Early Societies of the Americas
CITY OF CHICAGO

Richard M. Daley
Mayor, City of Chicago

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Michael W. Scott
President

Clare Muñana
Vice President

MEMBERS
Norman R. Bobins
Dr. Tariq Butt
Alberto A. Carrero, Jr.
Peggy A. Davis
Roxanne Ward

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ron Huberman
Chief Executive Officer

Barbara Eason—Watkins, Ed.D.
Chief Education Officer

Diane H. Zendejas
Chief Officer, Office of Language and Cultural Education

Antonio J. Acevedo
Deputy Officer, Office of Language and Cultural Education
Unit Overview

This unit is designed to engage seventh grade students in a critical study of Pre—Columbian social systems of the early Americas. The unit’s six lessons emphasize key themes related to the Illinois State Board of Education’s social science learning goal 18: culture and common features of culture, roles and responsibilities of individuals, interactions between individuals as members of society, social organization, and the development and change of societies over time. Lesson one introduces the concept of culture through reflection and discussion about common features. Lessons two through five feature various societies of the early Americas: Hopewell, Clovis, Maya, Ancestral Puebloan, Aztec, and Mississippian. Through observation, inferential reasoning, discussion, and reflection, students uncover the unique characteristics of these societies by examining art, non—fiction text, and artifacts. The final lesson is a focused field trip—including pre—, during, and post—visit activities—to The Field Museum’s The Ancient Americas exhibition. Upon completion, students will have developed an understanding of culture and its common features, peoples who lived in what is now called the Americas prior to European presence, and how observations and inferential reasoning can tell us about past peoples.
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Lesson 1 Exploring Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lesson 2 Daily Life in the Early Americas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Lesson 3 Community–Based Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Lesson 4 Empire Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Lesson 5 Mississippian Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Lesson 6 Visiting the Field Museum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 1
Exploring Culture
Lesson Summary

This lesson introduces students to the concepts of culture and ethnocentrism. Students will identify features of culture in both their own lives and in the lives of others as well as features they perceive as “less visible” or “more visible”. Students will begin reflecting upon the meaning of ethnocentrism by examining one culture presented from an outsider’s perspective.

Illinois Learning Standards

18A: Students can compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions, and institutions.
1A: Students can apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
1B: Students can apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
4A: Students can listen effectively in formal and informal situations.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:
• Understand culture as the learned patterns of thought, beliefs, or behavior characteristic of human groups that change through time.
• Describe different features of culture and provide examples of these features from their own culture.
• Identify features of culture as “less visible” or “more visible,” and support their positions.
• Examine one culture from an outsider’s perspective.
• Understand ethnocentrism as judging other groups from our own cultural point of view.

Background Information

Everyone has culture; everyone belongs to a social group that has culture. Culture can and does change as a result of history and innovation as well as from interaction with other societies.

**Culture** is the learned patterns of thought, beliefs, or behavior characteristic of a group or society. All people create culture, though the form and details of that culture may not be obvious to the people living within it. Your own culture may seem normal or natural to you because it is what you do every day, though your traditions might seem odd to individuals from other cultures having their own way of doing things.

All of us deal with the common concerns of life: finding food and shelter, building relationships, defining ourselves, coming of age, forming communities, traveling from place to place; however,
different cultures have different ways of responding to these concerns. Our responses depend on our environment, history, and creativity. Together, these influences shape the varieties of human culture in the present, the past, and into the future.

Understanding the reasons for differences helps us take the value judgment out of “different.” It helps us live in mutual respect with people whose beliefs are different from our own. Working toward cultural understanding gives each of us the chance to define more clearly what we believe, to know our selves and each other better, and, ultimately, to strengthen connections among us all.

Day One: Culture as an Iceberg

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Pencils
  Markers
  Culture as an Iceberg worksheet
  Features of Culture worksheet
  Iceberg poster
  Large slips of paper
  Tape

- **Advance Preparation**
  Post the iceberg poster in your classroom. Write features of culture on large slips of paper (refer to Features of Culture worksheet). Make copies of the Culture as an Iceberg and Features of Culture worksheets (one per student).

- **Vocabulary**
  Culture – The learned patterns of thought, beliefs and behavior characteristic of a group or society; the main components of culture include its economic, social and belief systems.

- **Procedure**
  1. Ask students, what is culture? Students should define culture in their own words. After students share their ideas, introduce culture as the learned patterns of thought, beliefs, and behavior characteristic of human groups.
  2. Hand out the Features of Culture worksheets. Explain that every culture deals with common concerns (finding food and shelter, building relationships, coming of age, forming communities, etc.) but different cultures have different ways of responding to these concerns. Explain that the worksheet presents a list of features of culture that all people share, but respond to differently as influenced by their culture.
  3. As a whole group, review each feature of culture listed on the worksheet. Prompt students to provide examples of such features from their own culture and those from different cultures.
For example, many Americans shake hands to greet an old acquaintance, whereas Brazilian men shake hands and Brazilian women typically kiss twice on each side of the face. Different cultures have different greetings.

4. Hand out the Culture as an Iceberg worksheets. In partners, have students write features of culture they believe are more visible, or above the water line of the iceberg (i.e., food, dress, technology, etc.) and features that are less visible, or below the water line of the iceberg (i.e., rules of polite behavior, religious beliefs, importance of time, etc.).

5. As a whole class, have students share their rationales for placing features of culture above or below the water’s surface. As students share, create a class iceberg by placing the slips of paper, noting each feature of culture above or below the water line on the iceberg poster. When there is debate among students regarding placement, you may choose to place the feature on the water line to recognize differing opinions. Ask students to think about the features above and below the water line and to look for similarities and differences among them.

6. Remind the class that culture is learned through the passing on of behaviors and thoughts from one individual to another within a culture. Ask students to provide examples of how specific features of culture are learned. Is there anything they’ve learned from individuals who share their culture? How do you know how to dance; where has the style of dance come from? Are there unique meals/dishes made in your family; how do family members know how to make them? Where does your style of dress come from?

7. Explain that students have learned unique patterns of thought, beliefs, and behavior from people who share their culture. All humans, in all times and all places, have culture. We share common concerns but respond to these concerns in different ways, which will be important to think carefully about as we study early social systems of the Americas.

TEACHER NOTE: Save students’ Features of Culture and Culture as an Iceberg worksheets for use during day two of this lesson.

- Variations
  To differentiate instruction, shorten the list of features of culture, selecting five to seven features that will be most easily identified by students. Enlarge the font of the worksheet if desired. Allow students to work with a partner whom they can discuss with and assist in identifying examples and placing features on the iceberg. Also consider providing images or pictures that represent each feature of culture to aid students in completing the activity.

- Homework/Home Connection
  Have students identify additional examples of the features of culture discussed during this lesson.
Day Two: Studying the Nacirema

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Pencils
  Journals
  *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* reading passage (available on web; Google “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema”)

- **Advance Preparation**
  Gather students’ *Features of Culture* and *Culture as an Iceberg* worksheets from previous day.
  Find the *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* reading passage on the Web by doing a Google search and make copies (one per student) or create an overhead transparency to display for whole class.
  Ensure that each student has a writing journal for the remainder of the unit.

- **Vocabulary**
  Ethnocentrism – judging other groups from our own cultural point of view.

- **Procedure**
  1. Introduce the term ethnocentrism; ethnocentrism is judging other groups from our own cultural point of view. Explain that ethnocentrism is difficult to avoid, but if one seeks to understand another’s culture, it is important to try not to judge or compare other cultures from our own cultural perspective. Ethnocentrism can lead to misunderstanding others, and while we can never rid ourselves of our own assumptions about life based on our own cultural point of view, we can try to recognize when we are being ethnocentric and acknowledge that this makes it difficult to truly understand other cultural points of view.
  2. Hand out the *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* reading passage (one per student) or display on an overhead projector. Explain that the passage describes the ritualistic practices of an unfamiliar culture from the perspective of an outside observer. Give students time to read the passage.
  3. After reading, have students write a brief reaction to the passage addressing the question: What were your initial interpretations (first impressions) of the culture? Ask students to share their responses. Reveal that the passage was written to describe American culture in the 1950s from an outsider’s perspective (“Nacirema” is American spelled backward). Review the article as a whole group, working to identify practices and/or features of culture students do or don not share with the Nacirema.
  4. Revisit the term ethnocentrism. Ask students to reflect upon their reactions to the Nacirema. Were their reactions ethnocentric? How or how not? What works for one culture is often different from what works for other cultures.
  5. To conclude, have students respond to the following prompt in their journals: When learning about people with culture that is different from my own, I will be most successful if I…
• **Variations**
  To differentiate instruction, rewrite the “Nacirema” passage using shorter prose. Increase the font size if necessary. Pre-record a reading of the passage on a tape recorder for students to listen to while following along. Gather and share images of 1950s America (specifically of those things referred to in the passages: images of people’s daily appearances, “strange” bathroom devices, i.e. toothbrush and razor, medicine cabinet) to support student understanding of life in America at that time.

• **Homework/Home Connection**
  Students should review their journal entries from lesson one and respond to the following questions: What can studying other cultures teach me about my own? How can I apply my new understanding of cultural differences in my own daily life?

• **Assessment**
  Observe student participation in *Culture as an Iceberg* activity. Have students explain culture and provide an example of a feature of culture. Evaluate discussion regarding the “Nacirema” activity and review journal entries.

• **Additional Resources/Museum Connections**
  For more information about understanding culture, visit The Field Museum’s department of Environment, Culture and Conservation on-line at [fieldmuseum.org/research_collections/ccuc/default.htm](http://fieldmuseum.org/research_collections/ccuc/default.htm).

  Read more about understanding culture and the relationship between culture and social systems in the *Ancient Americas* exhibition; visit *Ancient Americas* on-line at [fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/understanding.asp](http://fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/understanding.asp).

  Use the *Ancient Americas* educator guide to supplement lesson content, for classroom activity ideas, curriculum connections to learning standards, and for field trip planning ideas. Find the educator guide on-line at [fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf](http://fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf).

Harris Educational Loan Center Materials
[fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan](http://fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan)

  Experience Box: *Living Together: If the Shoe Fits*
  Experience Box: *Living Together: Shelter*
  Experience Box: *Cooking All Over*
  Experience Box: *Cover Your Head*
  Experience Box: *Dance and Celebration*
  Experience Box: *¡Vamos A Comer!*
  Experience Box: *Living Together: Multicultural Math*
## FEATURES OF CULTURE

Modified from peacecorps.gov/wws/bridges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of dress</th>
<th>Ways of greeting people</th>
<th>Importance of time</th>
<th>Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Family Structure</td>
<td>Attitudes about personal space and privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about the responsibilities of children</td>
<td>Gestures to show you understand what has been told to you</td>
<td>Holiday customs</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>Celebrations</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Facial expressions and hand gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
<td>Concept of beauty</td>
<td>Rules of polite behavior</td>
<td>Role of the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward age</td>
<td>Technology (tools, skills)</td>
<td>Beliefs about nature and our relationship to it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Iceberg Concept of Culture
Lesson 2

Being a Part of Society
Lesson Summary

Students will begin exploring the concept of society and, drawing from lesson one, increase understanding of how societies are shaped in part by culture. Students will read about Clovis, Hopewell, Maya, and Aztec societies and reflect upon how culture influences the way members of society are organized and the way they interact.

Illinois Learning Standards

18A: Students can compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions, and institutions.
18B: Students can understand the roles and interactions of individuals and groups in society.
16D: Students understand Illinois, United States, and world social history.
1A: Students can apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
1B: Students can apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
4A: Students can listen effectively in formal and informal situations.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:
• Analyze text and make observations about societies of the early Americas.
• Identify patterns of relationships in societies of the early Americas.
• Compare and contrast life in societies of the early Americas and American society today.

Background Information

All of us deal with the common concerns of life: finding food and shelter, building relationships, defining ourselves, coming of age, forming communities, traveling from place to place; but different cultures have different ways of responding to these concerns. Our responses depend on our environment, history, and creativity. Together, these influences shape the varieties of human culture in the present, the past, and into the future; further, culture shapes the daily life of different societies.

To paint a picture of daily life of past cultures, archaeologists and anthropologists rely on many forms of evidence. Archaeological excavations uncover the remains of everyday life from the past that have become buried over time. Evidence from excavations might range from pottery, to living structures, to remnants of meals eaten thousands of years ago. Using these clues and sophisticated technologies to date and map these remains, archaeologists construct hypotheses about the ways of life of ancient peoples, the interactions they had with their neighbors, and their relationship to the natural and spiritual worlds.
Day One: Daily Life in the Early Americas

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Pencils
  Paper
  Journal

  *Being a Part of Clovis / Hopewell / Maya / Aztec Society* reading passages/illustrations:
  - CLOVIS: [fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/popUps/IA19.html](fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/popUps/IA19.html)
  - HOPEWELL: [fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/popUps/PL27.html](fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/popUps/PL27.html)
  - MAYA: [fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/popUps/RC27.html](fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/popUps/RC27.html)

- **Advance Preparation**
  Make copies of the *Being a Part of Clovis / Hopewell / Maya / Aztec Society* reading passages and illustration pages (accessible on Field Museum Web site). Cut each page in half, separating the text from the illustration. Make enough copies of each society reading passage and illustration so that a quarter of the class will be studying one of the four societies. Ensure students have *Features of Culture* worksheet from lesson one; students may refer to the posted class iceberg as an alternate.

- **Vocabulary**
  **A.D.** – An abbreviation for the Latin “Anno Domini;” follows the year “1”
  **Aztec** – A society that lived from the early 1400s to the early 1500s and ruled an empire that stretched over hundreds of miles from Central Mexico to Guatemala; using military skill and political expertise, the Aztec gained control over neighboring peoples, forging an empire
  **B.C.** – Dates in the Julian calendar before the date thought to be that of Christ’s birth (the year 1)
  **Clovis** – A society of early hunter—gatherers that lived across North America and made what archaeologists call “Clovis points;” Clovis peoples lived off the land and worked in groups to hunt, beginning around 11,500 B.C.
  **Hopewell** – A society comprised of a network of communities in the eastern woodlands of North America that created magnificent “earthworks” or complexes of large mounds and enclosures of various shapes 200 B.C. – A.D. 500
  **Maya** – A society in Central America and Mexico whose first evidence dates back three thousand years; the Maya rose to prominence roughly between A.D. 250 and 900 and built one of the most famous civilizations in the Americas, excelling in architecture, sculpture, painting, written language, and astronomy
  **Observation** – A detailed description (written, sketched, or described verbally) of something; good observations should be explicit and reliable enough that another individual making an observation of the same thing would provide a similar description.
  **Society** – A social group with a distinctive cultural and economic organization
Lesson 2: Being a Part of Society

- **Procedure**
  1. Introduce the names, locations, and estimated time periods of the early societies students will be examining in this lesson: Hopewell, eastern woodlands of North America, 200 B.C. – A.D. 500; Aztec, central Mexico to Guatemala, early 1400s to the early 1500s; Maya, present—day countries of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Belize, and southern Mexico, A.D. 250 – 1600s (Note: descendants of the early Maya can be found throughout Central America, as well as other parts of the Americas; Clovis, across the North American continent and into parts of Central America, 11,500 B.C. – 10,800 B.C., based on radiocarbon dating. Explain that these early societies existed in different places in the Americas at different times, but we can still learn about the daily lives of people within each society by examining features of their culture.
  2. Pair students, assign one Being a Part of...Society reading passage or illustration to each pair. Attempt to have an equal number of pairs reading about or making observations of the illustrations from each society.
  3. Revisit the features of culture discussed in the previous lesson. Have each pair of students read their assigned passage or make observations of their assigned illustration. Students should then record examples of features of culture identified in the reading passage or illustration. Students may record information about style of dress, family structure, responsibilities of children, food, technology, celebrations, etc.
  4. After each pair has recorded information about the societies’ cultural features, ask students to share their findings. What examples of features of cultures were identified? What was daily life like for peoples from these different cultures? Have students write a journal entry that answers the question, what was Clovis / Hopewell / Maya / Aztec life like?

**TEACHER NOTE:** Save students’ observation sheets for use during day two of this lesson.

- **Variations**
  To differentiate instruction, assign partners different roles: reader, recorder, etc. You may also choose to use only text or only illustrations during this activity. You may also pre-record the reading passages for students to listen to while following along. Use objects from the Harris Loan Educational Loan Center (fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan) or the Ancient Americas website (fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas) to supplement the lesson.

- **Homework/Home Connection**
  In journals, have students create an illustration of a “day in the life” of their own society. Students should choose a certain place and time to illustrate and must include different individuals within the illustration. For example, an illustration at the end of a school day outside of school may include buses with bus drivers, students leaving school and talking/playing, parents talking to teachers or other school staff.
Day Two: Daily Life in the Early Americas

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Pencils
  Journal

- **Vocabulary**
  **Observation** – A detailed description (written, sketched, or described verbally) of something; good observations should be explicit and reliable enough that another individual making an observation of the same thing would provide a similar description.  
  **Society** – A social group with a distinctive cultural and economic organization

- **Procedure**
  1. Remind students that in day one of this lesson, they examined the features of culture and daily lives of people within four different early societies (Clovis / Hopewell / Maya / Aztec). Now students will look at the similarities and differences, or common concerns and different responses, among the societies. Organize students in pairs; each pair should be comprised of students who studied different societies in day one of this lesson.
  2. In pairs, have students share their findings from day one. What features of culture were identified? How were the societies similar? How were they different? Each pair should create a Venn diagram organizing the similarities and differences between the two societies studied.
  3. As a whole group, share the similarities and differences between societies. Emphasize that all cultures share common concerns, but have different responses to those concerns, as organized in their Venn diagrams.

- **Variations**
  Increase the challenge of this lesson by grouping students in fours. Have student groups create a four-circle Venn diagram with each circle representing a different society studied (Hopewell, Clovis, Maya, Aztec), thereby comparing and contrasting four societies at one time.

- **Homework/Home Connection**
  Have students write a response to the question: Imagine if you lived in Clovis, Hopewell, Maya or Aztec society. In what ways might life be similar to your life today? In what ways might life be different from your life today?

- **Assessment**
  Evaluate students’ observation notes from their assigned Being a Part of Society illustration or passage. Review their journal entries and “day in the life” illustrations to determine students’ ability to identify patterns of relationships in the societies of early Americas.
**Additional Resources/Museum Connections**

Find more information about Clovis, Hopewell, Maya and Aztec at The Field Museum. In the *Ancient Americas* exhibition, find large panels displaying the *Being A Part of ...Society* passages and illustrations. You may also visit the *Ancient Americas* exhibition on-line for more information and to access the passages and illustrations: [fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas](http://fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas).

Use the *Ancient Americas* educator guide to supplement lesson content, for classroom activity ideas, curriculum connections to learning standards, and for field trip planning ideas. Find the educator guide on-line at [fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf](http://fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf).

Harris Educational Loan Center Materials
[fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan](http://fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan)

- Experience Box: *Ice Age Mammals of Chicago* (related to Clovis society)
- Experience Box: *Aztec and Maya Marketplaces*
- Experience Box: *Cooking All Over*
Lesson 3
Community-Based Society
Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will examine Ancestral Puebloan society, an egalitarian society rooted in community relationships. Students will make observations of the early society, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the society. Students will then view a video about contemporary Puebloan society that highlights the importance of community and how the society has changed over time.

Illinois Learning Standards

18A: Students can compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions, and institutions.
18B: Students can understand the roles and interactions of individuals and groups in society.
16A: Students can apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation
16D: Students can understand Illinois, United States, and world social history.
5A: Students can locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.
5B: Students can analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

• Make observations about Ancestral Puebloan society.
• Gather information about Ancestral Puebloan society from living descendants.
• Provide examples of change within a society.
• Learn that Puebloan society is deeply rooted in community relationships.

Background Information

Over time in the early Americas, people who hunted and gathered began to domesticate animals and cultivate plants. As a result, these people’s lifestyle became more settled. Instead of moving seasonally, the people settled in one location or region for years at a time. Some of these settlements were made up of just a few families, while others were made up of large numbers of households joined together as a village. Living in villages, people’s lives revolved around the concept of community. In these societies, there were more hands for work, shared resources, and protection. All of these characteristics developed as a result of community—based relationships.

One type of society that is developed around the concept of community is an egalitarian society.
Egalitarian refers to a type of social organization in which individuals have no real authority over each other and in which no individual or group controls more access to wealth, power, or resources than any other. Positions of status are not limited, and rank is not acknowledged by egalitarian societies. Today, archaeologists find clues to this type of social relationship in art, architecture, and even clothing unique to a specific village or territory.

Around A.D. 1250, the U.S. Southwest was dotted with community-based farming villages. These Puebloan societies established hundreds of settlements in an area covering Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Like most agricultural groups, these people shared the workload and the fruits of their labor. They developed social and religious organizations that helped maintain order and created a sense of community.

Note that for years archaeologists identified ancient farmers from the Four Corners region of the American Southwest as *Anasazi*—a Navajo word meaning “ancient enemies,” which some find derogatory. Thus, archaeologists replaced the term with *Ancestral Puebloans*, which encompasses the ancestors of today’s Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo peoples. These Ancestral Puebloans typically demonstrated egalitarian social organization.

---

**Day One: Ancestral Puebloan Villagers and Community Life**

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  - Pencils
  - Journal
  - Farming Villagers posters
  - Farming Villagers observation sheet

- **Advance Preparation**
  Make copies of the Farming Villagers observation sheet (one per student).

- **Vocabulary**
  **Ancestral Puebloan** – A community-based, farming society that established hundreds of settlements in an area covering Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico around A.D. 1250

  **Archaeologist** – A person trained in the knowledge and methods of archaeology; a professional archaeologist holds a degree in anthropology with a specialization in archaeology and is trained as a scientist.

  **Archaeology** – A science; the study of people in the distant past and more recent past using the things they made or left behind, like objects, food remains, architecture, art, and cemeteries; archaeologists ask research questions about culture, culture change, and patterns of behavior and look for answers in material culture.
Community – A social group with members who live in a specific location, have a shared “government” and often have common cultural and/or historical heritage.3

Observation – A detailed description (written, sketched, or described verbally) of something; good observations should be explicit and reliable enough that another individual making an observation of the same thing would provide a similar description.2

- Procedure
  1. Organize students in small groups; give each group one of the Farming Villagers posters. Explain that the posters are one artist’s interpretation of Ancestral Puebloan society, 1250 A.D., based on archaeologists’ findings. An archaeologist is a person trained in the knowledge and methods of archaeology, the study of people in the distant and more recent past. Explain that, today, students will be making observations of the people and activities in the posters.
  2. Hand out the Farming Villagers observation sheets (one per student). As a whole group, review the Farming Villagers observation sheet. Explain that students will be using the observation sheet to record observations of individuals in the posters. Review the example observation; talk students through how to record their observations. Encourage students to take time and look carefully for details in the scene; encourage students to use the features of culture list to focus their observations.
  3. After completing the observation sheet, have students share what they observed within small groups or as a whole group. Begin a discussion about daily life in the ancient Southwest. What individuals were illustrated in the posters? What were they doing? Who were they interacting with? What was daily life like for different individuals in the posters? Men? Women? Children?
  4. Explain that Ancestral Puebloan peoples lived in a community—based society. Ancient farming men, women and children all cooperated in order to complete work and support the family; they each learned different skills and performed different tasks according to age and to gender. Based on their observations, ask students to share ideas about the roles of men, women, and children in the ancient Southwest communities.
  5. Wrap up the discussion by explaining that, in the ancient Southwest, religious ceremonies, public celebrations, and ritual observances helped to bring villagers from different family lines and clans together. Through these communal practices, individuals and families formed a bond, creating a community; decision—making became a group effort, and people worked together to create rituals and rules that regulated society.

- Variations
  To differentiate instruction, decrease the number of columns on the observation chart. Assign students one individual to observe rather than groups of individuals. As an alternate to completing the observation sheet, have students sketch particular individuals and label their activities.

- Homework/Home Connection
  Have students choose one of the individuals from the poster to assume the role of and write a fictional narrative about a day in the life of that individual.
Day Two: Puebloan Peoples and Community Today

• Time Allotment
  50 minutes

• Materials
  Pencils
  Paper
  Journal
  Computer with Internet access connected to LCD projector (or computer lab)

Community Life in the Southwest video:
  fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/videos/pueblo_life_lb.mov

• Advance Preparation
  Arrange for an LCD projector connected to a computer with Internet access in your classroom or reserve your computer lab in preparation for showing the Community Life in the Southwest video.

• Vocabulary
  Ancestral Puebloan – A community-based, farming society that established hundreds of settlements in an area covering Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico around A.D. 1250

  Inference – A statement about phenomena not directly accessible to the senses; an inference is something that involves a decision or interpretation being made about something observed.\(^2\)

  Observation – A detailed description (written, sketched, or described verbally) of something; good observations should be explicit and reliable enough that another individual making an observation of the same thing would provide a similar description.\(^2\)

• Procedure
  1. Explain that archaeologists make observations and draw inferences about past people, their social relationships, and activities using archeological evidence. An inference is a statement about phenomena not directly accessible to the senses; an inference is something that involves a decision or interpretation being made about something observed. Another way to learn about past societies is through descendants of early peoples. Some descendants of early Puebloan peoples, for example, live in communities today that share some of the characteristics of their ancestors’ communities.
  
  2. Play the Community Life in the Southwest video. While viewing, have students watch for examples of roles and/or responsibilities found within this contemporary Puebloan society. Discuss what was observed. Ask students to recall individual activities observed in the mural. With those activities in mind, ask students to consider how the individual activities in the video, similar to those seen in the mural, are important to community life. Discuss as a whole group.
  
  3. Dr. Naranjo talks about the ways culture is learned in her community, in part by passing traditions on from elders to children. Emphasize the importance of community in past and contemporary Puebloan life. Ask students to, again, think about their observations of Ancestral Puebloan villagers in the poster. What do they remember seeing young people doing? Did they
see any people learning from other people? What did Dr. Naranjo say about how members of this Pueblan community have maintained traditional values in our contemporary world?

4. Later in the video, Dr. Naranjo talks about the pressure in contemporary Pueblan society to shift from a “strong collective mindset” toward an “I’ mindset;” how the ‘we’ is really about community while the ‘I’ is about self-centeredness. In contemporary Pueblan society, life is rooted firmly in a “we” mindset. Discuss what you think Dr. Naranjo means about a “we” versus an “I’ mindset. The focus of the discussion should be on engaging students in reflecting on the mindsets Dr. Naranjo discusses, not to automatically see the “I” culture negatively or hold up the “we” culture as the ideal.

- **Variations**
  If necessary, allow some students to preview the Community Life in the Southwest video before the entire class views it together. Stop the video in between sections (and discuss/review) in order to break the video up into smaller spans of time.

- **Homework/Home Connection**
  Have students write a journal entry describing the different ways they learned about Pueblan society (Ancestral and contemporary). What kinds of things can you learn from people that you cannot learn from artifacts?

- **Assessment**
  Review students’ Farming Villagers observation charts and ask students to explain what they learned about Ancestral and contemporary Pueblan society. Evaluate students’ journals and classroom discussions to assess how they learned from artifacts and from people/in the video.

- **Additional Resources/Museum Connections**
  Find more information about Ancestral Pueblan society in the Farming Villagers gallery in the Ancient Americas exhibition at the Field Museum, including the original, wall-size mural of village life used in this lesson. Visit the Ancient Americas exhibition online and explore the Farming Villagers gallery at fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/farming.asp

  Use the Ancient Americas educator guide to supplement lesson content, for classroom activity ideas, curriculum connections to learning standards, and for field trip planning ideas. Find the educator guide on-line at fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf

  Harris Educational Loan Center Materials
  fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan
  - Experience Box: *Living Together: Home Sweet Home*
  - Experience Box: *Southwest Archaeology and Daily Life*
  - Experience Box: *Molcajete (Grinding Bowl)*
  - Experience Box: *The Metate*
### Farming Villagers observation sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the individual</th>
<th>Where is he/she?</th>
<th>Who or what is near him/her?</th>
<th>What is he/she doing? Is he/she doing it alone?</th>
<th>What is he/she using?</th>
<th>Other observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A woman with dark hair tied up in buns. She is wearing a white dress/clothing.</td>
<td>She is sitting on the ground in front of a wall that looks like it's made of clay or stone.</td>
<td>There are many people sitting on the ground by the wall. They are sitting close together.</td>
<td>She seems to be making pottery. There is something on the ground. It might be a pile of clay. She is watching a baby.</td>
<td>She is using her hands and clay. There is also a tool on the ground next to the woman.</td>
<td>These people all have dark hair. The building, ground, pots and mountains are the same color. The woman might be talking to other people around her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 4
Empire Society
Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will explore the Aztec Empire, record observations of Aztec artifacts and make inferences about Aztec society. Students will then work in small groups to create a mural depicting common roles and relationships found within Aztec society.

Illinois Learning Standards

18A: Students can compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions, and institutions.
18B: Students can understand the roles and interactions of individuals and groups in society.
18C: Students can understand how social systems form and develop over time.
16A: Students can apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation
16D: Students can understand Illinois, United States, and world social history.
5A: Students can locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:
• Record observations of Aztec artifacts.
• Infer the roles and responsibilities of members of Aztec society.
• Create a mural depicting Aztec life.
• Learn the characteristics of empires and label them within the Aztec mural.

Background Information

Many societies in the ancient Americas had rulers that controlled territories limited to a single ethnic group and geographic area, but some of these societies pushed beyond their traditional borders to incorporate neighboring cultures. Through military conquest and political alliances, these societies created empires. Empires required new strategies to manage their far-flung, diverse populations. Taxation, religious control, and other tools and techniques helped governments maintain power over their expanding territories.

To maintain their position of power over their territories, emperors built sophisticated, centralized governments. These governments developed advanced communications systems that, in some cases, included networks of roadways connecting administrative centers throughout the land. Art, religion, trade, language, and other aspects of subjugated societies were controlled by the government in an
attempt to unify the empire’s people.

Only a small number of societies in the ancient Americas became empires, one of which was the **Aztec Empire**. In the 1300s, a society of nomadic hunters and gatherers—driven from other territories in central Mexico—settled in uninhabited or sparsely occupied swampland. Using military skill and political expertise, they gained control over neighboring peoples, forging the empire we call the Aztec.

From the early 1400s to the early 1500s, the Aztec ruled an empire that essentially stretched over hundreds of miles from central Mexico to Guatemala. Like the Inca of Peru (A.D. 1400 – 1532), the Aztec created elaborate systems to hold their far-reaching lands and diverse subjects together.

---

**Day One: Aztec Artifacts**

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  - Paper
  - Pencil
  - Journal
  - Overhead projector
  - Field notebook transparencies
  - Aztec image transparencies:
    - **Warrior Codex depicting** – This codex shows an Eagle Warrior (left) and Jaguar Warrior (right) brandishing “Aztec swords;” the weapons had obsidian blades attached to them, making them very dangerous
    - **Farmer Codex depicting** – In the Aztec world, the majority of people were farmers such as this man harvesting his crop
    - **Ruler with Tribute Codex depicting** – In this codex illustration, the Emperor Moctezuma II is being paid a tribute of the finest of military regalia, including battle uniforms, feathered shields and banners, and embroidered cloth
    - **Aztec Woman Weaving Cloth Codex depicting** – This codex depicts an Aztec woman weaving. In Aztec society, men and women practiced different kinds of crafts. Aztec women were especially renowned as weavers and embroiderers of cotton and maguey cloth

- **Advance Preparation**
  Be prepared to show students where the Aztec Empire was located on a map. Set up an overhead projector prior to beginning the lesson.

- **Vocabulary**
  - **Aztec** – A society that thrived from the early 1400s to the early 1500s and ruled an empire that stretched over hundreds of miles from Central Mexico to Guatemala; using military skill and political expertise, the Aztec gained control over neighboring peoples, forging an empire
Codex (plural, codices) – A type of manuscript painted on treated bark paper (amatl, Nahuatl) or deerskin that unfolds like a screen; codices recorded history, myth, lists of tribute, etc.

Field notes – Various notes recorded by scientists during or after their observation of a specific phenomenon they are studying.

Empire – A union of dispersed territories, colonies, states, and unrelated peoples under one sovereign rule

Inference – A statement about phenomena not directly accessible to the senses; an inference is something that involves a decision being made about something observed.2

Observation – A detailed description (written, sketched, or described verbally) of something; good observations should be explicit and reliable enough that another individual making an observation of the same thing would provide a similar description.2

Taxation – The practice of imposing taxes for economic support from a centralized government to keep government running smoothly

**Procedure**

1. Ask students, what do you think of when you hear the word “empire”? What is an empire? Provide examples empires you have heard about. What characteristics do they share? After sharing, introduce empires as societies that formed through military conquest and political alliances and gained control over other societies. Empire societies share the following characteristics:
   - **Centralized governments and hierarchy** – emperors built sophisticated governments to rule over their diverse subjects. The governments included different ranks of government officials and rulers who held power over the subjects of lower social classes
   - **Tribute (taxation) systems** – rulers required that conquered peoples helped the government economically by requiring them to pay taxes in the form of tribute and service. Written records of tribute and service, like codices, show what goods the conquered people paid to their rulers
   - **Religious control** – rulers imposed common religious beliefs and assumed the religious power over their subjects throughout the land
   - **Communication systems** – networks of roadways, advanced record-keeping systems and complex trading patterns show that rulers of empires maintained constant contact and control over their widely spread territories.

2. Explain to students that they will be learning about the Aztec empire by examining and making observations of Aztec codices. Just as archaeologists record observations, students will be writing field notes in their journals. Show students the field notebook samples. Discuss what information is included in the notes (sketches and writing). Have students label four pages of their journals in the following way:
   - Heading that reads “Field Notes” in upper left corner
   - Name, date & page number in upper right corner
   - Heading that reads “Observations” (top of page)
   - Heading that reads “Inferences” (half-way down the page)

3. Project the *Aztec Woman Weaving Cloth Codex* image; use this image as an example to guide
your students in how to make observations of artifacts. Using the first field note page in their journals, have students record their observations of the artifact under the header “Observations.” Aid students in making careful observations by asking: Describe the artifact. What is its texture/color/shape? What material might it be made out of? What/who does it depict? What is unusual about it? Remind students that observations can be recorded using words or sketches, and that they should try to use both.

4. Project a different codex image; students should record their observations on the second page of field notes. Repeat process for the third and fourth image. Allow students to share their observations with fellow classmates or as a whole group.

5. Next, explain that students will be using their observations to make inferences about Aztec society. Remind students that an inference is a statement about phenomena not directly accessible to the senses; an inference is something that involves a decision being made about something observed. Project the Aztec Woman Weaving Cloth Codex image again and model making inferences from observations. For example:
   - OBSERVATION: a woman appears to be making or weaving something; INFECTION: Aztec society may have included specialized crafts people who made cloth or woven arts
   - OBSERVATION: another person watches the weaver but is not weaving; INFECTION: the Aztecs might have had separate roles for different citizens which were performed in separate spaces; maybe different people of different age, gender, or rank performed different tasks
   - OBSERVATION: the picture of the weaver is colorful and has detail of the landscape, the materials used for weaving, and the people in the image; INFECTION: Aztec society may have had people who were responsible for creating art depicting every day life, or even a system of documenting information about life in their society

6. After modeling, have students record inferences for each object (under the heading “Inferences”) on their field notes pages. Encourage students to discuss their ideas and inferences with classmates.

7. Next have students think about the characteristics of empire society that you reviewed earlier. How do students’ observations and inferences connect to those characteristics? Have students share their examples of these connections as a whole group.

• Variations
To differentiate instruction, decrease the number of images for students to observe and make inferences about. If necessary, allow students to work with a partner who can discuss with and assist their partner in identifying observations and/or inferences. Prior to beginning the lesson, have students practice making observations and inferences with objects they bring from home.

• Homework/Home Connection
Ask students to complete a journal entry in response to the following questions: What inferences did you make about Aztec life based on your observations? What can you infer about the different roles of individuals in Aztec society?
Day Two: Aztec Community

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Pencils
  Journals
  Butcher paper (4—6 large sheets)
  Art materials (collage materials, markers, paints, etc.)
  *Being a Part of Aztec Society* reading passage (from Lesson Two)

- **Advance Preparation**
  Make 4—6 copies of the *Being A Part of Aztec Society* reading passage. Cut 4—6 large sheets of butcher paper. Gather art materials for use by 4—6 small groups.

- **Procedure**
  1. Explain that, today, students will be building upon the previous activities by thinking carefully about the different people in Aztec society, and their roles and responsibilities as individuals and as members of Aztec society. Just as archaeologists use observations and inferences to develop ideas about life in the past, students will use their observations and inferences to develop a mural depicting Aztec society.
  2. Organize students into small groups. Have each group create a mural that is based on students’ observations and inferences from the previous day. Instruct students to include the people they would expect to see and examples of how they might be interesting. If you choose, revisit the Being a Part of Aztec Society reading passage to inspire student thought.
  3. After the murals have been created, instruct students to label the murals. Students should write a label (1—2 paragraphs) that includes the following information: 1) What the drawing is showing (who are the individuals, what are they doing, what are they using (tools/materials), what their roles are in society; 2) How the drawing portrays at least one of the characteristics of an empire society.
  4. Upon completion of the group murals, have groups to share their artwork, explaining the individuals or groups of individuals in their mural, why they were included, and how the individuals contribute to the Aztec Empire.

- **Variations**
  To differentiate instruction, assign group members different roles to focus on in creating their mural: illustrator, label writer, presenter etc. As an alternative, assign students one person in Aztec society to draw and label.

- **Homework/Home Connection**
  Have students choose one individual within a mural and answer the following questions in their journals: What are the roles and responsibilities of this individual? How did he/she fit into the Aztec empire’s social system? What are the disadvantages of an empire to its members?
What are the advantages of an empire to its members?

- **Assessment**
  Evaluate students’ field notes and have them explain their observations and inferences of the codices. Use their murals and mural labels to review students’ inferences about Aztec society and students’ understanding of the characteristics of empires.

- **Additional Resources/Museum Connections**
  Find more information about Aztec society in the Empire Builders gallery of the Ancient Americas exhibition. In the exhibition, find Aztec artifacts like those included in this lesson. Visit the Ancient Americas exhibition online at and explore the Empire Builders gallery at fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/empire.asp

  Use the Ancient Americas educator guide to supplement lesson content, for classroom activity ideas, curriculum connections to learning standards, and for field trip planning ideas. Find the educator guide on-line at fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf

  Visit the Aztec World exhibition on-line at fieldmuseum.org/aztecs/ and use the Aztec World educator guide to supplement your curriculum with activity ideas, content summaries, artifact images and additional information about Aztec society. Find the educator guide on-line at fieldmuseum.org/aztecs/pdf/Aztecs_Edu_guide.pdf

  To learn about Field Museum archaeologists’ fieldwork have students visit Expeditions fieldmuseum.org/expeditions/interactive_main.html. Pay particular attention to the archaeology expeditions of Scott Demel and Chap Kusimba, Ryan Williams, and Gary Feinman and Anne Underhill.

  Harris Educational Loan Center Materials
  fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan
  Experience Box: Aztec and Maya Marketplaces
  Slide Sets: Archaeology
Lesson 4: Field Notes example (1/2)

After mapping I returned to AD to start on #20. At the level 4, a stone, which was put into the bucket along with chipped dirt, was found. I placed it on the bucket. In the southern area of the unit we found a striated river cobble, a pot sherd with a strap handle, and a deer tusk.

I piece plotted the artifacts and the finished excavating feature 4 areas. When sterile material was encountered we leveled it with a shovel down to 10 cm below level 4 and pitched the sterile material into the backfill. We worked relentlessly after 6 pm today. We are all hoping to be able to hit the living floor of the house by tomorrow. We should be able to do that.
Lesson 4  Field Notes example (2/2)

Sarah and I found a POINT!
The point was in UC Kc 125
1st LVL 2
FS#100
Found at the depth of 99.49 m

N 195.84
E 192.58

* color: dark grayish black

* Note of Nate Hendrick chart

The point is
39.2 cm

Point found by Sarah, which measures
3 cm x 2 cm

Was found just below the start of LVL 2 in the North 1/2 of the Unit.

Good drawings & Maps - Need coordinates, etc.

Images provided by the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. Sample page from Lauren Falk 2009 field notebook. Notes from excavations at Angel Mounds (12Vg1), a Mississippian site in Evansville, IN.
Codex depicting warriors

Codex depicting farmer

© Florentine Codex, Vol. 4, Folia 73L, The Field Museum Library
Codex depicting ruler with tribute

© Florentine Codex, Vol. 8, Folia 34L, The Field Museum Library
Codex depicting aztec woman weaving
© Florentine Codex, Vol. 10, Folia 8L, The Field Museum Library

TEACHER NOTE: focus on the image itself, not on the writing
Lesson 5
Mississippian Societies
Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will research one of four Mississippian archaeology sites using Internet resources. Students will gather information about the Mississippian sites, compare and contrast the four sites, and identify characteristics of Mississippian societies.

Illinois Learning Standards

18A: Students can compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions, and institutions.
18B: Students can understand the roles and interactions of individuals and groups in society.
18C: Students can understand how social systems form and develop over time.
16A: Students can apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation
16D: Students can understand Illinois, United States, and world social history.
5A: Students can locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.
15A: Students understand how different economic systems operate in the exchange, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:
- Conduct research using Internet sources.
- Record information about Mississippian site and Mississippian societies.
- Compare and contrast Mississippian archaeology sites.
- Identify the shared characteristics of Mississippian societies: central leader and a system of classes, strong exchange/trade networks, and monumental architecture which required a well—orchestrated labor force.

Background Information

In some communities, people began to give up some of their decision—making power to a small group or a single leader. This may be because the community had grown so large that village projects were more efficiently completed when managed by a strong central leader rather than a large, unwieldy group. Archaeologists know that a small group or individual was in charge of major decision making in the community when they find certain archaeological evidence:

Symbols of rank—larger homes located closer to resources and burials with luxury items like
jewelry and other status symbols, indicating that a class system had been established for those in positions of power.

*Exotic goods*—luxury items made of non-local materials brought from far away, indicating that a strong exchange network with other distant communities had been established by organized, centralized leadership.

*Monumental architecture*—large-scale building projects, such as roads, canals, and community centers, indicating a strong leader had been in charge of a large, well-orchestrated labor force.

From the early 900s until the early 1300s, Mississippian societies shared artistic, economic, and spiritual connections across what is now the southern and eastern United States. Organized by central leaders, these societies included Moundville in Alabama, Spiro in Oklahoma, Etowah in Georgia, and Cahokia in Illinois. All of these societies managed extensive trade networks for rare items and built large earthen mounds and ceremonial centers with grand architecture. Each community was distinct from the others politically, but all shared similar architecture (earthen mounds), artistic traditions (stone scepters, ceremonial axe heads, shell “masks” and vessels and jewelry bearing pinwheels or “cross-in-circle” motifs), and styles of leadership (centralized leaders and decision makers)—a suite of traits archaeologists call “Mississippian.”

---

**Day One: Archaeological Sites**

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Computer lab
  Pencils
  Journal
  *Mississippian Society* chart
  *Mississippian Society* Web site list
  *Journey to Cahokia: A Boy’s Visit to the Great Mound City* by Albert Lorenz

- **Advance Preparation**
  Arrange a time for students to use the computer lab. Check all Web sites on the *Mississippian Society* Web site list to ensure sources are still accessible. If the Web sites are no longer available, identify alternate reputable Internet sources. Make copies of the *Mississippian Society* chart and *Mississippian Society* Web site list (one per student).

- **Vocabulary**
  *Archaeology*—A science; the study of people in the distant past and more recent past using the things they made or left behind, like objects, food remains, architecture, art, and cemeteries; archaeologists ask research questions and look for answers
Archaeology Site – A place where there is evidence of past human activity, such as artifacts, architecture, modification of the natural landscape, etc.; some archaeology sites are small, containing only fragmented pieces of stone tools, and others are large with monumental architecture, such as the Mississippian sites featured in this lesson

Cahokia – Mississippian archaeological site located in Illinois

Etowah – Mississippian archaeological site located in Georgia

Mississippian – Communities living from the early 900s until the early 1300s with shared artistic, economic, and spiritual connections across what is now the southern and eastern United States which were organized by central leaders

Moundville – Mississippian archaeological site located in Alabama

Spiro – Mississippian archaeological site located in Oklahoma

Procedure
1. Explain that students will be studying Mississippian societies, a large network of people living across what is now the southern and eastern United States from the early 900s to the early 1300s. There is a Mississippian archaeology site located here in Illinois called “Cahokia”. Cahokia was the largest Mississippian town, as well as the largest community north of Mexico in the early Americas.

2. Show students the Journey to Cahokia book. In small groups, ask students to skim the text and illustrations depicting life at Cahokia. Next, assign each group a two-page illustration to carefully examine. Prompt students to look at the people, natural and modified landscape, structure, animals, clothing and body decoration, objects, etc. After students have made their observations, discuss what was observed and what was interesting.

3. Next, explain that students will be researching one of four Mississippian archaeology sites using the Internet. This activity may be completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Hand out one Mississippian Society chart and Web site list to each student. Assign at least one student/pair/group to research each of the four Mississippian sites: Moundville, Cahokia, Spiro, and Etowah. Have students write the name of the site they have been assigned to research at the top of their chart.

4. Before beginning research, review the Mississippian Society chart, explaining the types of information students will be gathering on the Internet:
   - Social Rankings: leadership, social classes, divisions between citizens, burial traditions, etc.
   - Trade Networks: trading, commerce, information about local and non-local materials, etc.
   - Architecture: information about structures and the uses of these constructions
   - Artistic Traditions: artistic objects, materials used for crafts, artistic patterns, etc.
   - Location: where the archaeological site is located, the natural environment, available resources, etc.

5. Next, lead students to the computer lab to begin their research and complete the chart. As students are researching, remind them to use only the Web sites listed under the archaeological site that they are researching and that they will need to visit multiple Web sites to complete the chart.
**TEACHER NOTE:** Completed Mississippian Society charts will be used in the second day of this lesson.

- **Variations**
  To differentiate instruction, decrease the number of columns in the Mississippian Society research chart. Simplify the headings to titles such as: Leaders, Buildings, Art, and Location. Have students who are interested in conducting additional research find the following information: 1) Map of site location and/or layout; current site managers (Who cares for the site today?), 2) Dates of site occupation, stages of rise and decline, 3) History of site’s discovery in modern times

- **Homework/Home Connection**
  The largest of these Mississippian sites, Cahokia, is located in the state of Illinois. You can visit the Cahokia archaeology site today. Based on students’ review of the Journey to Cahokia book and Internet research, have students write a journal entry describing what growing up in a town like Cahokia might have been like. Encourage students to think about chores or responsibilities, activities, animals, the landscape, etc.

---

**Day Two: Shared Characteristics**

---

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  Pencils
  Journal
  Butcher paper
  Mississippian Society chart (from Day One)

- **Advance Preparation**
  Create a large version of the Mississippian Society chart on a piece of butcher paper including all columns and categories.

- **Procedure**
  1. Have students review their findings from the previous day, using the Mississippian Society chart.
  2. As a whole group, complete a large version of the chart, filling out information for one Mississippian site at time.
  3. Discuss as a whole group: What was similar about life at these four Mississippian sites? What was unique or different? Guide the discussion so that students are able to identify shared characteristics of Mississippian societies related to the following categories: social network, trade network, architecture, artistic tradition. Highlight these shared characteristics on the Mississippian Societies chart.
● **Variations**
If appropriate, have students record their findings on the class chart or designate a classroom recorder/s to document the research (words and/or pictures) for each archaeological site.

● **Homework/Home Connection**
In journals, have students reflect on how life in Mississippian Societies may have been similar to and different from their own lives, providing specific examples about activities, shelter, food, celebrations, travel, art, responsibilities, interactions with others, etc.

● **Assessment**
Observe student participation and research in the computer lab and discussions, and assess individual completion of the Mississippian Societies chart. Ask students to identify some of the shared characteristics of Mississippian societies and provide examples of such characteristics from their research.

● **Additional Resources/Museum Connections**
Find more information about Mississippian society and archaeology sites in the Powerful Leaders gallery of the Ancient Americas exhibition at the Field Museum. Or, visit the Ancient Americas exhibition online and explore the Powerful Leaders gallery [fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/leaders.asp](http://fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/leaders.asp).

Use the Ancient Americas educator guide to supplement lesson content, for classroom activity ideas, curriculum connections to learning standards, and for field trip planning. Find the educator guide online at [fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf](http://fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf)

Harris Education Loan Center Materials
[fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan](http://fieldmuseum.org/harrisloan)

- Experience Boxes: *Native North American Games*
- Slide Sets: Indians of Illinois: *Woodland and Mississippian North American Indians*
### Mississippian archaeology site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Rankings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade Networks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic Traditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 5: Mississippian Societies Web site list

- **Moundville Archaeology Site**
  
  http://moundville.ua.edu/ (Click on “Archaeological Sketch”)
  
  http://www.encyclopediabalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h—1045
  
  http://research.ua.edu/2005/12/mighty—mysterious—moundville/
  
  http://archaeology.about.com/od/mterms/qt/moundville.htm
  
  http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/archaeology/sites/northamerica/moundville.html

- **Spiro Archaeology Site**
  
  http://www.okhistory.org/outreach/museums/spiromounds.html
  
  http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/S/SP012.html
  
  http://archaeology.about.com/od/archaeologicals4/a/spiro.htm
  
  http://www.ou.edu/cas/archsur/counties/leflore.htm
  

- **Etowah Archaeology Site**
  
  http://www.gastateparks.org/info/etowah
  
  http://www.archaeology.org/0811/abstracts/etowah.html
  
  http://ngeorgia.com/ang/Etowah_Indian_Mounds_State_Historic_Site
  
  http://archaeology.about.com/od/eterms/g/etowah.htm
  
  http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h—577

- **Cahokia Archaeology Site**
  
  http://www.cahokiamounds.com (Click on the “Learn tab” then “Video Features: watch the video Cahokia: City of the Sun; click on the “Explore tab” then “Archaeology of Cahokia Mounds”)
  
  
  http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/archaeology/sites/northamerica/cahokia.html
Lesson 6

Visiting the Field Museum
Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will prepare for a field trip to the Field Museum to reinforce and supplement content learned throughout the unit. At the Museum, students will visit the Ancient Americas exhibition to gather information and sketch artifacts from societies studied earlier. Students will then analyze the objects they observed at the Museum by thinking about how they relate to the themes of the entire unit that they have been studying.

Illinois Learning Standards

18A: Students can compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions, and institutions.
18B: Students can understand the roles and interactions of individuals and groups in society.
16A: Students can apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation
16D: Students can understand Illinois, United States, and world social history.
5A: Students can locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:
• Gather information about and record observations of museum collections.
• Identify connections between unit themes and museum collections.

Background Information

The Field Museum’s innovative exhibition, The Ancient Americas tells the story of human life in the Americas, from the arrival of small groups of hunter-gatherers, whose way of life survived into the 20th century, to the great but fragile empires of the Aztec and the Inca, which came to brutal ends with the arrival of Europeans. The exhibition’s galleries are organized in a uniquely revealing way: not in chronological order around isolated cultures, but around the diverse approaches people have developed to meet the challenges that human beings everywhere have faced for millennia and how different societies organized themselves in the past. The following galleries feature societies studied within this unit:

Ice Age
Find out how the earliest peoples arrived on the continent, and discover what it was like to live in an Ice Age world. Meet the ancient Clovis people and view the sophisticated spear points they created to hunt mammoths and other giant mammals.
Farming Villagers
Discover why and how agriculture altered the Americas as some groups began settling down to a farming lifestyle, such as Ancestral Puebloan villagers. Walk through a recreated pueblo home from the area now known as the southwestern United States, handle replicas of pots and baskets, grind “maize” in a stone metate, and learn about community life by piecing together a virtual vessel using virtual potsherds like those found by archaeologists.

Powerful Leaders
Investigate the pros and cons of living in ancient communities that gave up some decision making to powerful leaders. Scale models, giant photo murals, and animated flyover videos let you explore the monumental stone architecture and fabulous earthworks built by the Colombian, Hopewell, and Mississippian peoples—all under the direction of strong leaders.

Rulers and Citizens
Witness the birth of centralized government in five fascinating societies—Zapotec, Maya, Teotihuacan, Moche, and Wari—and find out how their rulers may have used religion, the economy, and the military to maintain their power. Spectacular pottery, religious artifacts, and ancient writings reveal the grandeur of these powerful societies.

Empire Builders
Imagine yourself in an Aztec marketplace and examine interactive maps of the Inca capital city of Cuzco to learn how these societies transformed themselves into vast empires ruling over many different ethnic groups.

Day One: Preparing for the Field Trip

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  - Overhead projector
  - Computer with Internet access connected to LCD projector (or computer lab)
  - *Field Trip* worksheet transparency

- **Advance Preparation**
  Arrange for a computer with LCD projector and Internet access in your classroom or plan a visit to the school computer lab.

- **Procedure**
  1. Review the societies studied over the course of this unit. Note that throughout the unit, students have been studying different societies while focusing on common themes. Review the following themes and recall examples of related learning:
• Culture and features of culture
• Common concerns, different responses
• Roles and responsibilities of individuals and their interactions as members of society
• Change and development of societies over time
• Social organization in the early Americas

2. Explain that as a culmination to their study of early societies of the Americas, students will be taking a field trip to The Field Museum to connect museum collections to these themes, while learning even more about the societies examined throughout the unit.

3. In preparation for the visit, ask students: What is a museum? What do you think you will see at The Field Museum related to societies of the Americas? As a whole group, explore the Ancient Americas exhibition Web site: fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas. Introduce students to the layout of the exhibition by clicking on the links under the header “About the Americas.” The exhibition is organized to reflect different forms of social organization in the early Americas each gallery displays information about several societies that share a type of social organization, many of which students have been learning about.

4. Explain that during their visit, students will choose objects to record information about and draw detailed sketches of. If materials and equipment are available, you may encourage students to take digital pictures of the objects instead of sketching. Display the Field Trip worksheet transparency and briefly talk through the information students will be collecting during their visit:
   • What does it (the object) look like?
   • Where was it collected? When?
   • What society created it?
   • What is it made of?
   • What do you think it was used for (is it for a daily task or decoration)?
   • Who do you think used it?
   • Why do you think it was important to the society or the individual who made it?

● Variations
   When appropriate, allow students to capture artifact images with digital cameras and type descriptions of what they observe. Also allow students to type answers to the Field Trip worksheet when appropriate.
Day Two: Visiting the Ancient Americas

● **Time Allotment**
  Varies, allow at least 45—60 minutes to complete activity in the exhibition

● **Materials**
  *Field Trip* worksheets
  Field Museum maps
  Pencils
  Writing surface (clipboard, notebook, stiff folder, etc.)
  Optional: digital or disposable cameras

● **Advance Preparation**
  Make copies of the *Field Trip* worksheets (at least 2 per student and 1 per chaperone). Discuss the field trip activity with chaperones prior to departure; organize students in small groups led by one chaperone. Make copies of Field Museum maps for chaperones; identify Ancient Americas exhibition and other important locations on maps. Field Museum maps may be downloaded at fieldmuseum.org/plan_visit/pdfs/FM_map.pdf.

● **Procedure**
  1. On the way to the Museum, remind students of the societies they have studied (Clovis, Hopewell, Maya, Ancestral Puebloan, Aztec, Mississippian). Have students write the names of the societies on their *Field Trip* worksheets so they can identify related objects to study in the exhibition. Explain that while at the Museum, students should choose two objects to record information about and draw sketches of; the objects must be from one of the societies studied in the unit. Note that sketches may be drawn on the back of the *Field Trip* worksheets. Students may also use descriptive phrases on their papers to enhance their sketches.
  2. Upon arrival to the Museum, go to the Ancient Americas exhibition on the Main Level. Once in the exhibition, students may begin to complete the activity. If necessary, assign students by group (those with a common chaperone) to choose objects from one or two particular societies/galleries. In addition to ensuring that students in the same group stay near their chaperone, this will also ensure that a variety of objects from the exhibit are selected. We suggest completing the activity before exploring other exhibitions in the Museum.

  **TEACHER NOTE:** *Field Trip* worksheets and sketches will be used in day three of this lesson.

● **Variations**
  Assign students to work in pairs at the museum. Allow students to focus on one object instead of two, or assign students a particular object(s) or gallery to focus on.
Day Three: Making Connections

- **Time Allotment**
  50 minutes

- **Materials**
  *Field Trip* worksheets
  Large slips of paper
  Markers
  Tape

- **Advanced Preparation**
  Using the large slips of paper, create “headings” (large signs) of each of the unit themes listed in Day One. Post the headings in the classroom where there will be plenty of space for students to hang related *Field Trip* worksheets and sketches nearby.

- **Procedure**
  1. Recall the societies studied during this unit: Clovis, Hopewell, Maya, Ancestral Puebloan, Aztec, Mississippian. Did students learn anything new about the societies during their visit to the Museum? What was interesting? Surprising? How did they learn this new information?
  2. Direct students’ attention to the headings posted around the classroom. Choose one or two student sketches from the Museum visit and ask students to think about what headings the sketches relate to. Be sure to review some of the written information gathered as well. Guide students in make connections between the artifacts examined and the themes. When students have determined which heading the sketch is most closely representative of, tape that sketch beneath the heading.
  3. Once all students have decided where to hang their sketches, review the headings and related sketches with the class. What kinds of artifacts were representative of different headings? Were there artifacts that could have fit with multiple headings? Were there any artifacts that didn’t fit with any of the themes?
  4. After reviewing as a whole group, have students write two to three paragraphs explaining how the artifacts they sketched connected to at least one of the themes.

- **Variations**
  Modify the assignment by having students explain what features of culture their artifact demonstrates (similar to Lesson One) in their written responses rather than what overarching unit theme it connects most strongly with. Allow students to partner up, allowing one person to help the other write down his or her ideas if necessary.

- **Assessment**
  Review student field trip worksheets and sketches as well as their explanations (written and in class discussion) for connecting artifacts with specific themes.
• **Additional Resources/Museum Connections**
  Visit the [Ancient Americas](https://fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas) exhibition website at fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas to learn more about how The Field’s exhibition about early societies of the Americas is organized and what information is included.

  Use the [Ancient Americas](https://fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf) educator guide to supplement lesson content, for classroom activity ideas, curriculum connections to learning standards, and for field trip planning. Find the educator guide online at fieldmuseum.org/education/guides/aaguide.pdf
Artifact: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does it (the artifact) look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where was it collected? When?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What society created it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is it made of?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think it was used for (is it for a daily task or for decoration)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you think used it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think it was important to the society or the individual who made it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Draw a detailed sketch of the artifact on the back of this page.
1 Definition of “ethnocentrism” adapted from Barger, Ken (2004) [www.iupui.edu/anthkb/ethnocent.htm](http://www.iupui.edu/anthkb/ethnocent.htm)


Early Societies of the Americas

Museums And Public Schools

GRADE 7

The Field Museum