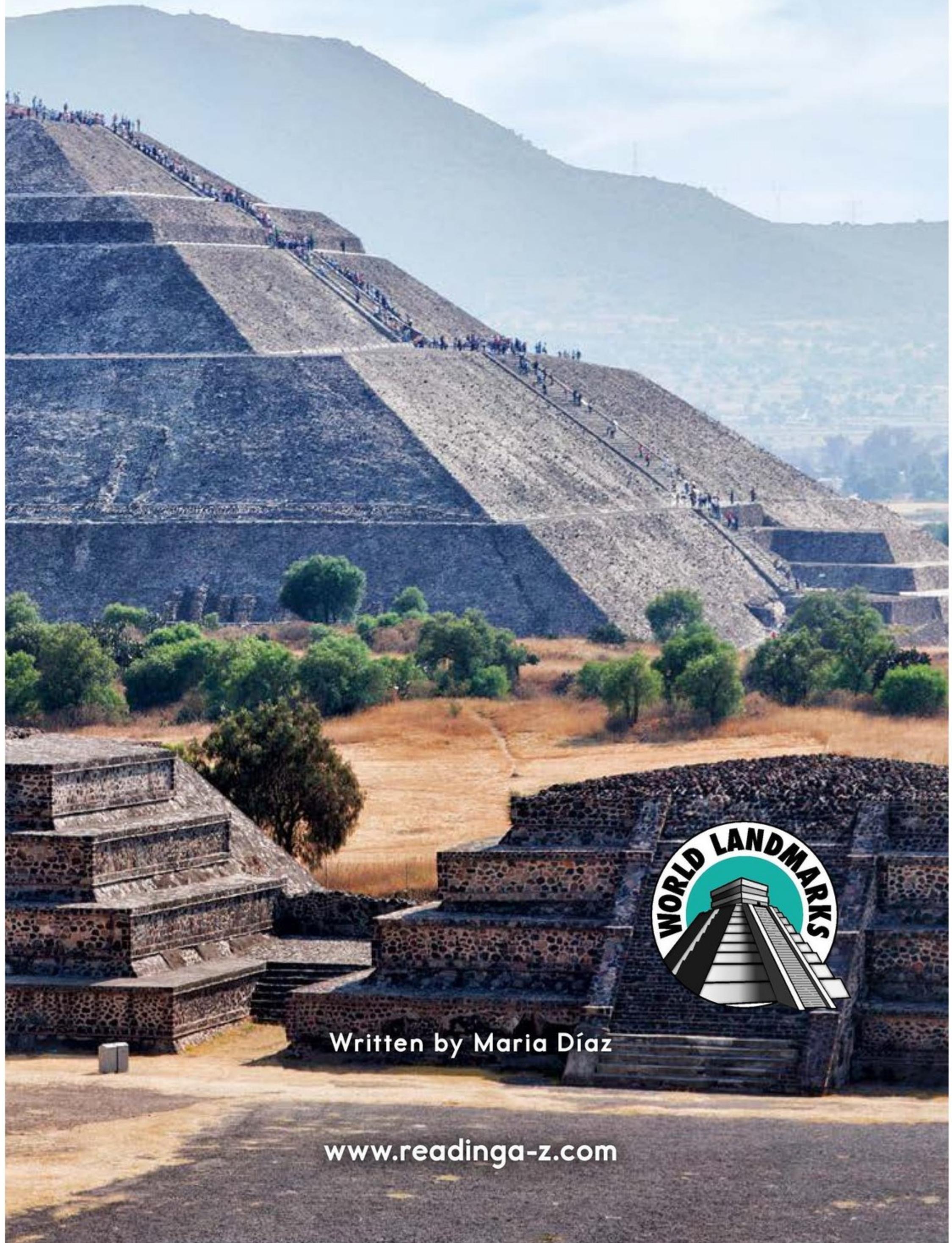


LEVELED BOOK • L

# Teotihuacán



Written by Maria Díaz

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## Focus Question

Why do so many people want to know more about Teotihuacán?

# Words to Know

cultures  
erupted  
experts

Native Americans  
pyramids  
temples

Front cover: Pyramid of the Sun

Title page: Stone carvings on the side of a temple

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World Landmarks  
Level L Leveled Book  
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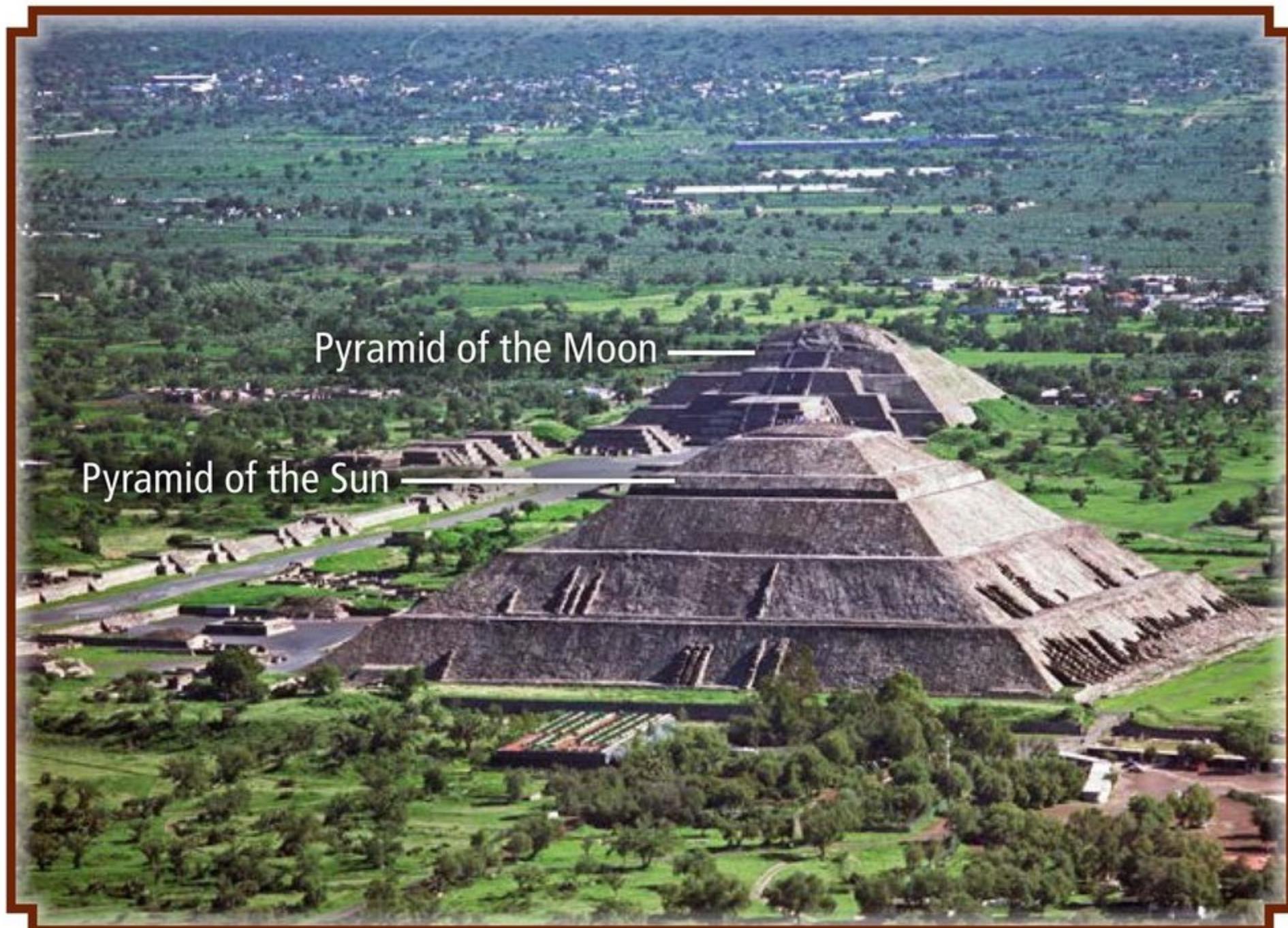
## Correlation

LEVEL L	
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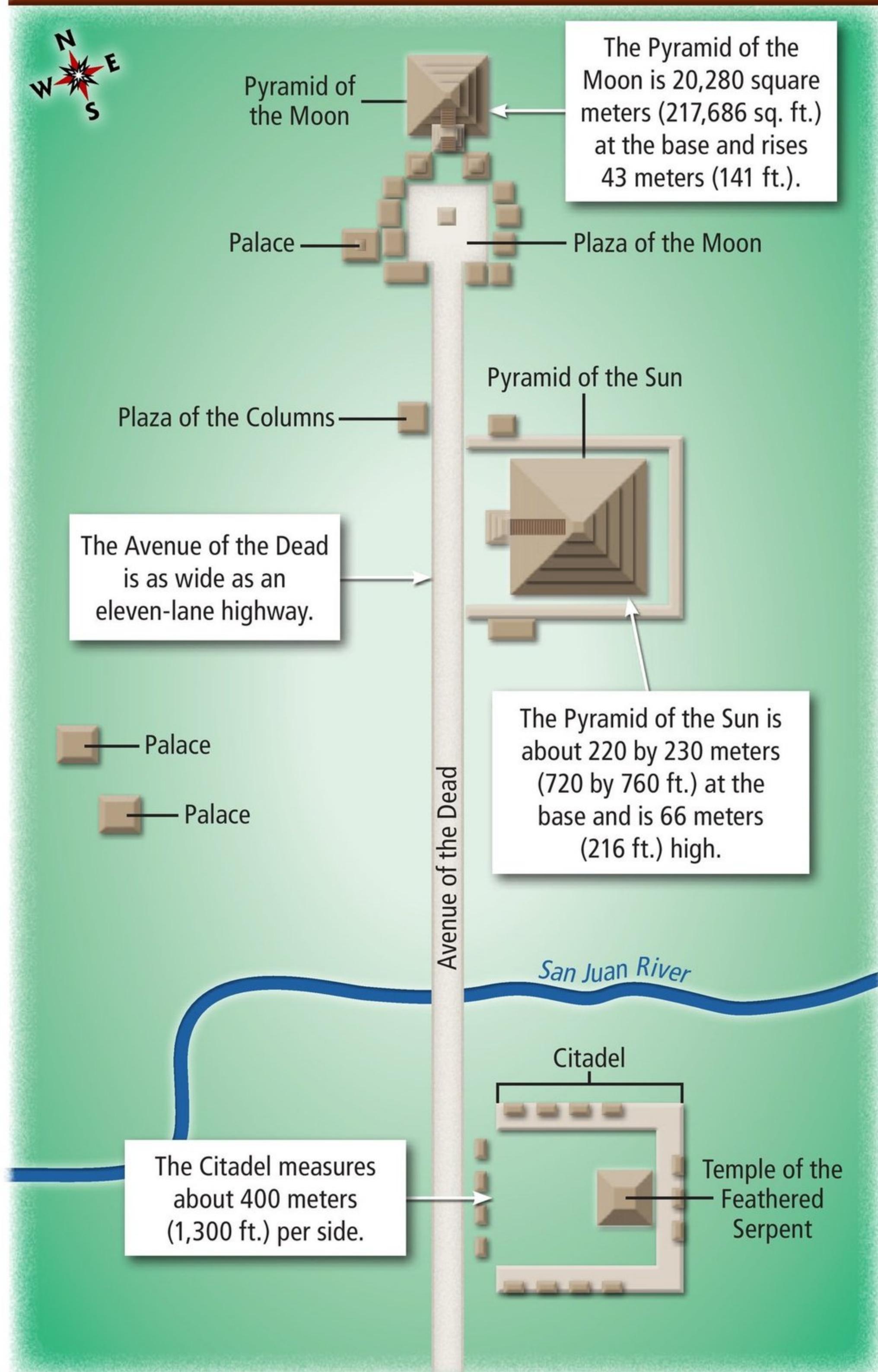
The largest structures at Teotihuacán are the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon.

## A Huge City

More than six hundred years ago, a group of **Native Americans** found a very old city. There were two huge **pyramids** but no people. No one knows who built the city.

They named the city Teotihuacán (tay-oh-tee-wah-KAHN). That was their word for “place where the gods were born.”

## The Center of Teotihuacán





The ruins of Teotihuacán are spread over a huge area.

## A Mysterious City

When it was built almost two thousand years ago, Teotihuacán was one of the biggest cities in the world. At that time, most people lived in small communities. What made Teotihuacán grow so big?

warrior carving



The people who ruled the great city left few clues about themselves. We do not know who they were. They wrote with pictures, but no one knows how to read the pictures today.

**Experts** must search the area for clues about the people.



A drawing of a god decorates a wall at Teotihuacán.

## Clues about the City

We know the rulers found a good place for farming. The soil was rich, and water flowed from the mountains.

There were caves there, too. Evidence shows that the people believed their gods were born in caves.



Workers dig up objects left by people long ago. The objects help us learn about the people of Teotihuacán.

People brought things with them when they moved to Teotihuacán. Some brought beautiful feathers from Quetzal (ket-SAHL) birds (right). A wall painting shows a priest wearing feathers that may have come from this bird (below).



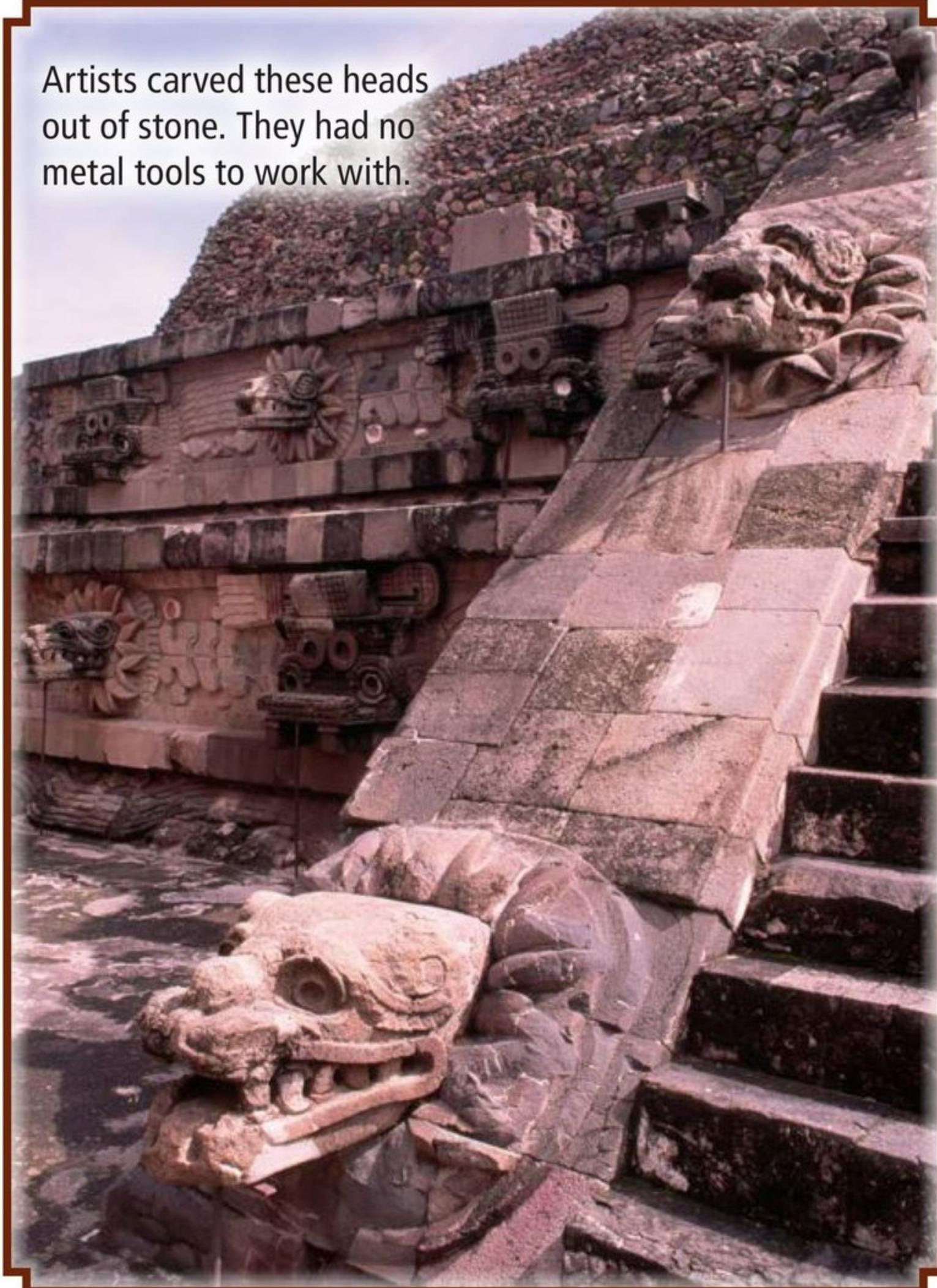
The city grew slowly at first. That changed when two nearby volcanoes **erupted**. Thousands of people had to run for their lives. Many came to Teotihuacán. These people were from other **cultures**, but they were welcomed. They helped the city grow.

The new people needed housing. The rulers ordered thousands of new homes built. These homes were unlike any others in the world. At first, experts who found the homes thought they were palaces for rich people. They learned that these homes were for everyone.



Artists painted the walls of the new homes with beautiful art.

Artists carved these heads out of stone. They had no metal tools to work with.



People lived well in the city. The rulers ordered new **temples**, too. Experts studied the stone statues on the temples. It took many artists to carve them. It took more artists to paint the outside of the temples with bright colors.

## A Mysterious Ending

As experts continued to explore the site, they found statues that were smashed. Also, temples were burned. The experts learned that the great city was attacked. However, who attacked it remains a mystery.

At some point, the people left the city, but no one is sure why. Grasses and other plants slowly covered the city.

A huge statue once stood in front of the Pyramid of the Moon. Now it is in a museum in Mexico City.





Each step of the Pyramid of the Sun is about 30 centimeters (1 ft.) high.

## The Park Today

Today, part of the old city is a national park. Visitors come by the thousands. Many climb to the top of the Pyramid of the Sun. Climbing the 248 steps is scary because they are steep, but the view is great.

## A New Threat

Wind, rain, and visitors harm Teotihuacán slowly. Today there is a new danger. Buildings are going up very fast. When builders dig near the city, they sometimes find things from the old city. They are asked to hand over what they find, but sometimes they don't. The clues are lost forever.



Experts dig very slowly.  
Sometimes they use  
tiny tools to dig.



Sergio Gómez found a tunnel in 2003. The tunnel held many important items.



## New Clues

There is a lot to see at Teotihuacán. It is a place of many mysteries. Experts are working to solve them. One expert is Sergio Gómez.

One day, Gómez saw a strange hole in the ground. The hole led to a tunnel. With a team of experts, Gómez dug up thousands of new clues. Maybe he will solve some of the mysteries of this special place.

# Glossary

<b>cultures</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	groups of people with their own ideas and ways of living (p. 9)
<b>erupted</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	shot out material, such as rock and ash from an active volcano; came out in a sudden explosion (p. 9)
<b>experts</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who know a lot about a subject (p. 7)
<b>Native Americans</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who lived in the Americas before Europeans arrived (p. 4)
<b>pyramids</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	large buildings with three or more sides shaped like a triangle, usually built by groups of people long ago (p. 4)
<b>temples</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	buildings that are places of worship (p. 11)

# Teotihuacán

A Reading A-Z Level L Leveled Book

Word Count: 501

## Connections

### Writing

What do you think happened to the people of Teotihuacán? Write a paragraph explaining your theory. Include details from the text to support your thoughts.

### Social Studies

Experts such as Sergio Gómez are called *archaeologists*. What is an archaeologist, and why might someone choose to be one? Make a poster to show your findings.

A photograph of a wide, multi-tiered stone staircase made of dark, irregular stones. The stairs lead up the side of a large, ancient pyramid structure. The sky above is clear and blue.

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