl
* gold and jade bands
* a cape of ocelot skin and sandals of glistening black obsidian
* serpent-head staffs and spears inlaid with green jade, masks, shields, and fans heavy with gold and turquoise
* These types of gifts show that the Aztecs thought Cortes was a God.
 |
| What can you infer about how the Aztec messengers felt towards Cortes? | * The messengers felt as if Cortes was a god. They are bowing in front of him, their eyes are cast down, and their hands are reaching out bearing gifts.
 |
| What were Montezuma’s reactions to Cortes’s arrival? | * He wondered, “Were they friends, or enemies? Should they be destroyed or treated as guests?”
* Moctezuma decided to welcome the strangers
* His mind raced. Quetzalcoatl has appeared! he thought. He has come back to reclaim his throne!
* Moctezuma gathered his chiefs around him. Tell him that his servant Moctezuma has sent you to welcome him back to his throne, and take him these gifts.”
* When Moctezuma heard this, he could not sleep or eat.
 |
| Foreshadowing in literature introduces an event that will happen later in the story. Foreshadowing sometimes is a hint used to mislead the audience. What foreshadowing event is mentioned?  | * “One fateful day..” introduces the momentous day when the Spaniards arrived to Tenochtitlan.
* Were they friends or enemies? Moctezuma was debating whether to welcome or destroy his visitors.
 |
| How did Cortes respond to the welcome that the Aztecs offered?  | * Cortes said, “Are these your gifts of welcome? And “Is this all you have brought?”
* Cortes ordered his men to fasten irons around the messengers’ ankles and necks. Then he fired a huge gun.
* He said, “I want to see how strong you are.” He gave them leather shields and iron swords then said they would fight the next day.
 |
| List two of the reasons that led to the fall of the Aztec empire.  | * Smallpox … killed thousands of Tenochtitlan’s inhabitants
* In May, 1521, Cortes returned to attack Tenochtitlan and claimed victory after leaving the city in ruins.
 |
| What evidence supports the Aztec’s belief in their god’s, particularly Quetzalcoatl?  | * The Great Temple stood at the heart of this remarkable city.
* This is where the Aztecs worshipped their gods...
* Long ago, according to legend, Quetzalcoatl, the great god of learning and creation, had sailed east … and this was the predicted year of his return
* Moctezuma knew there had already been signs that things were not well with the gods.
* The gods must be looking unfavorably on the richest and most powerful empire in the land. And now, it seemed, one of the gods had returned.
* Surely he was Quetzacoatl himself.
 |

Vocabulary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING** | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING** General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction  |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION** not enough contextual clues provided in the text | prologue excavation metropolis tribute momentous  | intricate loomed enchanted fateful adorned ocelot obsidian  |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**sufficient context clues are provided in the text | causeways  |  |

Culminating Task

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write
* *Read the following statement: Moctezuma’s belief about Quetzalcoatl’s return influences his dealing with Cortez. Do you believe this to be true? Why or why not? Use specific evidence and quotes from the text in order to support your ideas and claim.*

*Write an opinion essay to support your claim.*

* *Introduce your claim and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.*
* *Support your claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using the text.*
* *Provide a concluding statement.*

Answer: If it is believed to be true, students could use text evidence showing how a series of episodes influence Monctezuma’s dealings with Cortez. A flip side may be to use evidence to show how a series of episodes influence Cortez’s dealings with Monctezuma and the eventual victory over the city. For example, attacking during the festival because he has learned about their beliefs and having fewer warriors to destroy due to small pox, and returning a year later to overtake the city. It can be inferred that Cortez realized he was being treated like a god by the gifts he received.

Additional Tasks

* Write, project, or display one or more of these sentences or phrases. Ask students to write a different sentence about a different object/place/idea using the same grammar and syntax pattern. If students experience difficulty, have them do the task phrase by phrase, interactively.

Long causeways led to the mainland, where snowcapped mountains loomed in the distance.

They came with strange, wild-eyed beasts and they carried heavy weapons that clanked and gleamed in the sun.

Two years before, a great tongue of fire had streaked across the night sky, like a spear plunged into the very heart of the heavens.

 “...a great tongue of fire had streaked across the night sky, like a spear plunged into the very heart of the heaven.”

A plunging spear is a foreign object that pierces something and the streaking fire is foreign to the sky and pierces it. (Guide your students’ reading to the author’s purpose here, which is to build an understanding that the Aztec’s did not comprehend the natural occurrence as possibly a comet. This builds more support for the Aztec’s belief in the gods).

“The boats floated toward the shores like small mountains.” For the Aztecs, the boats were monumental compared to what they were accustomed to see.

* Have students complete a short research assignment regarding the fall of the Aztec Empire using other resources such as the Internet. Consider having them write an informational essay regarding their findings.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**“The Lost Temple”**

1. Why does the professor call his find the “discovery of a lifetime”?
2. Compare and contrast the type of information in the text boxes and sidebars to the information in the main text. How and why are they alike and different?

What evidence supports the statement that the Aztecs were a strong empire?

1. The author describes Tenochtitlan as a remarkable city. What vivid language does the author use to describe it as remarkable?
2. What events led to Moctezuma’s beliefs that Quetzalcoatl had come back?
3. List the gifts the Aztecs give to Cortes. Based on these types of gifts, what did the Aztecs think about Cortes?
4. What can you infer about how the Aztec messengers felt towards Cortes?
5. What were Montezuma’s reactions to Cortes’s arrival?
6. Foreshadowing in literature introduces an event that will happen later in the story. Foreshadowing sometimes is a hint used to mislead the audience. What foreshadowing event is mentioned?
7. How did Cortes respond to the welcome that the Aztecs offered?
8. List two of the reasons that led to the fall of the Aztec empire.
9. What evidence supports the Aztec’s belief in their god’s, particularly Quetzalcoatl?