

**ELA: Grade 7, Lesson 1, Early American Civilizations**

**Lesson Focus:** Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations

**Lesson Objective:** Students will be able to explain the impact of geographical features on the development of the early civilizations and how their lives changed once they began to settle in one area.

**TN Standards:** 7.RI.KID.1, 7.RI.CS.4

**Teacher Materials:**

- Grade 7, Lesson 1 Teacher Packet printed (will hold up images for students to see)

**Student Materials:**

- Piece of paper
- Pencil or pen

Teacher Do	Student Do
<p><b><u>Opening</u></b></p> <p><b>Hello! Welcome to Tennessee's At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today's lesson is for all our 7th graders out there, though all children are welcome to tune in. This lesson is the first in our series.</b></p> <p><b>My name is ____ and I'm a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools! I'm so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</b></p> <p><b>Today we will be learning about Early American Civilizations! Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Something to write with and a surface to write on</li><li>• A piece of paper</li></ul> <p><b>Ok, let's begin!</b></p>	<p>Student watches/listens</p>
<p><b><u>Intro</u></b> [Ask students the following]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Think about what you've learned in school about early civilizations. This was a really long time ago in history, right? We're talking hundreds of thousands of years ago!</b></li><li>• <b>How do you think the earliest people from all over the world ended up where they settled? Why did they choose to settle there? I wonder how their lives changed once they settled?</b></li></ul>	<p>Student interacts with teacher's questions as posed. Student will access prior knowledge about early civilizations.</p>

**Teacher Model**

**I'm going to read the first few pages of the text we will use in our lesson series. It's called "The Rise of Early American Civilizations."**

**I want you to listen carefully as I read and pay attention to the *paths* early Americans took along the way. Essentially, how did they land where they landed?**

Teacher read aloud:

**Our understanding of the history of humans living and working together begins in Africa more than a million years ago. Over time, humans began to migrate and eventually inhabited six continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, and the two Americas.**

- **How long ago can we go back and try to understand the history of humans living and working together? [Pause]. You're right, more than a million years ago! That's a very long time. Early Americans moved from Africa into Europe and Asia, and from there some people moved into Australia. Others moved south through North and South America. [ Show image provided map of the Americas)**

Teacher read aloud:

**For many thousands of years, early hunter-gatherers traveled from place to place. They fished, hunted animals, and gathered wild plants. Between 12,000 and 5000 BCE, some groups of people established more permanent villages. Often, these village-based societies relied on farming, raising their own crops for food. Some learned to domesticate animals. Over time, animals were used for more than food in some regions. They helped people plow and fertilize the soil. They supplied milk and provided wool for clothes.**

- **What do you think it means that some people learned to domesticate animals? [Pause] Yes, it means to raise and train animals to live around humans.**
- **How did domesticated animals help people? [Pause] They helped them plow and fertilize the soil so they could farm. They also supplied milk and provided wool for clothes. That sounds like the way many people still use animals today.**

Students listen to read aloud and respond to posed questions. Some require students to jot down answers on their paper.

Teacher read aloud:

**As people settled down to farm, their lives changed. People learned to irrigate fields. They developed ways to store food. Populations grew. Between 4000 and 2000 BCE, towns and villages in various places developed into cities. People constructed buildings and worshipped gods. They made pottery and wove cloth. The city-dwellers chose leaders and developed laws. Some people governed and others served. Civilizations were born.**

**Civilizations developed from Africa to the Americas. The earliest civilizations arose in fertile river valleys in Africa and Asia. These civilizations flourished along the banks of the Nile, the Indus, the Yellow, the Tigris, and the Euphrates Rivers. By 1000 BCE, new civilizations arose in the Americas. These early American civilizations are called pre-Columbian civilizations. This is because they developed long before Christopher Columbus's first voyage to the Americas in 1492. Three of these pre-Columbian civilizations were the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca.**

- **So, one of the big questions we're trying to answer today is about the geographical features (or characteristics of the earth's surface in a certain place) and how they impacted the way the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations developed. Some geographical features you might think of are mountains and rivers, but they are also the types of plants and animals living in the same place.**
- **Grab your paper and take a few minutes to jot down some geographical features that you know of. You can add to my list! [Pause]. I added to my list too...I added ponds, lakes, deserts, valleys, and forests. I'd love to see what you listed too.**

Teacher read aloud:

**As people settled down to farm, their lives changed. People learned to irrigate fields. They developed ways to store food. Populations grew. Between 4000 and 2000 BCE, towns and villages in various places developed into cities. People constructed buildings and worshipped gods. They made pottery and wove cloth. The city-dwellers chose leaders and developed laws. Some people governed and others served. Civilizations were born.**

- **Let's reread this sentence: "People learned to irrigate fields." What do you think the word *irrigate* means?**

<p>[Pause]. So, I'm thinking that if these people are now in one place and setting up farming, they need ways to regularly supply water to their fields so they thrive and produce good crops. Like you, I think the word irrigate means to supply water to crops.</p> <p>Teacher read aloud:  <b>Civilizations Develop from Africa to the Americas:</b>  The earliest civilizations arose in fertile river valleys in Africa and Asia. These civilizations flourished along the banks of the Nile, the Indus, the Yellow, the Tigris, and the Euphrates Rivers. By 1000 BCE, new civilizations arose in the Americas. These early American civilizations are called pre-Columbian civilizations. This is because they developed long before Christopher Columbus's first voyage to the Americas in 1492. Three of these pre-Columbian civilizations were the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What major geographical feature are we focusing on here? [Pause] Yes, rivers.</li> <li>• Let's stop for just a minute - I'd like for you to jot down why civilizations would choose to settle along the banks of rivers. [Pause] Good job! Rivers provided a source of drinking water and a method of transportation. River valleys had fertile soil for growing crops. Like lots of other early civilizations, the Maya, Aztec, and Inca knew how important rivers and fertile soil were to their survival.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Guided Practice</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good job today! I want you to be prepared for our next lesson, so I'd like you to draw a three-column chart that looks like this (show your example, one provided below). You are going to head each column with the three early American Civilizations that we learned about today [fill your example with Maya, Aztec, and Inca and show students]. Make sure to keep it close by for our next lesson.</li> <li>• To get you ready for the next step in today's lesson, I'd like for you to create a list with me. Grab your paper and let's get started. [Teacher charts the following think aloud]. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Let's think about what kind of life the earliest people in the Americas lead. They were</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>To prep for upcoming lessons, students draw a 3-column chart and head each column: Maya, Aztec, and Inca.</p> <p>Students chart with teacher during guided practice think-aloud.</p>

<p><b>hunters-gatherers and traveled from place to place.</b> [Chart: hunter-gatherers and traveled].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Next, we learned these hunter-gatherers eventually settled down to farm.</b> [Chart: settled to farm].</li> <li>○ <b>This meant that they had to think about their food differently: they grew their own crops, developed irrigation systems, and domesticated animals.</b> [Chart: grew and irrigated crops, domesticated animals, stored food].</li> <li>○ <b>After a while, civilizations were born and grew! They developed cities, governments, made pottery, constructed building, and practiced religions.</b> [Chart: cities, governments, pottery, buildings, religion].</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Independent Practice</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>At this point in our reading, we’ve learned that many thousands of years ago hunter-gatherers chose to settle in one area versus traveling from place to place. I’d like for you to take some time and write a paragraph or two explaining how their lives changed. Remember, many of the ways the early civilizations lived seemed “modern” to the way they lived before they settled down.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Student creates list of talking points and a brief summary.</p>
<p><b><u>Closing</u></b></p> <p><b>I enjoyed learning about Early American Civilizations with you today! Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you for lesson 2 in Tennessee’s At Home Learning Series! Good-bye and have a great day!</b></p>	

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