South American and Mesoamerican Civilizations

Content Benchmarks and Learning Objectives:

SS.8.W.2.10: Compare the emergence of advanced civilizations in Meso and South America with the four early river valley civilizations.

SS.8.G.2.1: Explain how major physical characteristics, natural resources, climate and absolute and relative locations have influenced settlement, interactions and the economies of ancient civilizations of the world.

Essential Questions

1. How did Early South American and Mesoamerican civilizations develop?
2. How was the emergence of civilizations in the Americas similar to or different from the emergence of the River Valley Civilizations?
3. How does geography and natural resources affect the way people live?

Key Vocabulary

Olmec, hieroglyphs, Teotihuacan, Yucatan peninsula, Maya, Aztec, Quetzalcoatl, maize, Montezuma I, Inca, Pachacuti, Cuzco, Quechua, Machu Picchu, quipu

Materials Needed:

- Promethean or SMART board
- Flip chart paper
- markers
- Attachment A: Lesson Opener Map
- Attachment B: South Americans and Mesoamericans
Steps to deliver the lesson:

Introduction/Hook: Project Attachment A- Lesson Opener on the board. Instruct students to take a few minutes to analyze the map then answer the questions in their journal. When finished, have students share out their answers to the questions.

Communicate to students that this lesson is an introduction to South American and Mesoamerican civilizations.

1. Activity 1: Divide class into 4 groups. Assign each group one of the Early American or Mesoamerican civilizations below.
   - Olmec: pgs. 454-456
   - Mayans: pgs. 459-461
   - Aztecs: pgs. 461-463
   - Incas: pg. 463-465

Distribute attachment B- South Americans and Mesoamericans, to each group. Instruct students that as a group, they will complete the part of attachment B related to their assigned South American or Mesoamerican civilization.

Students will use the pages specified above from the textbook: McGraw Hill Discovering Our Past: A History of the World. As groups are working, walk around to guide group discussion and provide assistance. When all groups are done, have groups take turn sharing their responses. Students will complete all sections of attachment B as groups share.

2. Activity 2: Create groups of 4-5 students each. Write the following River Valley Civilizations (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus River Valley, and China) at the top of a flip chart paper and draw a similarities and differences T chart (as shown below). Next, post the flip chart paper in different places around the room.

   Have each group report to the flip chart which is closest to them. Instruct students that as a group, they must list a similarity or a difference between South Americans/Mesoamericans and the River Valley Civilization listed on the flip chart paper. Encourage students to be specific with their details. Allow 4 minutes per rotation. Each group will move clockwise to the next flip chart paper. Repeat this process until all groups have listed a similarity or difference for each River Valley Civilizations. When finished, have them return to their seats. When all students have returned to their seats, have a brief discussion about their responses, emphasizing the major similarities and differences.
3. **Lesson Closure:**
   Ask students to answer the following question in their journal:
   - Were your predictions as to the impact of geographical features and/or natural resources on the development of a civilization correct? Why or why not?

**Optional Extension Activity/Home Learning**

Have students pick one the civilization they believe had the greatest achievements and create a PowerPoint depicting these achievements.

**Technology Integration**

The following websites provide additional resources that can be used for teaching about this time period:
- **Olmec Civilization:**
  [https://www.ancient.eu/Olmec_Civilization/](https://www.ancient.eu/Olmec_Civilization/)

- **The Maya: History, Culture and Religion**
  [https://www.livescience.com/41781-the-maya.html](https://www.livescience.com/41781-the-maya.html)

- **Aztecs:**

- **The Lost Inca Empire:**
• What major geographical features do you notice?
• What natural resources do you notice?
• What impact can geographical features and natural resources have on the development of a civilization?
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Directions: Please complete the graphic organizer by listing 3-4 facts for each group below.

Olmec

Inca

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Aztec

Maya