

# 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies - Mr. Bruning



***Here comes summer!*** I hope you have a blast – enjoying the neighborhood, going to the beach, maybe even heading off on a family vacation. While you’re relaxing, here’s a chance to get a head start on social studies for the fall. Our first lessons will be on native cultures – the amazing societies built by ancient people in South and Central America. These folks were something else! Great farmers, builders, architects – and, yup -- warriors, too. Take a little time to look at the pictures and documents below. Get ready to roll in social studies by completing the easy exercises following each. Explore the past. It’s the way we understand the present and look toward the future. I can’t wait to meet everyone when school begins again. Meantime – have fun, be safe, and –always – show your Riverton pride. ***See you in September!***

## **Document 1**

*Between 300 and 1500, three advanced civilizations developed in Central and South America. Ruins from the Mayan civilization remain even today in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. The Aztecs, who conquered most of Mexico, built a highly-developed civilization in the 1400’s. At the same time, the Incas were building an empire in Peru.*



Mayan architecture: Temple at Tikal, Guatemala

What do you think of the temple? What makes it different than anything you've seen? What hints does the design give about Mayan culture? (Write 3-5 solid sentences.)

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## Document 2

*When he arrived in 1519, the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés described the magnificent Aztec of Tenochtitlán with these words:*

*"The city has many squares where markets are held and trading is carried on. There is one square...where there are daily more than 60,000 souls, buying and selling, and where are found all the kinds of merchandise produced in these countries, including food products, jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, zinc, bones, shells, and feathers."*

Wow. Just think of a marketplace that sold all the goods Cortes describes – not exactly Costco or Target, right? If you time-traveled back to ancient days, what would you buy? Why? (Bang out three su-perb sentences.)

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### Document 3

*This description of farming in the Incan empire in 1539 was provided by Garcilazo de la Vega, a son of an Incan princess and a Spanish explorer.*

*“As soon as the Incan ruler had conquered any kingdom and set up his government, he ordered that the farmland used to grow corn be extended. For this purpose, he ordered irrigation channels to be constructed. The engineers showed great cleverness and skill in supplying water for the crops, since only scattered sections of the land could grow corn. For this reason, they endeavored to increase its fertility as much as possible.”*

Here’s a chance to show you are super-duper wordsmiths. Define:

Irrigation:

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Channel:

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Fertility:

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## Document 4

*These photos of the ruins of Machu Picchu provide evidence of the superior building design and farming techniques of the Inca in Peru.*



Put your imagination in high gear and make a few “educated” guesses: Why did these early architects and builders establish the Machu Picchu settlement so high in the Andes Mountains? It took a lot of extra work. What were the advantages? What do you think they had in mind? Agriculture? Security? Love of nature? (Five sentences, please, Imagineers!)

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**Last one! You're doing great!**

**Document 5**

*The Aztecs had no professional army but they had professional military officers. When a boy was born his umbilical cord was cut off and dried and then buried on a battle field signifying that his life would be dedicated to warfare. Every able-bodied boy was trained to fight. Soldiers were ordinary people. A vital part of everyday life for the Aztecs was warfare. All able body men were trained to be warriors. In readiness for adult life boys learned about fighting and weapons. To fight in battle was considered a duty and an honor. Warriors taught boys how to take a prisoner captive. A boy became a man after he captured his first prisoner.*

Holy cow! What's this about? As soon as a boy is born, parents cut the umbilical cord – look the word up! – and bury it in the battlefield to show that one day this little fellow will fight for his people. We don't do things like that in modern society. But times were different then. Imagine yourself a parent in Aztec society. Would you go along with the system? Would you be frightened for your child? What questions would you ask of the leaders insisting that you dedicate a child to military service? (Let's wrap it up with seven more sensational sentences!)

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