

## Indigenous Cultures

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about the indigenous cultures of the Americas.

### Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

5.2.1 Describe the origins, characteristics, and expansion of indigenous cultures and groups that existed in the Americas prior to European exploration

### Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Constructed Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Scoring Notes](#)
- [Printable Student Version](#)

### Task Directions

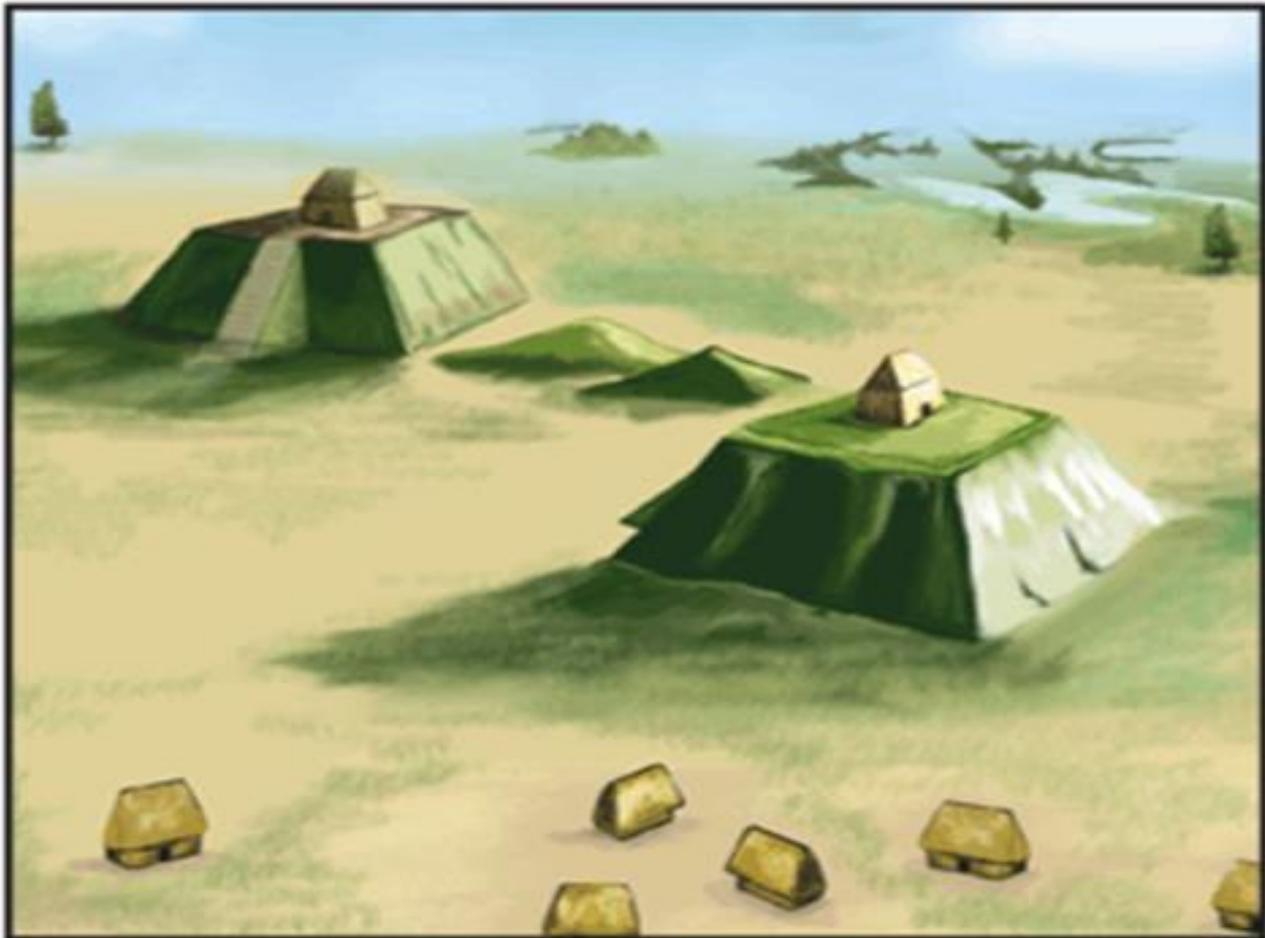
- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 5.

**Primary and Authentic Sources**

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about indigenous cultures. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 5 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 9.

**Source 1:** Indigenous Mounds in the Mississippian Culture

The Mississippian Mound civilizations developed permanent settlements. They built structures around a central plaza that served as the center of their settlement



**Source 2:** Adapted from *Chronicles of the Incas* (1540) By Pedro de Cieza de Leon

At the beginning of the new year, the rulers of each village came to Cuzco, the capital city. They bring their quipus, which told how many births and deaths there had been during the year. In this way the Inca and the governors knew which of the Indians were poor, . . . whether they were able to pay their taxes, and how many men they could count on in the event of war, and other important things. The Incas took care to see that justice was done. So much so that nobody tried to commit a crime or theft...

As this kingdom was so huge, in each of the many villages there were many storehouses filled with supplies and other needful things. In times of war, when the armies went they drew upon the contents of these storehouses, ...Then the storehouses were filled up once more with the taxes paid the Inca. If there came a weak year, the storehouses were opened and the villages were lent what they needed in the way of supplies. Then, in a year of wealth, they paid back all they had received. No one who was lazy or tried to live by the work of others. Everyone had to work. On certain days each lord went to his lands and took the plow in hand and farmed. Even the Inca emperors did this to set an example. If a citizen had his health, he worked and wanted for nothing. If he was ill, he received what he needed from the storehouses. No rich man could dress himself in more fancy clothes than the poor. Except the rulers and the headmen, who, to maintain their dignity, were allowed great freedom.

Source 3: American Indian Cultural Groups

## American Indian Cultural Groups



**Source 4:** Pictures of Indigenous Peoples

**Native Americans of South America (1542)**

The images show Aztec dress from a book, *Codex Mendoza*. This book contains a history of the Aztec people, their rulers, battles, and daily life.



**Native American of North America (1645)**

This work is thought to be the earliest engraved portrait made from of a Native American. Drawn and engraved by the printmaker Wenceslaus Hollar, it depicts a twenty-three-year-old Algonquian Indian of Virginia who visited London in 1645.



**Item 1: Multiple Choice**

Which statement **best** describes a conclusion that can be made about the map in Source 3?

- A. Indigenous people lived mostly on rivers for trade with other cultures.
- B. Indigenous people settled across many landscapes in the Americas.
- C. Indigenous people first lived in South America, but slowly migrated north.
- D. Indigenous people fought to control for territory in all regions.

**Item 2: Multiple Choice**

Based on Source 2, which statement **best** describes the reason for the Inca having to wear the same clothes, except for rulers and headmen?

- A. They had limited resources to produce cloth and dyes.
- B. Their clothing needed to be functional for work rather than for style.
- C. They did not see any difference in classes, and all people were considered equal.
- D. They had a class system where some were higher than most of the population.

**Item 3: Multiple Choice**

Based on Source 1, why did indigenous people in both North America and South America create mounds and large temples?

- A. to represent the sun god
- B. to have a place to pay their taxes
- C. to track the solar and lunar eclipses
- D. to bury important members of their settlements

**Item 4: Multiple Choice**

What is the **main** reason that various cultures of Native Americans had different types of homes?

- A. Homes were designed to protect families from wild animals.
- B. The number of people was different from tribe to tribe.
- C. Homes were built from natural resources that were found nearby.
- D. Native Americans built their homes to look like the homes of European settlers.

**Item 5: Multiple Choice**

Based on Source 4, what similarities can be drawn from indigenous peoples of the Americas?

- A. Many indigenous people developed a system of trade and law.
- B. Indigenous people depended on nature for their food and dress.
- C. Indigenous people travelled across many lands for exploration.
- D. Indigenous people across the continents did not like to wear headdresses.

**Item 6: Technology-Enhanced Item**

Consider the different elements of a civilization. What were some of the characteristics of the Indigenous cultures of the Americas?

Record each element of civilization from the list below into the correct column in the chart. Some options may be used more than once. All options will be used.

Society was divided into different classes of people	Established permanent settlements	Built earthen mounds around a central plaza
Developed record-keeping systems	Built monumental structures	Established trade networks

North American Indigenous Cultures	Central and South American Indigenous Cultures

**Correct Answers:**

North American Indigenous Cultures	Central and South American Indigenous Cultures
Established trade networks Built earthen mounds around a central plaza Established permanent settlements	Established permanent settlements Built monumental structures Developed record-keeping systems Established trade networks Society was divided into different classes of people Built earthen mounds around a central plaza

**Item 7: Multiple Select**

Based on Source 2, why was it important for the Inca to keep records? Select the **two** correct answers.

- A. to make sure they sent the right people to prison
- B. to keep track of the number of people who were born and died each year
- C. to remember who lived in different parts of the empire
- D. to know who paid their taxes or not
- E. to keep track of who was in school

**Item 8: Multiple Select**

Based on Sources 1 and 2, why were the Native Americans so influential to the development and growth of the Americas? Select the **two** correct answers.

- A. They helped to establish the names of states.
- B. They played a key role in helping Europeans settle.
- C. They helped to create systems of trade and barter within early society.
- D. They developed calendars to chart the stars for water navigation.
- E. They quickly married the Europeans and began a new culture that flourished.

**Item 9: Constructed Response**

Using the sources and your knowledge of indigenous peoples, describe two ways that the indigenous cultures are considered to be a civilization.

Scoring Information	
Score Points	Description
2	Student's response correctly identifies two ways that indigenous cultures are considered to be a civilization.
1	Student's response correctly identifies one way that indigenous cultures are considered to be a civilization.
0	Student's response is blank, does not identify ways that indigenous cultures are considered to be a civilization.

**Scoring Notes:**

- Indigenous cultures used mounds as ceremonial structures where they worshipped gods, held other religious ceremonies, and became the center of their civilizations.
- Indigenous peoples created ways to track births and deaths and record census information of the community. Indigenous tribes can be considered a civilization because record-keeping shows an organized, permanent settlement.
- Indigenous peoples created systems to administer justice to people who broke laws. This aspect can be considered a characteristic of a civilization since the creation of a legal system helps to maintain peace in a society.
- Indigenous peoples kept records of storehouse inventory. The use of the storehouse indicates that the indigenous peoples were able to create a surplus.
- Indigenous peoples created systems to assure that people had jobs. Indigenous peoples began to engage in specialization to make their society more efficient. As people began to specialize, people would increase in skill in their job which helped to advance the society.
- Indigenous cultures used physical features to establish natural boundaries between each other and to protect themselves from other groups.
- Accept other reasonable responses.

**Printable  
Student Version**

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