

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

App developers create apps that people can use on their phones and tablets. Apps are used for different purposes, including education or entertainment! To become an app developer, you will need to learn to code. “To code” refers to learning a computer language. A computer language is a series of instructions that tell a computer what to do. Examples of computer languages include Python and JavaScript.



Today, you will imagine you are an app developer who is creating a new video game about the Aztec Empire, an ancient civilization that existed 700 years ago. Follow the steps below.

## Step 1: Read About the Aztec Empire

The Aztec empire was built around 700 years ago in what is now central Mexico. The Aztecs were a pre-Columbian civilization, which means that the civilization existed before Columbus came to the Americas in 1492. While the Aztec empire no longer exists today, archaeologists and historians study the empire to learn about what the civilization was like and how it was similar or different to other ancient civilizations. Read about different aspects of the Aztec empire below. Then, answer the questions.

### Leadership

Leadership in the Aztec empire was similar to a monarchy. A monarchy is a type of government that is ruled by a single ruler, such as a king or a queen. The head of the Aztec government was an emperor, known as Huey Tlatoani (pronounced “whey-tla-toe-anee”). The emperor was responsible for creating and enforcing laws and controlling the military. Under the emperor was a council. The council was made up of a group of men who controlled local governments in the empire. Each local government was part of a city-state. A city-state is a political system in which an independent city governs surrounding lands. The city-states created their own local laws; however, they still had to abide by the laws in the empire.

Other leaders in the empire included priests and judges. The priests oversaw religion in the empire, and the judges oversaw the courts.

### Army

The emperor required each city-state to train men to serve in an army. As a result, the Aztec empire had men ready to fight at all times in case the empire was under attack. The city-states were also required to provide supplies and food for the men, like maize, beans, and salt.

The men who fought in the army were known as warriors. While on the battlefield, Aztec warriors beat drums and blew trumpets. They threw darts and stones at their enemies. They also developed strategies, like sending spies into enemy territory to gather information about the enemy’s movements.

The picture on the right is a model of an Aztec Eagle Warrior, one of the most prestigious types of Aztec warriors in the army. The top Aztec warriors wore feathered headdresses and animal skin.

Credit: <https://www.ancient.eu/image/3719/aztec-eagle-warrior/>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

## Trade

The capital city, Tenochtitlan, was the center of trade. People came to the capital to trade crops, pottery, and clothing. They also traded luxury items, like tropical bird feathers and cotton. They traded goods with other Aztecs and with people in other empires, like the Mayas. Because of trade, the Aztecs built a strong economy.



This is an artist's drawing of the capital city, Tenochtitlan.

Credit: <https://mexicanroutes.com/tenochtitlan/>

## Religion

The Aztec religion was polytheistic, meaning many gods were worshiped. Many of the gods represented important resources, including water, sun, and crops. The god Huitzilopochtli, pronounced “wee-tsee-loh-poch-tlee,” was the god of war and the sun. The Aztecs relied on the sun to grow food and on the army to protect and expand their lands.

The Aztecs offered human sacrifices to the gods. A human sacrifice refers to a person who was killed and presented to the gods as a gift. The Aztecs usually sacrificed people they captured during battles.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

Answer the questions below using complete sentences.

1. Look at the map of the Aztec empire. The capital city, Tenochtitlan, is marked with a star. Do you think Tenochtitlan is in a good location for a capital city? Explain why or why not.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

2. Historians argue that the Aztec empire was one of the most successful ancient civilizations. Look at the staircase outline below. In each step write one factor that contributed to the growth of the Aztec Empire. Put the most important factor on the top stair, the second most important factor on the second stair, and so on. Then, explain the reasoning for each ranking.

## Aztec Empire



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

Answer the questions below using complete sentences.

3. How was the Aztecs' government similar to the United States government today? How are they different?

---

---

---

4. Take a look at this primary source. It is part of a letter from Hernán Cortés, the leader of the Spanish expedition that conquered the Aztec empire. In the letter, Cortés talks about the Aztecs' extensive trade network in Tenochtitlan. Based on this letter, what do you think a "marketing controversy" is? How did trade impact the Aztec civilization?

Day after day 60,000 people congregate here to buy and sell. Every imaginable kind of merchandise is available from all parts of the Empires, foodstuffs and dress, ...gold, silver, copper, ...precious stones, leather, bone, mussels, coral, cotton, feathers....Everything is sold by the piece or by measurement, never by weight. In the main market there is a law court in which there are always ten or twelve judges performing their office and taking decisions on all marketing controversies.

-- Hernando Cortes, Letters of Information

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

## Step 2: Create an App

You will imagine you are an app developer who is designing a new video game about the Aztec empire. During the game, players will imagine they lived in the Aztec empire. Today, you will design levels 1 and 2.

### Designing Level 1

In level 1, players will imagine they are merchants who are navigating their way to the trading market in Tenochtitlan. Once they arrive at the market, they will need to trade goods with other merchants.

To design level 1, you must:

- Sketch a picture of the market in the center of Tenochtitlan.
- Design a minimum of three obstacles that players will have to overcome while trying to get to the trading market.
- Identify one item players will want to trade when they arrive at the market.
- Write three clues for the player to find their way to the right market. For example, you can suggest the player look for a sign that shows the path to get to the market.

In the box below, sketch a picture of your market trading market. Then, design at least three obstacles. Label each obstacle.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

Write three clues on the lines below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write at least one item players want to trade at the market once they arrive.

\_\_\_\_\_

## Designing Level 2

In level 2, players will imagine they are the emperor. They will need to train an army and create laws for the empire.

To design level 2, you must:

- Identify two laws you would create for the empire.
- Create two punishments if people do not follow the laws.
- Design a shield that warriors can use during battle.

Two Laws:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Two Punishments:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the Aztec Empire

Draw your shield here:

