

## Early Latin American Civilizations

Approximately three weeks

- I. Olmecs
  - A. Mother civilization to others in Middle America, lived in southern Mexico from 1200 B.C.
  - B. Religion – Polytheistic (many gods). Main god is the rain god (half jaguar and half man).
  - C. Art – giant stone heads.
  
- II. Mayas – 250 – 900 A.D. one of the most important civilizations in Latin America.
  - A. Where – southeast Mexico, Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Built civilization in the dense jungle (rain forest)
  - B. Achievements
    - 1. Writing system (hieroglyphics)
    - 2. Calendar system
    - 3. Number system (zero)
  - C. Agriculture – slash & burn system of clearing land to farm (plant crops).
  - D. Tikal – Largest city.
  
- III. Aztecs – 1200's – 1500's
  - A. Major city – Tenoehitlan (Mexico City).
  - B. Warriors – Conquered other tribes to build their empire.
  - C. Agriculture – Grew crops on Chinampas (floating gardens made from mud). Grew corn (maize), squash, beans.
  - D. Innovations – Calendar, writing system (hieroglyphics, mathematics).
  - E. Conquered by Hernan Cortes (Spanish). The Aztec leader at the time was Montezuma II.

- IV. Incas – 1400's – 1500's
  - A. Location – Peru. Empire extended from Columbia to N.W. Argentina along the Andes Mountains.
  - B. Machu Picchu – Major city made out of stone.
  - C. Conquered by Francisco Pizzaro (Spanish Explorer).
  - D. Built terraces along mountain sides to plant crops.
  - E. Built road system to communicate throughout Empire.
  
- V. Settling of Latin America
  - A. Spain conquered most of Latin America.
  - B. The Spanish brought Christianity to the region.
  - C. Columbian exchange – exchange of ideas and goods between European countries and their colonies in North and South America.