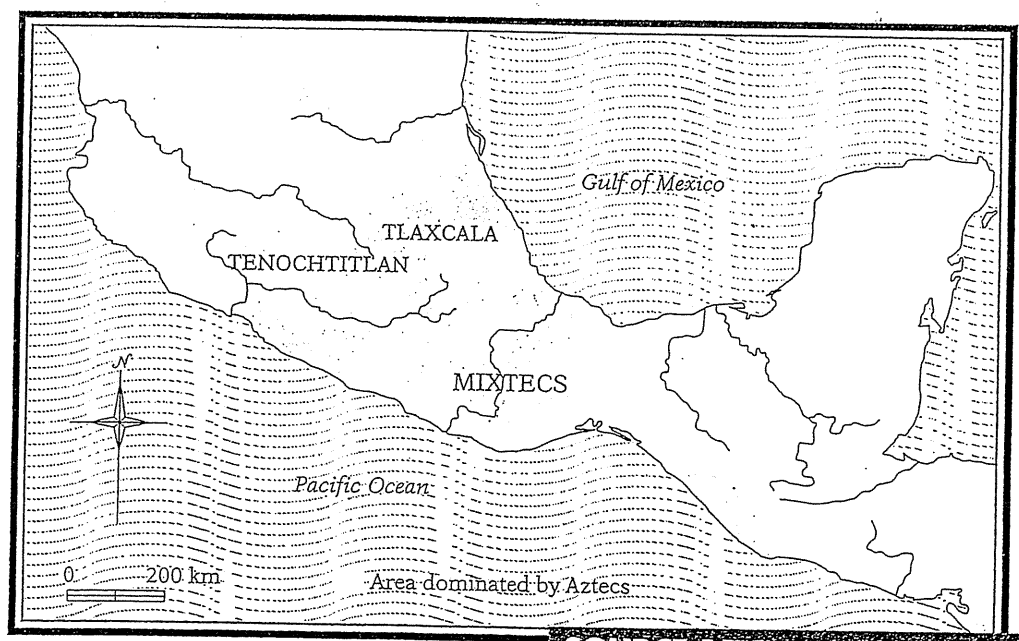


WHO WERE THE AZTECS? CONFLICT AND SETTLEMENT

The Aztecs once dominated the country we now call Mexico. They built a great city on the islands and swamps of a lake and ruled all the other people who lived in the Valley of Mexico. They ruled from the early 1400s to 1521, when they were conquered by the Spanish army led by Hernando Cortes. Although they developed a well-organised civilisation, the Aztecs were chiefly warriors. Their culture and their technical achievements were borrowed or developed from the more advanced civilisations that they conquered, such as the Toltecs, Maya and Zapotecs.



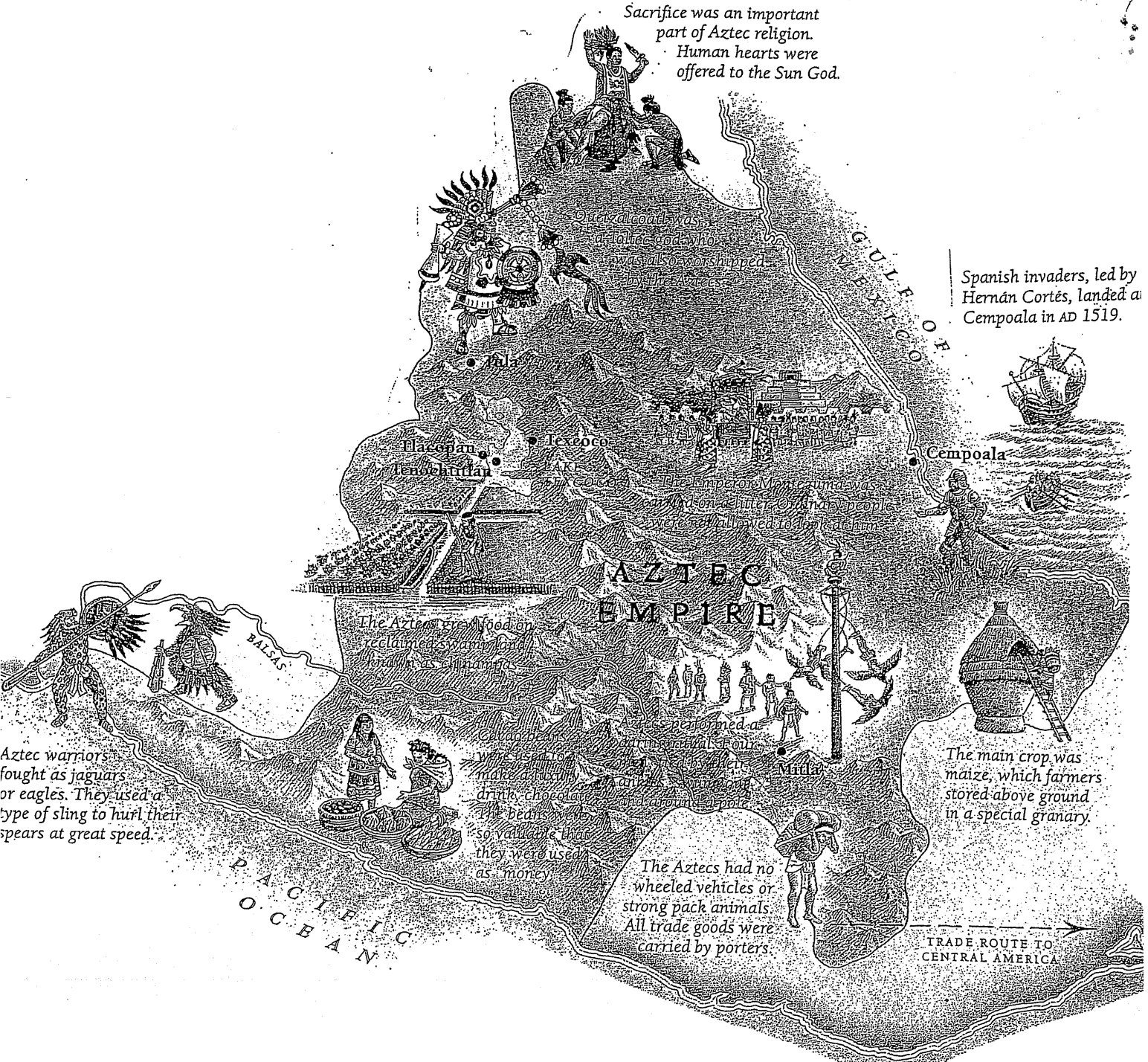
SOURCE 11.1

The Aztec empire at its greatest

THE AZTECS

Sacrifice was an important part of Aztec religion. Human hearts were offered to the Sun God.

Spanish invaders, led by Hernán Cortés, landed at Cempoala in AD 1519.



Chalcoatl was an Aztec god who was also worshipped by the Spaniards.

Tlacopan
Tenochtitlan

Texcoco

Cempoala

AZTEC EMPIRE

The Aztecs ate food on reed rafts which floated on the water in the lake.

Cacao beans were used to make a luxury drink, chocolate. The beans were so valuable that they were used as money.

The Aztecs performed a human sacrifice. They killed people and offered their hearts to the Sun God.

The main crop was maize, which farmers stored above ground in a special granary.

The Aztecs had no wheeled vehicles or strong pack animals. All trade goods were carried by porters.

TRADE ROUTE TO CENTRAL AMERICA

Aztec warriors fought as jaguars or eagles. They used a type of sling to hurl their spears at great speed.



When they first came to the Valley of Mexico, the Aztecs were only a small hunting tribe. They had left their northern homeland of Aztlan in 1168 in search of a new home. Unfortunately for the Aztecs, many other tribes were already living in the valley. The Aztecs were not made welcome by these other people. For well over a hundred years they were chased away from each place in which they tried to settle.

Sometimes they were forced to work for other tribes in the area, but the Aztecs proved very difficult to control. Two stories make this clear. On one occasion, a group of Aztecs was forced to fight on behalf of the king of Azcapotzalco. When they had defeated and killed the enemy soldiers, they cut an ear off each of the 8000 corpses, put them in a sack, and poured them over the king. On another occasion, the Aztecs were rewarded for their service in battle by the Tepanecs with the gift of a Tepanec princess for their chief. Instead of marrying her, the Aztec chief had her killed as a human sacrifice. The Tepanecs were horrified and drove the Aztecs away.

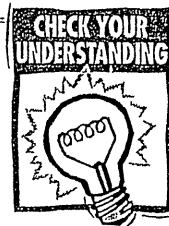
Finally, in 1325, the Aztecs settled on the swamps and islands of Lake Texcoco. At first, they were under the control of more powerful people (such as the Tepanecs), but they quickly became rich and powerful. In 1427, they combined with two other towns to defeat the Tepanecs and take over the Tepanec empire. Quite soon the Aztecs ruled an empire of over fifteen million people, covering 250 000 square kilometres.



SOURCE 11.2

The Valley of Mexico

- 1 Copy or trace the map of the Valley of Mexico, above, into your workbook (making sure that you include a border, title, north arrow and scale) and then answer the following questions.
 - a What is the name of the island in the middle of Lake Texcoco?
 - b How many roads connect the island with the shore?
 - c Using the scale on the map, estimate how far the island is from the nearest piece of shore.
 - d Approximately how far is it from one side of the island to the other?
 - e How many lakes are there in the Valley of Mexico?
 - f Draw a series of lines on your map to show the movements of the Aztecs from 1168 to 1325.
- 2 Draw a timeline from AD 1000 to AD 1600. Mark and label each of the following dates: 1168, 1325, 1427, 1521.





Historians have come up with two different versions of why the Aztecs settled on Lake Texcoco. Read sources 11.3 and 11.4 and answer the questions that follow.

- 1 According to source 11.3, why did the Aztecs settle on lake Texcoco?
- 2 According to source 11.4, why did the Aztecs settle on lake Texcoco?
- 3 Which explanation do you think is more likely to be true?
- 4 Tenochtitlan is an Aztec word meaning 'place of the prickly pear cactus', and Aztec pictures of their city feature an eagle eating a snake while sitting on a cactus. How does this information help you to accept that at least part of source 11.3 is true?
- 5 You have already read how the Aztecs were treated by the other tribes in the Valley of Mexico. How does this information help you to accept that at least part of source 11.4 is true?
- 6 Is it possible that both versions are true, but incomplete?
- 7 Write a paragraph that gives a more complete explanation of the reasons why the Aztecs settled on Lake Texcoco. Apart from the reasons mentioned above, you could also consider the following information:
 - the lake had plenty of food
 - the islands were easy to defend as they were surrounded by water
 - no other tribes wanted the islands on the lake.

SOURCE 11.3

The Aztecs believed the gold Huitzilopochtli told them to find the spot where an eagle stood on a cactus holding a snake. It was here they would build a city and become great rulers. The eagle was said to have been found on one of the islands of Lake Texcoco as prophesied. It was here the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan was built.

Penny Bateman, *Great Civilisations: Aztecs and Incas, AD 1300-1532*, 1988

SOURCE 11.4

Since most of the land was already occupied, the Aztecs were almost constantly at war. To avoid conflict, they moved to a small island and there founded their capital, Tenochtitlan, in 1325.

History of the World: Civilizations of the Americas, 1990

Tenochtitlan

Tenochtitlan was the capital of the Aztec empire. When the Aztecs first settled there, it was a collection of marshy islands, but the Aztecs were able to enlarge the islands through **land reclamation**, creating large 'floating gardens', called *chinampas*, where farmers grew crops. On this enlarged island the Aztecs built a magnificent city. The reclaimed land was strong enough to support farms, wooden or mud houses and human activity. But only the land at the centre of the island could support stone buildings. This is where the great temples and the emperor's palace were located. People travelled through the city on flat-bottomed canoes, as canals were used as the main roads.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: HOW WAS AZTEC SOCIETY ORGANISED AND GOVERNED?

The Aztecs lived in a very strictly structured society. Everyone knew their place and the particular responsibilities and laws that applied to them. Each person's role in the organisation and government of Aztec society was determined by their sex and their social and political position.

Aztec society treated men and women very differently. While both had an important role to play in society, women could belong to the higher classes only through family ties or marriage. A man could enter the upper classes through proving himself in battle. A woman belonged to whatever class her husband (or father if she was unmarried) belonged to.

SOURCE 11.6

*An artist's impression
of the emperor and the
snake woman*

The emperor and the snake woman

At the top of Aztec society was the **emperor**, a man who had been chosen from the members of the royal family by a group of the most respected nobles. He was treated like a god and was given great respect. To disobey the emperor was both a crime and a religious sin punishable by death. Very few people had contact with the emperor. He rarely went into the streets, and when he did he was carried on a litter, a throne carried between two strong poles, so that his feet did not touch common ground. The emperor was the head of the government and the religion and was especially responsible for foreign affairs and war. The emperor shared power with the **snake woman**. The holder of this strange title was another member of the royal family and was also a man. The snake woman was responsible for the laws of the city, taxes, food and building. The snake woman possessed the right to take over government when the emperor was away from the city.

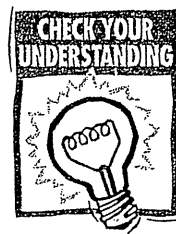


The Aztecs built three stone **causeways** from Tenochtitlan to the shore of the lake. The causeways stretched all the way across the water and were wide enough to allow three riders on horseback to travel side-by-side. They also built a **dyke**, fifteen kilometres long, to keep the salt water of the lake away from their gardens during the flood period. At first, a fresh-water spring on the main island supplied drinking water for the city's inhabitants, but as the population grew, this was not enough. So an **aqueduct** was built to bring water across the lake from the mountains nearby. This was like a long pipe made from stone and completely covered to prevent anything ruining the water. It was the main source of water for the Aztecs for hundreds of years, and served a population of approximately 200 000 people.



SOURCE 11.5

An artist's impression of Tenochtitlan



Copy the following table into your workbook.
Fill in each section in as much detail as possible.

	Description
Aqueduct	
Canals	
Dyke	
Causeways	
Chinampas	

The nobles

The nobles held the highest offices in the land. They were judges, high-ranking warriors, priests and rulers of conquered cities. The nobles had significant rights and freedoms. They were given land and fine houses to live in, as well as fine clothing and jewellery. They were not expected to pay taxes, but when a noble died, his family did not inherit his wealth. His possessions went back to the emperor, from whom they had originally come. The emperor often appointed the noble's son to his father's former position (although this was not automatic) so the possessions usually did remain with the family.



SOURCE 11.7

An artist's impression of an Aztec noble

Merchants and craftsmen

The next most important group were the merchants, a separate class of very rich families, who engaged in foreign trade and brought wealth into the Aztec empire. They often acted as spies or ambassadors, bringing back news of other towns and cities for the Aztecs to conquer. Next came the craftsmen, who were organised into guilds and were responsible for making the things the Aztecs needed. Both these groups of people kept to themselves, passing their work on to their sons and marrying people only from the same class.



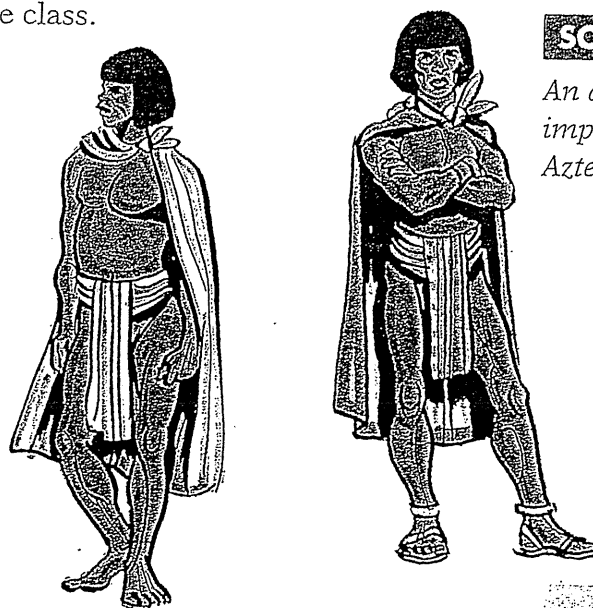
SOURCE 11.8

An artist's impression of an Aztec merchant

The ordinary people

Ordinary people were farmers and labourers. They grew food to feed their families and to pay as taxes to help feed the nobles and the people in need. They belonged to one of the twenty or so family groups (called clans) in Tenochtitlan. Each clan had its own district in the city, along with its own temple and school.

- ① When a man married, his clan gave him a plot of land for his family to farm.



SOURCE 11.10

An artist's impression of an 'ordinary' Aztec person

SOURCE 11.9

An artist's impression of an Aztec craftsman

The lower classes

Two lower groups were outside the clan system: the *mayeques*, or peasants, and the slaves. The *mayeques* were landless labourers who worked on the estates of nobles or carried out lowly work, such as street cleaning and carrying things for other people. Slaves were put to any work without pay, but were generally treated well—that is, as long as they were not used for human sacrifice. Slaves had been captured in battle or had committed a crime and been sentenced to slavery as a punishment.

SOURCE 11.11

An artist's impression of a landless Aztec labourer



SOURCE 11.12

An artist's impression of an Aztec slave

Name
Emperor



Responsibilities
Head of government and religion. Responsible for foreign affairs and war.

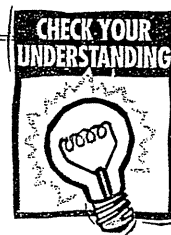


SOURCE 11.13

The Aztec social pyramid



- 1 The social pyramid (source 11.13) on page 171 has been drawn to show the different classes of Aztec society. The pyramid shape has been used to show how many people belonged to each class. Copy the pyramid into your notebook (with or without the pictures). On the left-hand side of the pyramid, write the names of each of the classes. On the right-hand side, list the responsibilities of each class. One has been done for you.
- 2 Who in Aztec society made decisions that affected the whole society? Who does so in Australian society today?
- 3 In a small group, draw a pyramid that demonstrates the social and decision-making structure of your school. Label the pyramid with the names and responsibilities of each position.
- 4 In a small group, draw and label a similar pyramid to show the social and/or decision-making structure of Australia.



WHAT DID THE AZTECS BELIEVE?

Gods

The Aztecs worshipped many gods, each of whom was responsible for a different aspect of life. Gods caused the sun to rise each morning, controlled the weather, illness, happiness, etc. For example, Cinteotl was the goddess of maize, Ehecatl was the god of the winds, Patecatl was the god of medicine, and Mayauel was the goddess of cactus. The gods knew everything that had happened and controlled the future.

The most important god was Huitzilopochtli the sun god, the Aztecs' tribal god. The hundreds of other gods they worshipped were taken from the people that they conquered. The most important of these was Tlaloc, the rain god, and Quetzalcoatl, the god of civilisation and learning. These gods were important for everyone, but other gods were worshipped only by certain groups, such as goldsmiths or potters. One such god was Yacatecuhtli, the god worshipped by merchants.

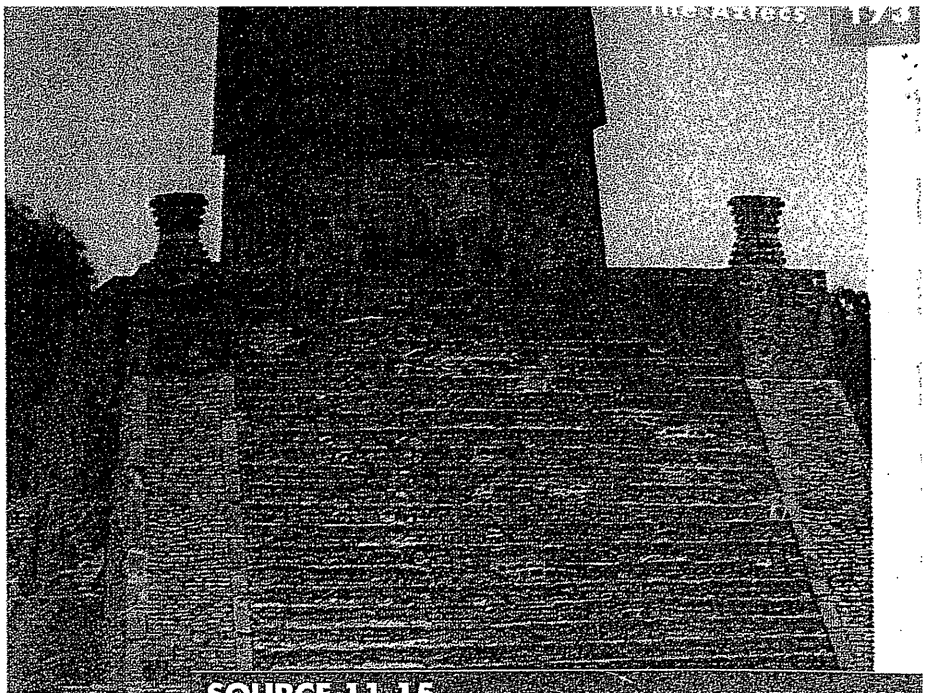


SOURCE 11.14

These pictures of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc are typical of Aztec representations of their gods

Temples

The Aztecs built temples from huge blocks of stone brought down from the mountains. The temples were built as tall as possible, to enable the Aztecs to get as near as they could to the gods. The great temple, with its two shrines to Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, was over thirty metres high. The great square in the centre of Tenochtitlan had temples in honour of Huitzilopochtli, Tlaloc, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca.



SOURCE 11.15

The only surviving Aztec temple is in Santa Cecilia near Mexico City (Tenochtitlan)

Sacrifices

The Aztecs believed that the gods had sacrificed themselves to create the sun. They believed that to thank the gods and to give them strength, they had to offer them human sacrifices. Thousands of human sacrifices were made every year, which is one of the reasons why the Aztecs were always at war, so they could keep up a steady supply of prisoners to be sacrificed.

People who had been chosen as offerings to the gods were often sacrificed on the platforms of the great temples. They would walk up the steps to the platform. Usually no guards were needed as it was seen as an honour to die in this way. The victims were stretched out over the platform. The priests would then cut open their chests and tear out their still-beating hearts as offerings to the gods. It was believed that humans' most precious gift, life itself, the blood from the human heart, would give the gods strength and keep them happy.



SOURCE 11.16

An Aztec painting showing a priest performing human sacrifice

SOURCE 11.18

When the Sacrificers were thus in order, they drew forth such as had beene taken in warre, which were to bee sacrificed at that Feast, and being accompanied with a guard of men all naked, they caused them to mount up these large staires in ranke, to the place where the Ministers were prepared: and as every one of them came in their order, the six Sacrificers tooke the Prisoner, one by one foote, another by the other, and one by one hand, another by the other, casting on his backe upon this pointed stone, where the fift of these Ministers put the collar of wood about his necke, and the High Priest opened his stomack with the Knife, with a strange dexteritie and nimblenesse, pulling out his heart with his hands, the which hee shewed smoking unto the Sunne, to whom hee did offer this heate and fume of the heart, and presently he turned towards the Idoll and did cast the heart at the face, then did they cast away the body of the sacrificed, tumbling it downe the staires of the Temple... [T]heir Masters, or such as had taken them, went to take them up, carried them away; then having divided them amongst them, they did eate them, celebrating their Feast and Solemnitie. There were ever fortie or fiftie at the least thus sacrificed, for that they had men very expert in taking them.

Jose de Acosta, c. 1520



As a Christian priest, is the writer of source 11.18 likely to have approved of human sacrifice? How is that likely to have affected the way he described the event? Are there any words or phrases used that reflect the priest's disapproval of the sacrifice?

JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENT: HOW DID THE AZTECS KEEP LAW AND ORDER?

Laws

The Aztecs had a very complicated set of laws. There were laws about the style of footwear people could wear and about the size, style and placement of jewellery. The Aztecs believed that everyone should know his or her place in society. Every class had its own style of dress and hair. People were punished by death if they were found wearing clothes belonging to others of a different class. Common people were forbidden to wear cotton garments, probably because there was not enough cotton available for everyone and the nobles wanted it reserved for themselves.

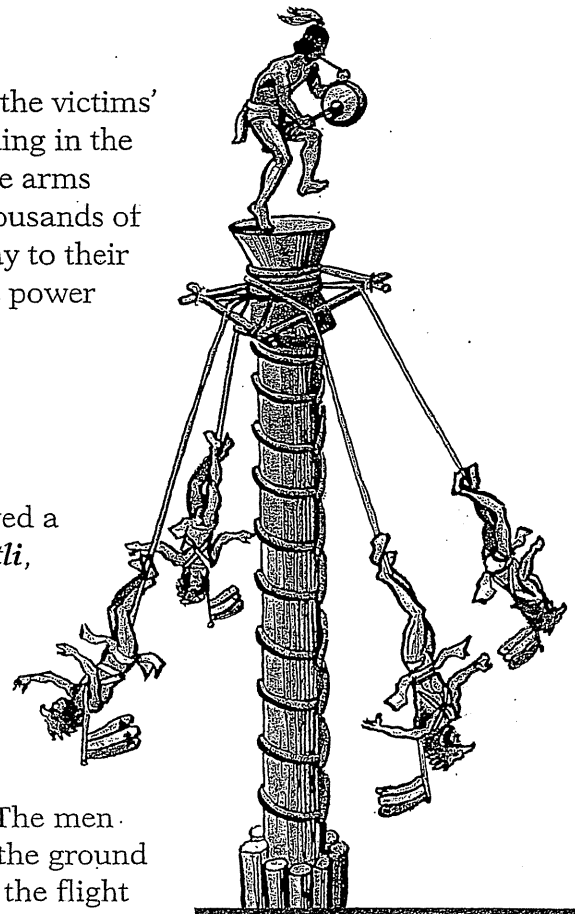
There were also many laws about social behaviour. People under the age of fifty were not allowed to drink alcohol, and running off with another person's wife or husband was seen as a very serious crime.

After the sacrifices, which often went on for hours, the victims' heads were cut off and placed on the **skull rack**, a building in the central square used to show the power of the Aztecs. The arms and legs were cut up into small bits and eaten by the thousands of people who had come to celebrate the sacrifices and pray to their gods. The Aztecs believed that they were swallowing the power of their victims.

Games

Not all religious ceremonies were so brutal. Games played a large part in religious ceremonies. One game was *tlachtli*, a ball game on which netball and basketball are based. The game, played in the temple precinct, was supposed to be a copy of the way in which the gods played ball with the stars.

Another game was the *volador*. This also took place in the temple grounds. Four men dressed as birds would stand on a narrow platform at the top of a pole. The men would jump off the platform and would spiral down to the ground as the rope unwound. The *volador* was believed to copy the flight of the gods.



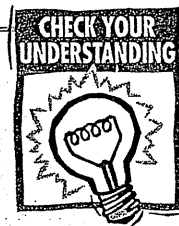
SOURCE 11.17

An artist's impression of the volador

- 1 To which of the Aztec gods would you pray if you wanted:
 - to have a baby
 - a good harvest next year
 - the sun to rise tomorrow
 - to do well at school
 - a tornado to avoid your house
 - to recover from an illness
 - as a merchant, to undertake a safe journey?
- 2 Using sources 11.15 and 11.16 (p. 173) to guide you, draw and label a sketch of an Aztec temple.
- 3 **a** You are a prisoner of the Aztecs. You have just witnessed a human sacrifice and you know that you will be sacrificed tomorrow. Write a paragraph explaining what you saw and how you feel about it.

b You are a priest who has just completed a human sacrifice and you are very excited. Write a paragraph explaining what happened and how you felt about it.

c Look over the two paragraphs you have just written. List the differences between the two paragraphs. Write a sentence to explain why they are different.



Source 11.18

(p. 175) is an eyewitness account of an Aztec sacrifice written by a Spanish priest. Read it carefully and complete the activities that follow.

- 1 Using information from this source, create a cartoon showing the different stages of human sacrifice.
- 2 In what ways is the language in this source different from the language we use in Australia today? Can you think of any possible reasons for this difference?

**SOURCE 11.19**

There was a very strong understanding of the rules that governed the different classes—slaves had to obey the commands of the nobles and were not allowed to wear the same sort of clothes

Courts

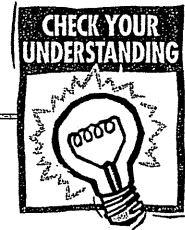
The Aztecs had quite a well-developed court system. Each clan had its own local court with the heads of the families as judges. The merchant class had its own court, as merchants liked to keep separate from the rest of Aztec society. As well as these smaller courts, there was a central court, the High Court, at the emperor's palace at Tenochtitlan. This was usually presided over by the snake woman or one of his assistants, but sometimes the emperor would take over for a really difficult case. The judges of all these courts were paid so that they would not be interested in taking bribes. Any judges who were found to have acted unfairly were sentenced to death.

Punishments







The Aztecs did not have jails or a police force. Therefore, punishments were harsh so that people would be scared into obeying the law. Almost all crimes were punishable by death, with the exception of stealing. Commoners found guilty of theft were usually forced to work as slaves, until they had repaid twice the value of the goods they had stolen. The victims were repaid for their losses and the rest was paid as a fine to the court.

Nobles were treated even more severely than commoners. A nobleman who became a thief was put to death immediately. Similarly, while a commoner was sentenced to having his or her head shaved and house destroyed as a punishment for drunkenness, a noble was sentenced to death for the same crime. This is because the nobles were expected to set an example for the rest of Aztec society.

Criminals sentenced to death were not sacrificed. This was seen as an honour of which they were not worthy. They were killed by drowning, stoning or by being skinned alive. The bodies were then either buried or cremated—except for those of men who had run away in battle or women of bad reputation. In such cases, the body was thrown into the swamp.

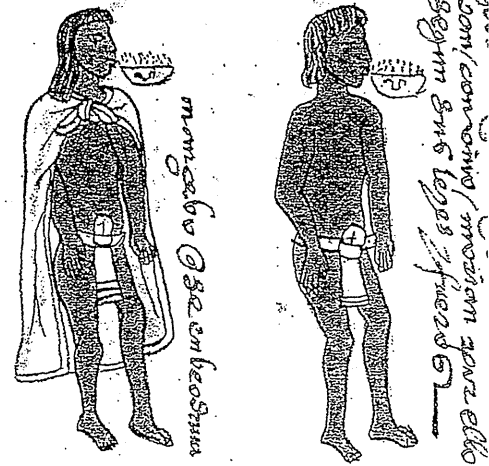


- 1 List all the different crimes mentioned above. Underline those that you think are not seen as crimes in Australia today. Compare your answers with those of one or two other students in your class. Add any that you had missed.
- 2 List all the different punishments mentioned above. Underline those that you think are not used as a punishment in Australia today. Compare your answers with those of one or two other students in your class. Add any that you had missed.
- 3 In a pair or a group, think of a list of crimes that are punishable under Australian law. Which of these crimes would not have been considered a crime in Aztec society?
- 4 In a pair or a group, think of a list of punishments that are used in Australia today. Which of these punishments would not have been used in Aztec society?
- 5 There are many different kinds of thinking and ways of responding to issues, and various people over time have tried to describe them. One of these, Edward de Bono, has suggested that we can look at issues in at least six very different ways. Each of these can be represented by a different coloured hat. We can 'try on each of the hats' to make sure we really think carefully about a topic from a number of different perspectives. Following are the six hats, together with a question or activity relating to each one. Have a go at trying on each hat:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
|  | facts | List all the punishments used by the Aztecs. |
|  | feelings | How did you feel when you were reading about the Aztec system of law and order? Can you name some of the emotions you experienced? |
|  | negatives | List all the things about the Aztec system of law and order that you consider to be bad. |
|  | positives | List all the things about the Aztec system of law and order that you consider to be good. |
|  | summary | What are the three or four main points of this chapter? |
|  | creativity | How would the Aztec justice system have been different if killing or causing physical pain was forbidden except in war? Create a new system of non-violent punishments that the Aztecs may have been willing to use. |

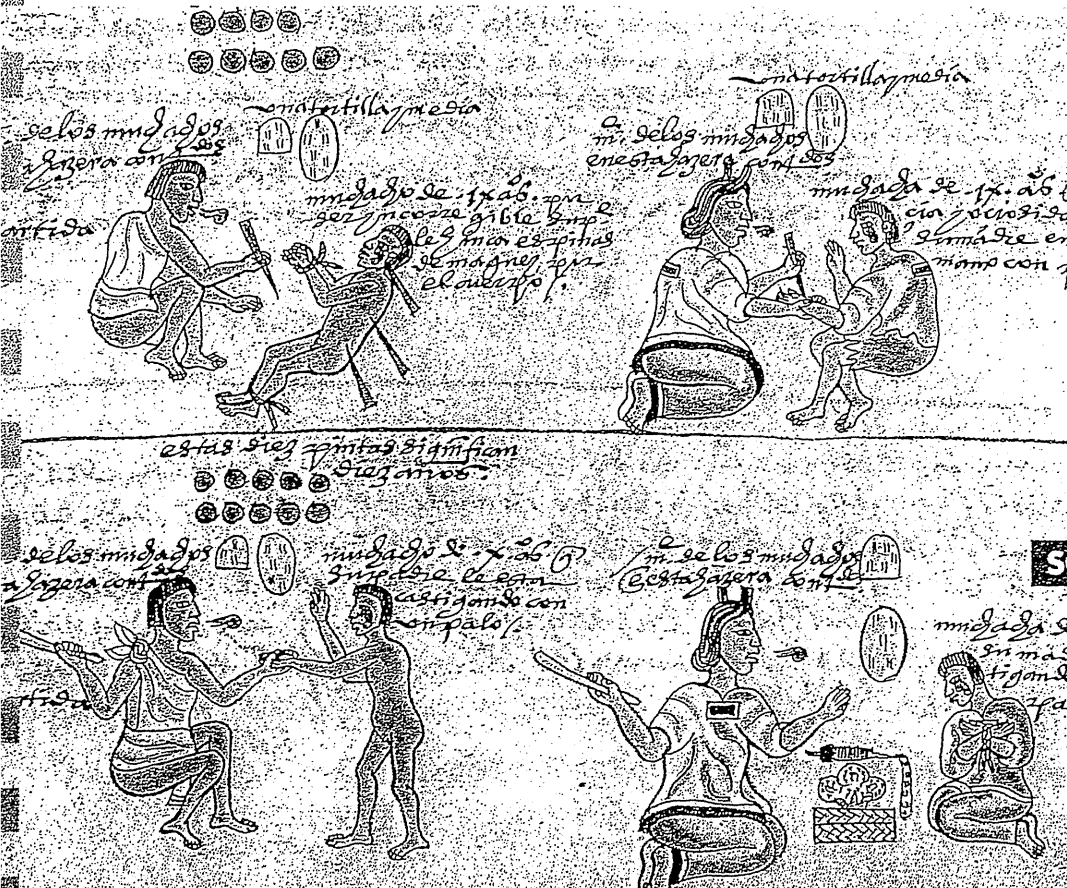
Punishments were harsh in all parts of Aztec society. Although Aztec parents loved their children, they used harsh discipline because they believed that this helped prepare their children for adult life. Disobedient or lazy children were severely punished. Some of the common punishments used were beating, flogging and sticking with thorns or cactus spikes. Sometimes children had their heads shaved. Girls were sometimes made to get up in the middle of the night and do housework, or to sweep outside the house all day long. Young children were sometimes held over a fire of burning peppers to make their eyes sting.

The pictures in source 11.21 were drawn by Aztec scribes in the early 1500s to show some of the punishments inflicted on children. The dark patches on the children's faces represent tears, the blue scrolls coming from mouths represent speech, and the blue circles above each child indicate his or her age (each circle representing one year). For each picture, write down the age and sex of the child, then write a sentence or two describing as much as you can work out about the punishment.



SOURCE 11-20

The four dead bodies shown in this Aztec drawing indicate that the common penalty for drunkenness and stealing was death. The pictures show each person's crime and, in the case of the thief, the method of execution



SOURCE 11-21

Extracts from the Codex Mendoza showing common childhood punishments



HOW AND WHY DID THE AZTEC CIVILISATION END?

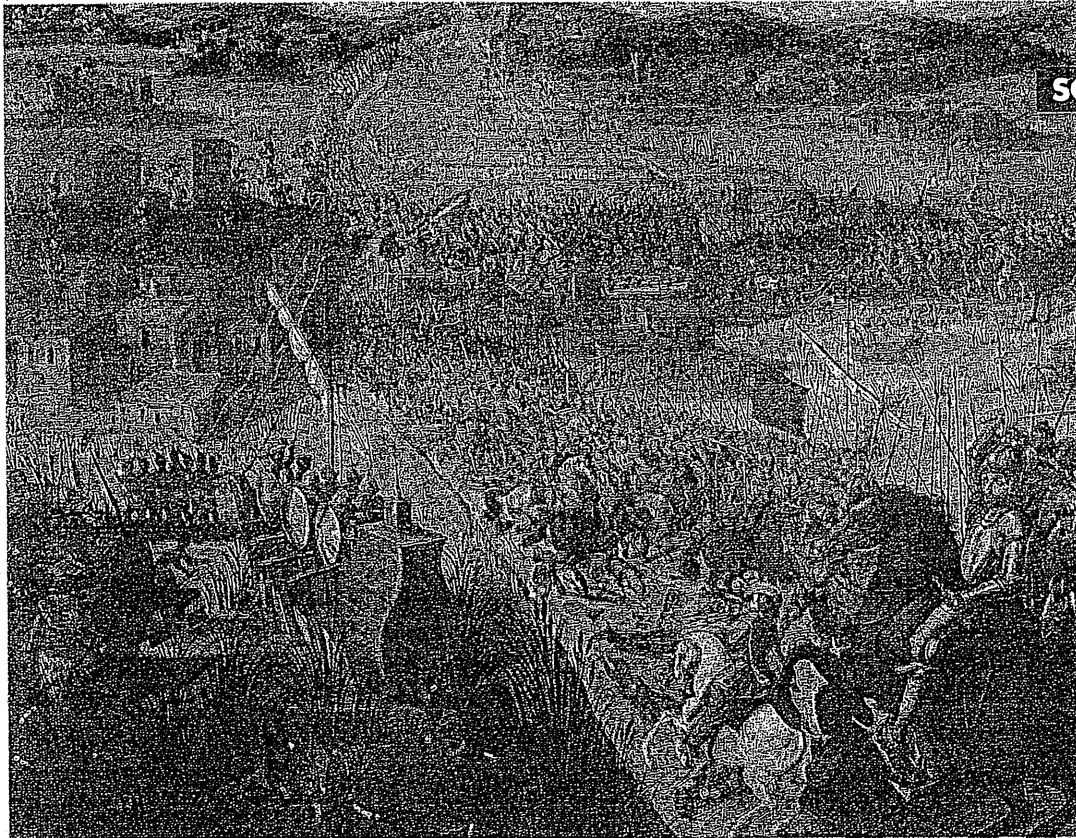
In 1519, the Spanish Conquistador Hernando Cortes landed on the coast of Mexico with a small army of 600 men. The Aztecs, led by Emperor Montezuma, numbered over 200 000 and had a strong and established civilisation. Within the space of two years, Cortes had conquered the Aztecs, destroying their cities and enslaving the people who survived. Although the descendants of the Aztecs still live in Mexico today, the Aztec empire ended in 1521. How could such a small army, in a strange land, defeat a powerful civilisation of over 200 000 people? Sources 11.22–11.26 outline some of the main reasons for this extraordinary defeat. Study the sources carefully and answer the questions that follow.

SOURCE 11.22

... instead of attacking the Spaniards, ... [Montezuma] sent gifts in the hope that they would go away. Terror prevented him from taking any form of action for, according to ancient prophecies, Cortes was the god Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, who had come to claim his kingdom. The date, the white faces of the strangers, their magical weapons, strange animals and their arrival across the sea all pointed to the truth that Quetzalcoatl had come. It was useless to resist a god.

So Cortes was able to advance inland ...

R. J. Unstead, *Living in Aztec Times*, 1974



SOURCE 11.23

A seventeenth-century painting of the final Spanish attack on Tenochtitlan

SOURCE 11.24

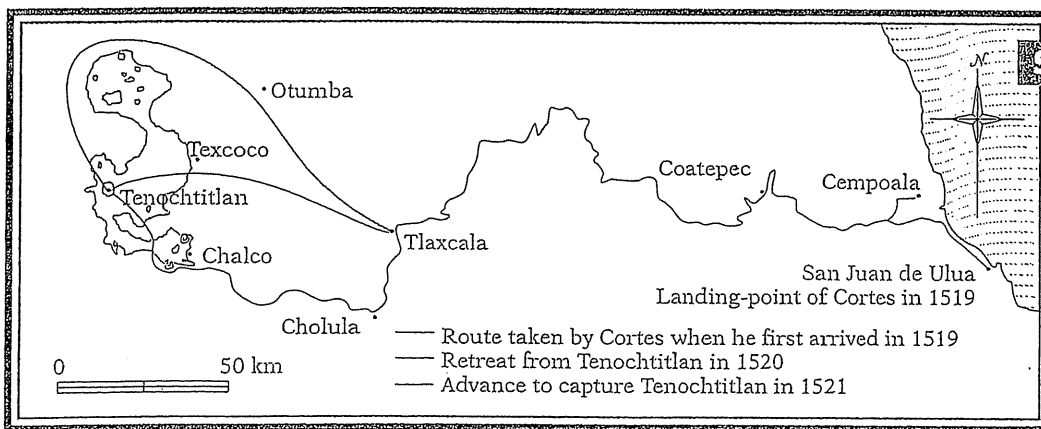
As he went he made friends with the tribes who had been fighting the Aztecs. They gave him food, and many of their warriors marched with him, especially the Thlaxcallans [usually spelt Tlaxcallans].

On 8 November 1519, the Spaniards and about four thousand of their Thlaxcallan friends crossed one of the causeways to Tenochtitlan ...

The Aztecs now made the mistake of attacking their enemies in the open. This was at Otumba. The Spaniards had only sixteen horses left, but this tiny force of cavalry cut through the Aztec hordes again and again until they fled. After this victory Cortes's men took heart and so did his Indian allies. Also, more Spaniards arrived ... Something else they brought with them was smallpox, and the Indians had no resistance to it. It spread among them like wildfire, and many thousands died ...

Cortes now went back to attack Tenochtitlan. He had 900 of his own countrymen and a force of Indians which grew to 150 000.

P. F. Speed, *History through Maps and Diagrams: Medieval Times to the Tudors and Stuarts*, 1984



SOURCE 11.25

The Spanish conquest of Mexico, 1519–1521



SOURCE 11.26

... it was clear that a basic difference in tactics gave the Spaniards an additional edge over their opponents. While the Aztecs tried desperately to capture prisoners for sacrifice, the Europeans aimed only to kill their enemies as quickly as possible. On one occasion, Cortes was actually captured. He could easily have been killed and the invasion smashed. Instead, he was rescued by his own men as the Aztecs were about to hustle him away.

Roy Burrell, *Life in the Time of Moctezuma and the Aztecs*, 1993

- 1 List under the following subheadings, all the different reasons why the Spanish were able to conquer the Aztec civilisation:
 - Spanish weapons and resources
 - Spanish strategies
 - Aztec mistakes
 - accidental factors.
- 2 Use the subheadings above to organise a piece of writing that answers the question: 'How did a small Spanish army conquer the Aztecs?'
- 3 Use sources 11.22–11.26 to complete the following crossword. (Answers: p. 188)

Clues

Across

3 Because they made friends with the people who lived there, the Spaniards were able to use Tlaxcalla as a _____ from which to launch their attacks. (source 11.25)

4 Many of the other Indian peoples were willing to help the Spaniards because the Aztecs had been so cruel to them that they were their _____. (source 11.24)

7 The Aztecs lost many men and much confidence at this place when they made the mistake of attacking the Spaniards in the open (source 11.24)

13 According to P. F. Speed, when Cortes first attacked Tenochtitlan he was accompanied by four thousand of these people. (source 11.24)

14 When he was losing the battle in 1520, Cortes made the sensible decision to _____ and gather a larger army before attacking again during the next year. (source 11.25)

15 The Spaniards built these to help cross the lake to attack Tenochtitlan. (source 11.23)

17 A weapon that gave the Spanish a great advantage over the Aztecs. (source 11.23)

18 On his way to Tenochtitlan, Cortes was able to build his army because he passed through many Indian _____. (source 11.25)

Down

1 Cortes was able to get his horses across to Tenochtitlan because the Aztecs had built a very wide _____ to link their city to the edges of the lake. (source 11.23)

2 What do we now call the country in which the Aztec civilisation was situated? (source 11.23)

5 The Spaniards had an advantage because they used these animals while the Aztecs had to fight on foot. (source 11.23)

6 The size of Cortes's army grew with the arrival of these from Spain. (source 11.24)

8 The name of the Aztec city. (source 11.24)

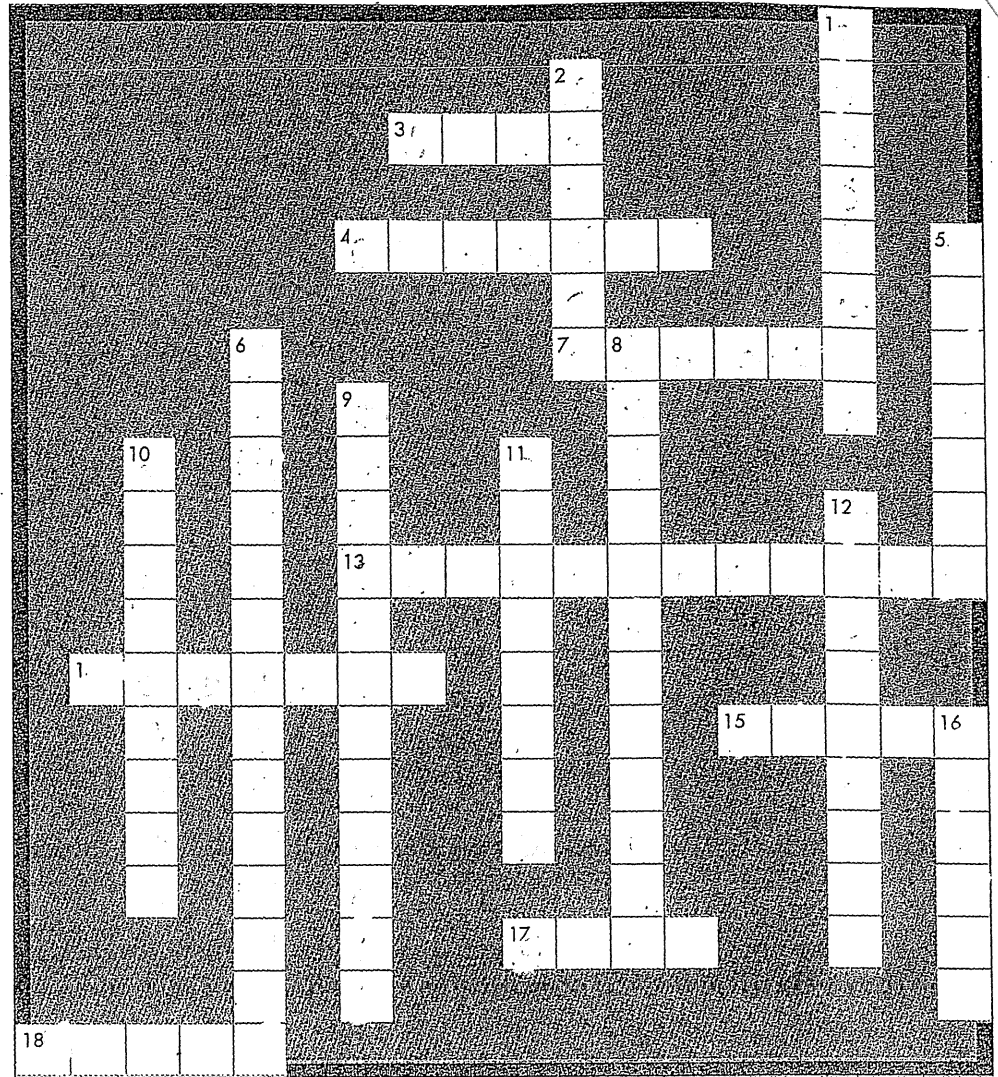
9 Cortes was allowed to advance into Aztec-controlled territory because the Aztecs thought he was this most important god. (source 11.22)

10 The name of the Aztec emperor at the time of the Spanish invasion. (source 11.21)

11 This disease, unintentionally brought from Europe by the Spaniards, killed many Aztecs. (source 11.24)

12 Many Spanish soldiers, including Cortes, were able to escape rather than be killed instantly because the Aztecs made the mistake of trying to capture enemy soldiers for _____ rather than just kill them in battle. (source 11.26)

16 The strong metal armour and _____ of the Spaniards were far superior to the wooden shields, clubs, spears and arrows of the Aztecs. (source 11.23)



WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF THE SPANISH COLONISATION?

After they conquered the Aztecs, the Spanish destroyed Tenochtitlan and built Mexico City on the ruins. The surrounding lands that they took from the Aztecs became the country that today is called Mexico. Thousands of people in Mexico are directly descended from the Aztecs, while many more call themselves *mestizos* (people of mixed European and Aztec ancestry). Both California and Texas also include among their populations significant numbers of *mestizos*. There are approximately eight million indigenous people living in Mexico today, making up almost 11 per cent of the population. These Mexican Indians, descendants of the Aztecs, the Toltecs, the Maya, and others, are generally the poorest people in Mexico.

In some ways the conquered Indians were allowed to keep their customs. They were allowed to speak their own languages, and to be governed at the local level by their own officials. Food, housing and family life changed very little over the three hundred years following colonisation. However, some changes were made. The Indians were forced to pay a 'tribute'—a special tax to the Spanish government—and they were required to work for the Spanish conquerors when help was needed. This made many of them very poor as they could not properly cultivate their own land, nor could they keep all of the things they produced when they did work on their land. While they retained much of their culture, they were forced to abandon many of their religious practices and to convert to Christianity. The Spanish priests were horrified by some aspects of the Indian religions, such as the human sacrifices practised by the Aztecs, and had Indian temples destroyed whenever they found them.

For many of the Spaniards, however, Mexico was a place to make their fortune. In the 1540s, silver was discovered in the northern part of the country, and many silver mines came into operation. This brought great wealth to many of the Spanish conquerors and their descendants, who owned and operated the mines. It also brought wealth to the many others who set up huge estates, called *haciendas*, and produced food and clothing for the miners—a community that quickly expanded as more and more people migrated from Spain to try to make their fortune in silver mining. Many Indians were forced to live at the *haciendas* and work for the Spaniards for little or no wages, returning to their villages and their own small farms only when they were not needed on the *haciendas*.

By the twentieth century, the indigenous peoples had been almost completely dispossessed of their land. The good farming land had been converted into *haciendas* or large 'plantations'—farms producing such commodities as coffee and tobacco. The Indians were left with poor quality land on which they could not support their families. Today, many Indians are forced to work on the plantations, often for very low wages.

It is not surprising, then, that the right to land is an important issue for the indigenous Mexicans. In 1994, in the south of Mexico, a revolt broke out as a result of the extreme poverty and injustice that prevailed in the region. The rebel group, the Zapatista National Liberation Army, was largely made up of indigenous people. The rebels declared war on the government and took control of four major towns, demanding the return of their land and the introduction of fairer wages and taxes. The government sent 12 000 troops to fight the rebels and, after a week, had stopped the rebellion. About one hundred people died in the fighting.

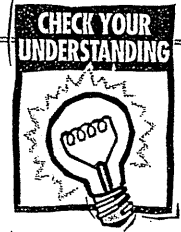
The Aztec heritage contributes much to modern-day Mexican culture. Many place names, such as Acapulco and Mexico, are Aztec words. Such Aztec foods as chocolate, chilli and tacos are well known. Famous Mexican painters like Jose Orozco and Diego Rivera used Aztec themes in many of their paintings. Since the middle of this century there has been a growing national pride in the Aztec ancestry, known as the 'heritage of Aztlan'. For example, in 1949 the famous Aztec leader Cuauhtemoc was adopted as a national symbol for Mexico. Today, however, many of the descendants of the Aztecs are poor and have little land. Although Mexico is no longer a Spanish colony, the effects of the colonisation of the Aztec empire by Spain are still being felt by these people.

SOURCE 11.27

... on New Year's Day, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, an obscure guerilla group ... launched an offensive in the southern state of Chiapas, a dirt-poor region inhabited largely by descendants of the ancient Maya ... Federal troops backed by planes, helicopters and armoured personnel carriers struck back with overwhelming force ... the Chiapas uprising sent an unwelcome message from Mexico's poor south. 'It brings out things that the government of Salinas [the president of Mexico] has tried to keep hidden under the rug for the past five years', says Roderick Camp, a US expert on Mexico ... Salinas tried to portray the Zapatistas not as peasants rebelling against economic hardship but as little more than hoodlums ... Salinas said he would consider an amnesty for militants who were duped or coerced into taking part in the rebellion. He also insisted that the government has already invested 'a great amount of resources to improve conditions in Chiapas', and his cabinet pledged increased support for the state's indigenous peoples.

Newsweek Magazine, 18 January 1994

- 1 Rule a table like the one that follows. Use the table to list the effects of the Spanish colonisation of Mexico on both the indigenous peoples and the colonisers.



Impact of colonisation on the Aztecs

Impact of colonisation on the Spanish

- 2 Using the table above to organise your thoughts, produce an extended piece of writing that answers the question, 'What were the results of the colonisation of Aztec Mexico for the indigenous peoples and the colonisers?'
- 3 Imagine you are a member of the Zapatista National Liberation Army. Design a poster that will inform people both of the hardships confronting the indigenous people in Chiapas and of the demands that the Liberation Army is making.

Read source 11.27. What reasons are given for the revolt in Chiapas?



Two views are reported in source 11.27—those of Salinas and Camp. Who are these men? What does each say? Who is more believable and why?



R E S E A R C H P R O J E C T

Research project: what was it like to grow up an Aztec?

In this assignment your task will be to research and produce a board game showing what it was like to grow up as an Aztec. As you did with the assignment in Chapter 9, you will use the 'Ten Steps to a Successful Assignment'.

Step 1: choose or be given a subject/topic to study

We know what the subject is. At the top of a large piece of paper, write the subject: 'Growing up an Aztec'.

Step 2: write your questions (or paragraph headings)

There are four aspects of the life of an Aztec that you will need to collect information about.

- birth
- childhood
- education
- becoming an adult

Rule up a data grid like the one on page 185. It should have four columns for the four topics mentioned and four rows to give you space to use four sources of information.

Growing up an Aztec				
Sources	Paragraph headings			
	Birth	Childhood	Education	Becoming an adult

Step 3: find the resources

Page 158 explains where you can look to find sources of information. Some information has been provided below so you will have to find only three more sources.

Birth

The Aztecs believed that the child's character and fate were partly determined by his or her date of birth and the date on which he or she was given a name. There were many lucky days, but there were also many days to be avoided. An astrologer, who was believed to be able to tell about the future using the stars, was called in to choose a lucky naming day for the child. This was particularly important if the birthday was not on a good day.

The midwife had a particularly important job. As soon as the new baby was born, she welcomed it into the world and explained its role in life to it. If it was a girl, she was told that it was her duty to remain at home and raise a strong family with many children to help the Aztec empire. A boy was told that he must be a great warrior, and must capture many prisoners to offer to the gods.

The midwife returned on the naming day. She laid the baby on a special mat. If it was a girl, she put tiny copies of a work basket, a spindle and a broom beside the baby. If it was a boy, she gave him a tiny shield and a tiny spear, and miniature copies of his father's work tools. The midwife then showed the baby how to use the tools and told it the name its parents had chosen.

Childhood

As they grew up, children learnt their roles from their parents. From about the age of four, children were expected to sweep the floor of the house, collect wood for the fire and learn how to spin or weave. At about the age of five, girls were shown by their mothers how to weave thread, grind maize (a type of corn), cook meals and look after babies. At the same time, Aztec boys learnt the farming techniques or the crafts of their fathers. While a boy could earn himself a place in the nobility by distinguishing himself in battle, it was usually expected that he would do the same job as his father. A woman could take on several occupations, such as medicine woman or midwife, but only after her family had grown up and her duties as a mother had been completed.

Children helped with collecting food and with cooking. Meals took a lot of time and energy to prepare, although the Aztecs did not have much to eat each day. In the morning and at night they ate a bowl of porridge made from maize. To make this porridge, the wife and children had to peel and grind the maize before boiling it. The main meal of the day was held at noon. Again, maize was peeled and ground before being added to water to make a dough for tortillas, which were then baked on top of the oven. The other main food was fruit and vegetables. Sometimes the lake provided such things as tadpoles, cactus worms, fish, frogs, lizards and the eggs of water flies. Meat was rare, although the Aztecs did keep turkeys and little hairless dogs, which they fattened up and ate on special occasions. Sometimes an Aztec father would catch a deer, rabbit or wild pig in the surrounding forests.

Education

At about the age of seven or eight, Aztec children went to school. There were two types of school. One, for the sons of commoners, was called a *telpochcalli*. This was a school run by the clan, and children were taught by retired warriors from that clan. The other, for the sons and daughters of nobles, was called a *calmecac*. *Calmecac* schools were usually run by priests or priestesses. There were separate *calmecac* schools for boys and girls.

At the *telpochcalli*, boys were taught battle skills, Aztec history, obedience and religion. They also learnt music, singing and dancing, as these were important in religious ceremonies. They were not taught how to read or write. Everything they learnt was supposed to be stored in their heads. This was a boarding school where boys spent the night, but they did go home for part of the day for meals and to continue to work with their fathers, learning a trade or profession. They were also expected to undertake lowly tasks, such as cleaning temples or digging canals. Conditions were often tough, with cold, draughty bedrooms and very harsh punishments, such as the burning of pupils' hair.

Students at the *calmecac* schools were also taught history, religion, obedience and fighting skills. In addition, they studied reading, writing, mathematics, law, medicine and politics. Those who intended to become priests learnt to sacrifice small animals in preparation for when they would have to kill human beings as offerings to the gods. The boys at this school had to sleep on the floor and were sometimes not allowed to eat for several days. Often they were forced to get up in the middle of the night and dive into pools of freezing water. Sometimes, they had to go alone into the mountains overnight and drive cactus needles into their ears, tongues and legs until they bled. This tough training was intended to help *calmecac* boys defeat fear and ignore pain.

Girls from noble families often trained to be priestesses. They learnt about religion and were instructed in arts and crafts. They had to keep silent for large parts of the day, and were never to speak to boys. They were made to get out of bed several times each night to pray, and they were beaten for disobedience or for stopping work without permission.

Becoming an adult: marriage

When a boy reached the age of twenty and a girl reached the age of sixteen they were considered to be ready for marriage. The law allowed men to have more than one wife, but very few did. Women were allowed only one husband. A man was allowed to divorce his wife if she did not bear him children, but a woman could get a divorce only if she could prove that her husband was cruel to her. Most marriages were arranged. The parents of a twenty-year-old man decided on a suitable wife, then they employed a **marriage broker** to approach her parents. The girl's parents usually refused two or three times before agreeing to the marriage.

Step 4: take notes from the resources

Remember to take point-form notes from your sources and to put them in the appropriate columns. After using some of the information provided here your grid sheet should look like the partially completed example shown below.

Now complete your data grid.

Growing up an Aztec				
<i>Sources</i>	Paragraph headings			
	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Childhood</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Becoming an adult</i>
Ersie Burke, Darryn Kruse and Sarah Mirams, <i>Aspects of the Past</i> , OUP, 1999, pp. 185–87.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birth date important—lucky and unlucky days • astrologer chooses naming day • midwife tells child his/her role • girl given tiny work basket, spindle and broom • boy given tiny shield and spear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children learn role from parents • boy warrior • girl at home • age 4—sweep floor, collect wood, weave and sew 		

Step 5: write your first copy

As this assignment is in the form of a board game, there is only a small amount of writing needed. You will need to turn your notes into instructions for a board game. The way you word your instructions will depend on what type of board game you choose to design. But as an example, a piece of information like 'birth date important—lucky and unlucky days' might become 'You were born on an unlucky day. Wait two turns' or 'Congratulations, you were born on a lucky day. Collect two bonus points' or 'To make up for being born on an unlucky day, pay the astrologer twenty extra bags of maize to choose an especially lucky naming day'.

Step 6: correct your first copy

Have a friend or your teacher check over any writing you want to use.

Step 7: find pictures, maps, drawings and diagrams

Decorate your game and provide more information about the life of an Aztec by including pictures in your design. Make a note of the pictures you want to use.

Step 8: plan the layout of your finished work

In this assignment, the layout will be a plan of your board game. You may wish to copy the design of a well-known game like Monopoly or Snakes and Ladders, or you might want to invent your own. In your layout, roughly show how your design will look and where each piece of information or picture will go.

Step 9: prepare your final copy

Once your layout has been checked by your teacher and you have your corrected writing, you can put all the elements together into a board game. Make sure you take care with neatness and presentation. It will make it all the more fun to play the game when you are finished.

Step 10: complete your bibliography

Use the resources noted in the left-hand column of your data grid to compile your bibliography. Write them in alphabetical order by author's family name or by title if there is no author. The bibliography could go in a corner of your game or on the back if there is no room.

Solutions to crossword, p. 181**Across**

- 3** base
4 enemies
7 Otumba
13 Tlaxcallans
14 retreat
15 ships
17 guns
18 towns

Down

- 1** causeway
2 Mexico
5 horses
6 reinforcements
8 Tenochtitlan
9 Quetzalcoatl
10 Montezuma
11 smallpox
12 sacrifice
16 swords

