

## *Mummies of Peru: Teacher's Guide*

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Curriculum Focus:** Geography

**Lesson Duration:** Two class periods

### **Program Description**

Unearth secrets of an ancient people preserved by the sands of time. In the desert of southern Peru, archaeologists have excavated a burial site belonging to the Chiribaya, an early population of Peruvians who sent their dead to the afterlife with gold jewelry, fine textiles, and sometimes even a mummified llama!

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### **Onscreen Questions**

Part I – Before watching the video

- Think about how important members of Egyptian society were prepared for the afterlife.
- As you watch the program, compare these preparations with those made by the Chiribaya. How did the Chiribaya view of the afterlife compare with that of the ancient Egyptians?

Part I – After watching the video

- Discuss the artifacts that were typically buried with the Chiribaya mummies. What do they reveal about the values, culture, and lifestyle of this early civilization?
- Why are these artifacts important to archaeologists?

Part II – Before watching the video

- Think about how technology allows us to understand the inner workings of the human body.
- As you watch the program, note how tools of modern medicine are used to solve the mysteries of mummies. What makes these tools effective?

Part II – After watching the video

- While archaeologists examine the Chiribaya mummies thoroughly, they also attempt to preserve them. What methods or practices were used while examining the mummies?
  - Discuss the difficulties of studying such an object without altering it in some way.
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## Lesson Plan

### Student Objectives

- Research artifacts from one of three ancient civilizations: the Maya, the Aztec, or Inca.
- Create representations of ancient artifacts of one of these civilizations.
- Identify classmates' artifacts and determine the cultures they come from.

### Materials

- Books and CD-ROMS about the cultures and artifacts of the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca
- Internet access
- Newsprint and markers
- Materials to create representations of ancient artifacts (paper, posterboard, clay, paint, and markers)

### Procedures

1. Begin the class by providing the information below about ancient American cultures.

**Earliest Americans:** Historians believe that people may have lived in the Americas for 20,000 years, when humans migrated to North America by crossing the Bering Strait when it was frozen over during the Ice Age. Over thousands of years, people gradually moved south through North America, into Central America, and as far south as South America. For many years, people hunted and foraged for food. Around 5000 to 3000 B.C., they began to farm. The first civilization was that of the Olmecs, who flourished from about 800 to 300 B.C. in Central America. In the centuries to follow, other civilizations formed in the Americas.

**Three Ancient Civilizations:** Three of the most advanced ancient civilizations in the Americas were the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. These groups ruled in different regions of Central and South America until the Spanish conquered them in the 16th century. To reinforce when these civilizations flourished, draw a time line on a piece of newsprint with the information below.

- 1000 B.C.–A.D. 1697: Maya kingdom
- A.D. 1325–1519: Aztec empire
- A.D. 1438–1538: Inca empire

**Where They Ruled:** The Maya and the Aztec lived in the region known as Mesoamerica (much of what is now Central America), and the Inca lived along the west coast of South America (much of what is now Peru). Provide a map that shows the locations of these civilizations. This information should be available in your print resources, or see the map online at <http://library.thinkquest.org/C006206F/images/images/mapa.jpg>.

2. Much of what we know today about the Maya, Aztec, and Inca comes from artifacts discovered during archaeological digs. Artifacts small and large give clues about a civilization. You may



want to use the resources suggested below to show students examples of artifacts, such as religious masks or musical instruments, and to challenge them to determine something about the culture based on the artifacts.

3. Tell students they will select an artifact to study from one civilization. Make sure students include a variety of artifacts; you may have them count off 1 to 5 and assign artifacts according to number:
  - (1.) Religion (mythology and gods and goddesses)
  - (2.) Daily life (food, houses, tools, pottery, clothing, jewelry, and medicine)
  - (3.) Arts and entertainment (sports, dancing, music, and games)
  - (4.) War (weaponry, shields, and the military)
  - (5.) Communication (writing, hieroglyphs, counting, and calendars).
4. Ask students to choose one Maya, Aztec, or Inca artifact and answer the following questions in their notebooks. (They should not tell anyone the artifact they have chosen.)
  - What is it?
  - What is it made of?
  - In which category would you place this artifact: religion, daily life, arts and entertainment, war, or communication?
  - What was it used for and how was it used?
  - Which civilization used it?
  - What can you learn about the civilization from this artifact?
  - How is it similar to an object used for the same purpose today?
5. Have students create two- or three-dimensional representations of their artifacts. Encourage them to be creative; they could make a clay model, a watercolor painting, a sketch, or a mobile.
6. Have each student present his or her artifact to the class without disclosing its name or purpose. For each artifact, play "Twenty Questions," challenging the class to ask yes-or-no questions to identify the artifact and its purpose and to determine its culture of origin. Students should ask the presenter questions about the artifact's use, design, and composition.
7. Have students group their artifacts by civilization and discuss what each one reveals about its culture. Ask students to summarize the significant aspects the artifacts taught them about each culture.

## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students participated actively in class discussion, exhibiting strong understanding of ancient civilizations; showed strong research and writing skills; demonstrated above-average creativity and communication skills in their artifact presentations.



- **2 points:** Students participated to an average degree in class discussion, exhibiting some understanding of ancient civilizations; showed on-grade research and writing skills; demonstrated average creativity and communication skills in their artifact presentations.
- **1 point:** Students participated little in class discussion, exhibiting weak understanding of ancient civilizations; showed weak research and writing skills; demonstrated below-average creativity and communication skills in their artifact presentations..

## Vocabulary

### artifact

*Definition:* An object produced or shaped by human craft, especially a tool, weapon, or ornament of archaeological or historical interest

*Context:* Masks, pottery, and weapons are artifacts that may reveal details about how ancient people lived.

### civilization

*Definition:* An advanced stage (as in art, science, and government) of social development; the way of life of a people

*Context:* The Maya, Aztec, and Inca developed sophisticated civilizations.

### empire

*Definition:* A political unit with a large territory or number of territories or nations and ruled by a single supreme authority

*Context:* Led by Hernán Cortés in 1519, the Spaniards conquered the Aztec empire.

### hieroglyphics

*Definition:* A system of writing mainly in pictorial characters

*Context:* The Maya are known for many great achievements, including sophisticated hieroglyphics, accurate calendars, and grand pyramids.

## Academic Standards

### Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit link:

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Arts – Visual Arts: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Geography – Human Systems: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
- Language Arts – Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts



### **The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)**

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
  - Time, Continuity, and Change
  - People, Places, and Environments
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### **Support Materials**

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

