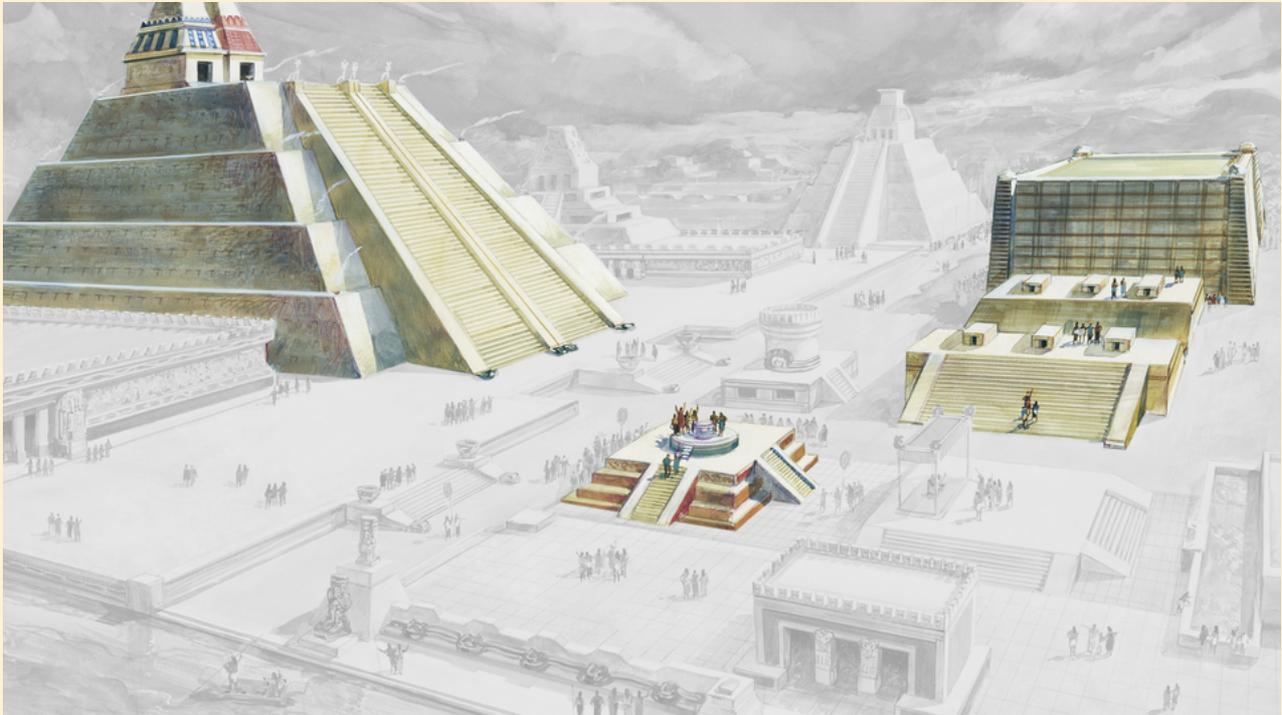


Miniclips: The Aztec Empire

# The Aztec Empire



# About this video



MINICLIPS: THE AZTEC EMPIRE

## The Aztec Empire

Leaving their original homeland sometime in the 1100s, the Aztecs were drawn by a spiritual sign to a marshy swampland on Lake Texcoco. But how did the Aztecs build their extraordinary city of Tenochtitlán on a swamp?

### Essential question:

How did the Aztec Empire begin and how did they build it on a swamp?

### Key vocabulary:

Aztec Empire

Lake Texcoco

Tenochtitlán

swamp

chinampas

canal

causeway

Mesoamerica

Valley of Mexico

Huitzilopochtli

### Learning intention:

Learn about the origins of the Aztec Empire, their journey to Tenochtitlán, and how they constructed their capital.

# Before watching

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## Activating prior knowledge

Ask students if they know of any societies or civilizations that existed once upon a time but are no longer around.

Use the following prompts to guide the discussion:

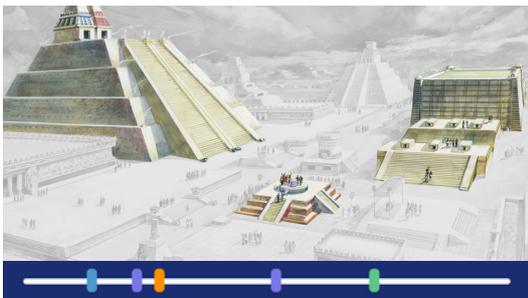
- If so, why do they think these civilizations didn't survive?
- Can they name any of these civilizations?
- How do we know they existed (e.g. ruins, monuments, artefacts, art)?
- Do they think these civilizations were important and influenced the wider world even after they ended?

Students may mention ancient Egypt, Rome, or Greece, or the Aztec Empire.

# Whilst watching

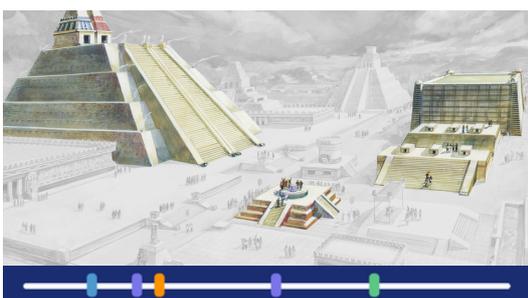
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## Watching as a class



Watch the interactive video as a class and ask students to respond to the prompts throughout the interactive.

## Watching individually



Have students watch the interactive created for immediate feedback and solo viewing.

# After watching

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Below are two activities to extend students' learning and check for understanding.

## Activity 1: Aztec journey

Students will explore the Aztec civilization's migration and settlement in a new land.

- As a class, discuss the challenges the Aztecs faced during their search for a new home and the difficulties they encountered when other tribes refused to let them join. Focus on how they eventually found marshland to settle on and were guided by a divine sign to stay.
- Provide each student with the *Aztec Journey Map* (or provide access to a globe).
- Distribute markers or pushpins and have students mark on the map or globe where the Aztecs began their journey and their final settlement (Tenochtitlán). Students may need to conduct additional research to accurately identify the locations for this journey.
- Ask students to use a colored pencil or string to connect the two locations, representing the journey of the Aztec people.
- Students can write a short summary of the journey, what started it, their experiences along the way, and what happened when they arrived at their final destination.

### Support:

Provide students with a simplified map with pre-marked locations. Students could also draw drawings to represent the journey instead of writing.



### Extension:

Students could research and add additional significant locations or obstacles the Aztecs encountered during their journey.

They could also write a short narrative or diary entry describing the challenges faced by the Aztecs and how they overcame them from the perspective of someone who would have experienced the journey.



## Activity 2: Building a chinampa

Students will research, design, and construct their own chinampa based on the design of those used during the Aztec Empire.

- Students are to use books and ICT to research chinampas to learn about their purpose, their structure and appearance, the crops that were grown on them, and how the Aztecs farmed them successfully.
- Students are to design and construct their own chinampa using their research to guide them. They can use:
  - Colored paper to represent the soil, water, and raised beds of the chinampas.
  - Markers and pencils to color in plants and other features.
  - Popsicle sticks to create the wooden frames around the raised beds.
  - Small rocks or pebbles to put in the water channels to represent the rocks used to stabilize the chinampa and control water flow.
  - Glue or tape
  - Scissors
- Once students have finished their construction, they are to label their chinampa identifying the key elements and their purposes.
- Have students display them around the classroom and conduct a 'gallery walk' to allow the class to browse others' creations.

### Support:

Provide students with a labeled diagram of a chinampa to help them understand its physical structure and purpose.



### Extension:

Students could research how the chinampas have influenced the agricultural industry post-Aztec Empire until today. They could create a short presentation or summary of their findings.



## Conclusion

Ask students to respond to the essential question posed at the beginning of the lesson.

**How did the Aztec Empire begin and how did they build it on a swamp?**

Ask if they still have any questions about the content presented in the video. Discuss and answer these questions as a class.