

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Olmec Civilization Classwork

Directions: With a clock partner, work together to read, annotate, and answer the questions in complete sentences.

Annotation Expectations:

- Underline key vocabulary terms that we covered in class.
- Highlight key details (who, what, where, when, how)
- Identify main ideas via one-sentence statements for each **section**.

The Olmec

Farming was a key advance for early societies in the Americas. In time, some farming communities in the Americas grew enough surplus, or extra, food to support large populations, and the first cities emerged.

Cities marked the rise of the first civilization in the Americas. A civilization is a society—or a people sharing a language, territory, and economy—that has certain basic features. Among these are cities, an organized government, different social classes, a complex religion, and some method of record keeping.

The earliest known civilization in the Americas was that of the Olmec in present-day Mexico. The Olmec lived in the lowlands along the Gulf of Mexico about 3,500 years ago. Scientists have found huge stone heads carved by the Olmec. Some were 10 feet tall and weighed several tons. Smaller figures showed creatures that were part human and part animal. Olmec farmers supplied nearby cities with food. There, powerful leaders built stone temples. The Olmec left few written records, but they did make many advances. They studied the stars and developed a calendar to predict the change of seasons and mark the passage of time.

1. Write a one-sentence main idea summary based on the section about the Olmec civilization.

2. What features of Olmec society indicate that it was a civilization?