

Aztec, Incas & Mayans**Tenochtitlan**

How did the Aztecs choose to settle and build the city of Tenochtitlan? One **legend**¹ explains this story:

Before the vast empire of the Aztecs existed, a smaller group of hunter-gatherer natives were moving from place to place. These people were a tribe called the Mexica. They believed a story passed down from their ancestors. This story said they would not have to keep roaming the wilderness forever. A long time ago, a god had come to one of their wise leaders and said:

“One day, your people will **establish**² a great civilization. Be patient but be aware. One day you will arrive at a marsh. One among your leaders will see an eagle perched on the top of a cactus that grows from a rock. This is where you will settle and build your city.”

Many years later a leader of the Mexica people, Tenoch, brought his people to the shore of Lake Texcoco. He had a vision from the god Huitzilopochtli. The vision told him that he had arrived at the place of the future Mexica civilization. The cactus and rock and eagle appeared before him. Tenoch knew that he should stay. The Mexica later became known as the Aztec.

The story of Tenochtitlan may or may not be true. However, the **marshy**³ shore of Lake Texcoco was the perfect place to begin building an empire. Water, food, and other resources helped the Mexica people fulfill all of their needs.

¹ **legend** – an old story, usually passed down over time

² **establish** – to start or to make for the first time

³ **marshy** – wet and swampy

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How would the Aztecs know where to build their city?
 - a. They would see a crow sitting on a cactus.
 - b. They would see an eagle sitting in a marsh.
 - c. They would see an eagle perched on a cactus that grows from a rock.
 - d. They would build it in the wilderness.

2. Reread paragraph two. What do you think **roaming** means?
 - a. It means to live with someone.
 - b. It means to move from place to place.
 - c. It means to visit.
 - d. It means to live there.

3. In this passage, which of the following events happened first?
 - a. The Aztecs built the city of Tenochtitlan.
 - b. Tenoch saw the eagle appear before him.
 - c. Tenoch brought his people to the shores of Lake Texcoco.
 - d. A god came to a wise leader and told him about the legend.

4. What made the marshy shore of Lake Texcoco a good place to build Tenochtitlan?
 - a. It had excellent resources.
 - b. It was in the desert.
 - c. It was not a good place to build a city.
 - d. There were a lot of animals around.

5. What was the name of the leader of the Mexica people who lead them to the site where Tenochtitlan would be built?
 - a. Moctezuma
 - b. Itzcoatl
 - c. Tenoch
 - d. Nahuatl

6. What role did the gods of the Aztecs play in the location and building of Tenochtitlan?

7. Before the Mexica built the city of Tenochtitlan where did they live?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The location of Tenochtitlan was the perfect place to begin building a new empire _____ there was water, food and other resources available.

- a. although
- b. last
- c. so
- d. because

9. Answer the following question based on the sentence below.

The Aztec people were guided to the location of their new city, on the shore of Lake Texcoco, by their gods so they could establish a great civilization.

Who? Aztec people

(were) What? _____

Where? _____

(by) Whom? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** legend: an old story, usually passed down over time.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 740**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic**Passage Summary:** The Aztec people found the location for their permanent city, Tenochtitlan, with the help of their god, Huitzilopochtli.

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6. What role did the gods of the Aztecs play in the location and building of Tenochtitlan?

Suggested answer: A god in the early days of the Aztecs predicted the founding of Tenochtitlan and the signs. The god Huitzilopochtli gave Tenoch the vision that told him he was in the right place.

7. Before the Mexica built the city of Tenochtitlan where did they live?

Suggested answer: Before the Mexica built Tenochtitlan they were hunter gatherers and moved from place to place.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The location of Tenochtitlan was the perfect place to begin building a new empire _____ there was water, food and other resources available.

- a. although
- b. last
- c. so
- d. **because**

9. Answer the following question based on the sentence below.

The Aztec people were guided to the location of their new city, on the shore of Lake Texcoco, by their gods so they could establish a great civilization.

Who? Aztec people

(were) What? **guided to the location of their new city**

Where? **the shore of Lake Texcoco**

(by) Whom? **their gods**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** legend: an old story, usually passed down over time.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.