**How did use and control over water affect the expansion of agriculture, trade, and empire under the Aztecs?**

Topic: Aztec Empire, water

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###### History Standards:

###### 7.7 Students compare and contrast the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Meso-American and Andean civilizations.

1. Study the locations, landforms, and climates of Mexico, Central America, and South America and their effects on Mayan, Aztec, and Incan economies, trade, and development of urban societies.

**CCSS Standards: Reading, Grade 7**

1. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts

**Guiding Question:**

**How did use and control over water affect the expansion of agriculture, trade, and empire under the Aztecs?**

**Overview of Lesson:**

1. As a whole class the teacher leads students in discussion of the source, “Tenochtitlan Marketplace.” Students will describe what they see and begin to develop a response to the lesson question using evidence from the source to support their answer. Students probably do not have enough background knowledge to answer the question using the source, but teachers can facilitate a discussion about what students see and what they think the role of water is in the image.
2. Teachers discuss that the Aztecs built their city, Tenochtitlan, in the middle of Lake Texcoco and highlight that they used the water from the lake to support the development of agriculture for food. Teachers will want to emphasize to points: that Aztec agriculture was so successful that it created food surpluses; and that food surpluses created opportunities for trade, which led to Tenochtitlan becoming an important city in Mesoamerica. In addition, the location of the city allowed the Aztecs to defend themselves from outside intruders. Teachers will ask students to get into groups of two to read the Education in the Environment Initiative article, “Tenochtitlan: An Ancient Aztec Urban Society.” Teachers may want to highlight that the Aztecs were not at all ancient, but instead that their city was a marvel with more people than most European cities at the time, with pyramids that rivaled the ones in Egypt, and the center of the expanding Aztec empire. In partners, each student will read the text silently with a specific focus. Student 1 will highlight aspects of the text that examine the role of water in the development of agriculture. Student 2 will highlight aspects of the text that will examine the role of water in supporting trade. Once each student reads and highlights the document, they will share a summary of their excerpts with their partner. The teacher will bring the class together to summarize the text as a whole.
3. The teacher will then show the video on chinapas found at the Youtube address below. Teachers will guide students to consider the following questions as they watch the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ay78bCwXe8>

* + What were chinampas?
	+ How were chinampas built?
	+ Why did the Aztecs use this method to farm?
	+ How did the Aztecs use and control water to affect the development of agriculture?
1. Students will then discuss the items traded in Tenochtitlan that resulted from the agricultural abundance created by chinampas. First, students will read an excerpt from Bernal Diaz de Castillo describing the great market at Tenochtitlan. Students will then gather into groups and each get a key to the Aztec tribute records and a tribute record from one of the provinces that the Aztecs traded with. Each group will discuss the following questions:
	* What tribute did this province give to the Aztecs?
	* What types of items were there that were agricultural?
	* What items were extracted products?
	* What did the Aztecs do with these items?
	* How did the Aztecs benefit from this trade?
2. The teacher will then call the group back together to review the tribute codices. As a whole class or in groups, students will develop a response to the lesson question using evidence from their sources. Students can fill in the chart below.

**Sources:**

\*Visual source: Diego Rivera’s mural “Tenochtitlan Marketplace” found at:

<http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/ask-us/what-about-tlatelolco>

\*Article: Education in the Environment Initiative article, “Tenochtitlan: An Ancient Aztec Urban Society.”

\*Video: “Aztecs Chinampas Tenochtitlan” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ay78bCwXe8>

\*Primary source: Bernal Diaz de Castillo, “True History of the Conquest of New Spain” 16th Century.

\*Aztec Tribute Key and Codices from Education in the Environment Initiative, “Sun Gods and Jaguar Kings,” pp.20-28.

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Primary Source:

Bernal Diaz de Castillo was a Spanish explorer and soldier who wrote a memoir about this time in what is today Mexico. He described his first encounter with the Aztecs and his first memories of Tenochtitlan’s marketplace.

*Look at his great city and all the other cities standing in the water, and the many others on the lands round the lake…we turned back to look at the great market place and the crowds of people that were in it, some buying and others selling…*

1. How was Tenochtitlan organized?
2. What was the relationship of water to the city?

*…Where more than sixty thousand people come…to buy and sell, and where every kind of merchandise produced in these lands is found; provisions* [daily necessities] *as well as ornaments* [luxuries] *of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, stones, shells, hones, and feathers. They also sell lime, hewn* [cut or carved] *and unhewn stone, adobe bricks, tiles, and cut and uncut woods of various kinds. There is a street where they sell game and birds of every species found in this land: partridges and quails, wild ducks…The sell rabbits and hares, and stags and small gelded dogs which they breed for eating.*

1. What types of items does Bernal Diaz de Castillo describe can be found at the marketplace?
2. What items were for everyday necessity?
3. What items were luxury items?
4. What conclusions can you make about the Aztec empire and how successful they were at trade based on this source?

Use at least 3 of the sources you analyzed to answer the lesson question:

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| **Reason** | **Evidence** | **Explanation** |
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