

# Ancient America

## Before You Read: Anticipation Guide

Copy the statements below in your notebook. Write *agree* or *disagree* next to each one. After you have read the lesson, look over the statements again and see if you have changed your opinion.

- The geography of the Andes Mountains helped civilizations develop there.
- Some ancient American civilizations built pyramids.
- The Maya did not create a very advanced civilization.



## Big Ideas About Ancient America

**Science and Technology** New inventions and techniques change the way humans live their daily lives.

Ancient American cultures arose in difficult environments. These cultures adapted to their challenging conditions by developing new farming techniques and irrigation systems. The techniques allowed them to grow food and build thriving civilizations.



### Integrated Technology

#### eEdition

- Interactive Maps
- Interactive Visuals
- Starting with a Story



Ancient Maya



#### INTERNET RESOURCES

Go to **ClassZone.com** for

- WebQuest
- Homework Helper
- Research Links
- Internet Activities
- Quizzes
- Maps
- Test Practice
- Current Events

## AMERICAS

## WORLD

**1200 B.C.**

Olmec build the Americas' first known civilization in southeastern Mexico. (sculpture of Olmec wrestler) ▶



**900 B.C.**

Chavín culture arises in Peru and influences other cultures in South America.

**1200 B.C.**

**1200 B.C.**

Attacked by invaders, Egyptian Empire begins to decline. (Egyptian sphinx and pyramid) ▶



# American Civilizations, 1200 B.C.–A.D. 900

INTERACTIVE



Mayan rain god



Chavin stone sculpture of a warrior



**200 B.C.**  
Nazca culture arises in southern Peru.  
◀ (Nazca Lines)

**A.D. 100**  
Moche culture emerges and produces beautiful art.

**A.D. 250**  
Classic Period of Mayan civilization begins.

**480 B.C.**  
Culture and science flourish during the Golden Age of Greece.



**202 B.C.**  
Han Dynasty begins in China.  
◀ (Emperor Liu Bang, who founded the Han Dynasty)

**A.D. 120**  
Roman Empire reaches its height during a long period of peace.

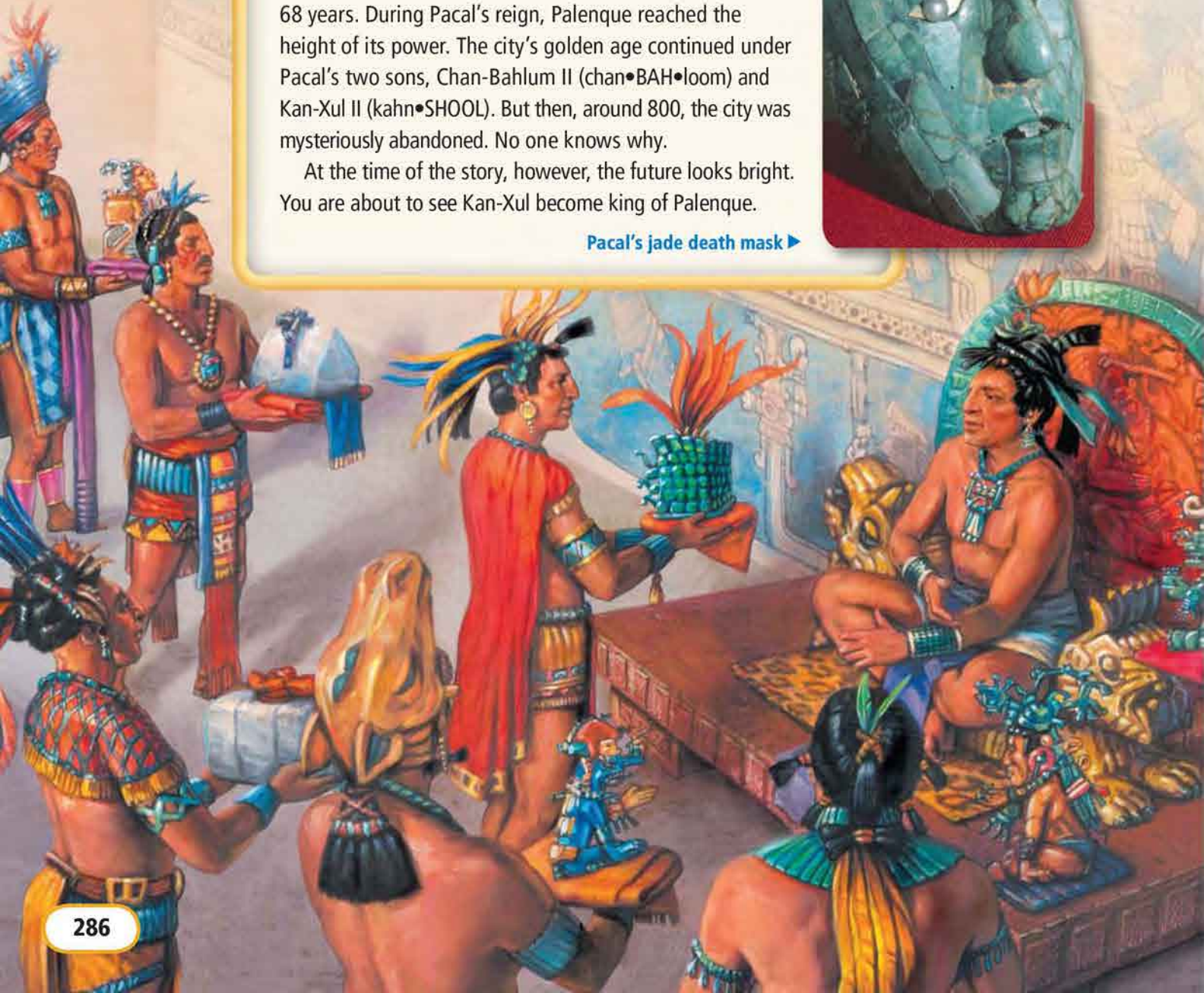


# King Pacal II and His Sons

**Background:** In southern Mexico stand the ruins of an ancient Mayan city-state called Palenque (pah•LEHNG•keh). The city's greatest leader, King Pacal II (pah•KAHL), came to power in A.D. 615 and ruled for 68 years. During Pacal's reign, Palenque reached the height of its power. The city's golden age continued under Pacal's two sons, Chan-Bahlum II (chan•BAH•loom) and Kan-Xul II (kahn•SHOOL). But then, around 800, the city was mysteriously abandoned. No one knows why.

At the time of the story, however, the future looks bright. You are about to see Kan-Xul become king of Palenque.

Pacal's jade death mask ►





**A**s an attendant in the palace, you have much to do before the ceremony begins. But as you work, placing the gifts and offerings around the throne, you think about Kan-Xul's father.

Pacal the Great made Palenque one of the most powerful Mayan cities in the land. He had beautiful temples built and decorated them with wonderful jade ornaments and stone sculptures. After Pacal died, the city's artists carved statues of the king. They also made necklaces and rings for him to wear on his journey to the underworld. You were one of the few servants to catch a peek of the life-sized jade mask that was placed over the dead king's face. Now you're almost sorry you looked. Whenever you recall the unblinking gaze of its eyes, you shiver.

After Pacal's funeral, slaves carefully lowered a stone block to seal his tomb. The enormous block weighed as much as 70 men. A long speaking tube extended from the tomb. The tube let Pacal's sons talk and pray to their dead father.

Pacal's oldest son, Chan-Bahlum, ruled for 18 years. He continued his father's work. Now that he has died, his brother Kan-Xul will be the king. After you finish the preparations, you stand at the back of the room and watch the ceremony.

Kan-Xul sits on the jaguar throne. He receives the magnificent jade headdress that his father and brother wore before him. His mother stands at his side and watches as Kan-Xul accepts gifts from the noblemen of the city. You happily imagine the many kings who will certainly follow Kan-Xul. Then suddenly, you feel a strange chill. You remember the cold, staring eyes of Pacal's death mask. The eyes seem to behold a darker future. What do they see?

**What can happen when a new leader takes power?**

## Reading & Writing

- 1. READING: Supporting Citations** How was Pacal important to his sons and to the people of Palenque? Use citations from the story to support your answer.
- 2. WRITING: Description** Imagine that you are a reporter covering the ceremony as Kan-Xul becomes king. Write a short news feature in which you describe what you see.



# The Geography of the Americas

## TERMS & NAMES

isthmus

tropical

Mesoamerica

Yucatán Peninsula

slash-and-burn  
agriculture

**Build on What You Know** Which do you like best—the mountains, the shore, the desert, the plains? You can find all of these regions in North America. In this lesson, you will compare the geography of North America with that of South America.

## Physical Geography of the Americas

- 1 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What is the physical geography of the Americas like?

Look at the map of North and South America on the following page. You can see that the continents are connected. A narrow land bridge called an **isthmus** links them. However, the geographies and climates of the two continents are very different.

**Major Landforms and Rivers** Mountains run along the western parts of both continents. North America has a north-south mountain range called the Rocky Mountains. South America has a mountain range called the Andes.

Water flows down these ranges to the continents' great rivers. The major river system of North America is the Mississippi. The Amazon and Paraná (PAR•uh•NAH) rivers are the major systems of South America.

Amazon River  
Villagers of the  
Amazon rain forest  
paddle a canoe on  
the river. The Amazon  
carries more water to  
the sea than any other  
river in the world. ▼



**A Variety of Climates** The locations of the two continents has an impact on their seasons. As you can see on the map on this page, North America lies north of the equator. Most of South America lies south of it. As a result, the seasons are reversed. When it is summer in North America, it is winter in South America—and vice versa.

The locations of the continents also affect their climates. Much of North America has a mild or dry climate, with four distinct seasons. Most people live in these climates. Few people live in the northern regions of Canada, where the climate is very cold.

South America also has a wide range of climates. In addition, much of the continent receives a great deal of rainfall.

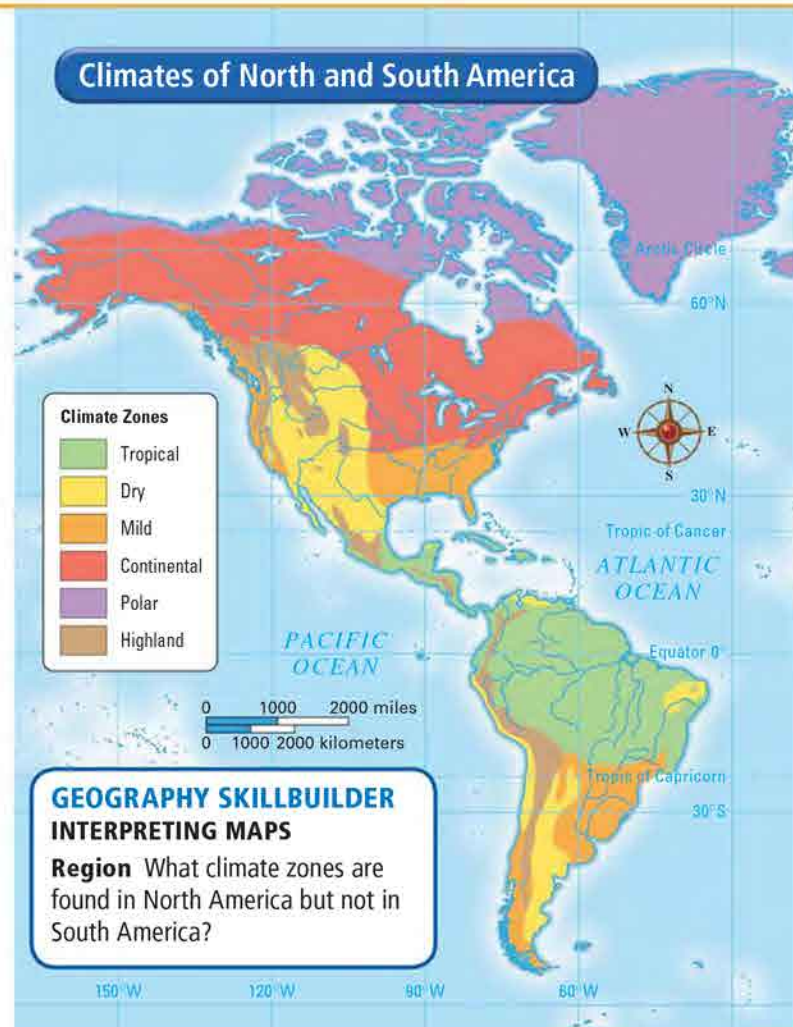
In fact, about half of South America is warm and rainy. These warm and rainy areas are called **tropical** zones. Some areas of North America are also tropical. These areas lie mostly in Central America. The people who built ancient civilizations in this Central American area learned to live and thrive in its tropical climate.

**REVIEW** What are some major differences between the geographies and climates of North America and South America?

## Geography of the Andes

**2 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What geographic features are characteristic of the Andes?

Ancient civilizations developed on both continents. Some arose high in South America's Andes Mountains. The Andes extend about 5,500 miles from Venezuela in the north to Chile at the southern tip of South America. They consist of very high plateaus surrounded by even higher peaks.





**Tall Peaks** The peaks of the Andes are the highest in the Americas. Many are over 20,000 feet, or almost four miles high. The highest elevations are covered only by a thin, stony soil. Lower down, the soil is a little richer.

The Andes' location along two colliding plates also makes life there hard. The plate movement causes volcanic activity and earthquakes in the Andes. The climate is severe too. At high altitudes it freezes, and in many places rainfall is unpredictable.

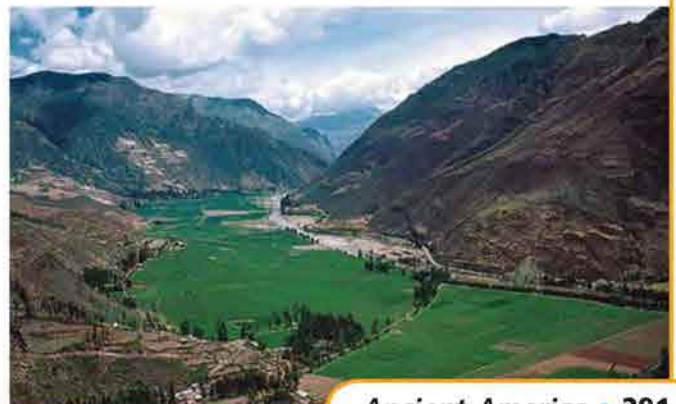
**High Plateaus** Over a long stretch of the Andes, the mountains split into two ranges. A large group of high plateaus lies between them. This area is filled with hills, valleys, plains, and deserts. A few large rivers water the area. But in the high desert regions, rain almost never falls.

As you might imagine, farming presents a challenge in the Andes. To grow their food, farmers in ancient Andean civilizations developed irrigation canals. These carried water to crops the farmers developed, such as potatoes.

**REVIEW** What makes the Andes a harsh environment?



**Andes** The Andes are the longest mountain range in the world. The top photograph shows a high plateau region. The bottom one shows the more fertile valley region.





## Geography of Mesoamerica

- 3 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How do the geography and climate of Mesoamerica contrast with those of the Andes?

Ancient civilizations arose in North America in a region called **Mesoamerica**. Mesoamerica includes southern Mexico and the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, and parts of Honduras and Nicaragua. In contrast with the Andes Mountains, Mesoamerica offers a milder environment.

**The Land of Mesoamerica** Mesoamerica has two main regions: highlands and lowlands. The tropical lowlands hug the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. These areas of dense jungle are also found on the **Yucatán** (YOO•kuh•TAN) **Peninsula**, which lies between the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. The highlands stretch between the mountains of the Sierra Madre mountain system. Like much of the Andes, this region is subject to earthquakes and volcanoes.

**Climate** Rainfall varies greatly in these two regions. It can rain more than 100 inches a year in the steamy lowlands, providing a good environment for palm, avocado, and cacao trees. As you climb toward the highlands, however, the air becomes cooler and drier. This region receives much less rainfall.



Early Mesoamerican farmers had to develop advanced agricultural practices to deal with both climates. In the dry highlands, farmers irrigated their fields, which produced corn, beans, and squash. In the lowlands, they practiced **slash-and-burn agriculture**. They cleared a patch of jungle by cutting back and burning it. When the field became less productive, farmers began again with a new piece of land.

**REVIEW** How does climate affect the two main regions in Mesoamerica?

### Lesson Summary

- North America and South America have contrasting climates and geographies.
- The Andes Mountains provided a challenging environment for ancient civilizations.
- The climates of Mesoamerica resulted in the development of different agricultural practices.

### Why It Matters Now . . .

Today the potatoes developed in the Andes and the corn developed in Mesoamerica have become important crops in countries all over the world.

**Corn** These ears of maize, or corn, are being sold in a Yucatán market. Corn was first developed in Mesoamerica. ▼



## 1 Lesson Review

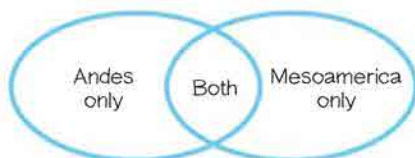
### Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of
- |             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| isthmus     | Yucatán Peninsula          |
| tropical    | slash-and-burn agriculture |
| Mesoamerica |                            |

### Using Your Notes

**Comparing and Contrasting** Use your completed Venn diagram to answer the following question:

2. How is the geography of the Andes and Mesoamerica similar?



### Activity

**Making a Physical Map** Trace a map showing Mesoamerica and the western coast of South America. Label the major landforms, bodies of water, and regions in both places. Use a legend to identify any symbols or colors on the map.



### Main Ideas

3. Why are the seasons reversed in North and South America?
4. Why is farming a challenge in the Andes?
5. How did farmers grow crops in the rainy lowlands of Mesoamerica?

### Critical Thinking

6. **Explaining Geographic Patterns** Why did farmers in the Andes and in Mesoamerica develop advanced agricultural techniques?
7. **Making Inferences** What might have happened if ancient peoples in the Americas had not adapted to their environments?



# Ancient Andean Civilizations

## TERMS & NAMES

Chavín  
textile  
Nazca  
aquifer  
Moche

**Build on What You Know** You have learned about the rugged landscape and harsh climate of the Andes Mountains. Now find out about the people who created civilizations in this tough environment.

## The Chavín Civilization

### 1 ESSENTIAL QUESTION What was the Chavín civilization?

The ruins of a huge U-shaped temple stand high in the Andes of Peru in a place called Chavín de Huantar (chah•VEEN deh WAHN•tahr). The temple was built by a culture known as the **Chavín**. This culture flourished between about 900 and 200 B.C. Our understanding of the Chavín may increase as more discoveries are made. But for right now, the little we know is based on the ruins of the structures they built.

**The Chavín Ruins** Archaeologists believe that the Chavín civilization was united mainly by religion. Little is known about their political or economic organization. However, the religious images found at Chavín de Huantar tell us about their culture.

Chavín de Huantar  
Heads like this one decorated the outer walls of the temple of Chavín de Huantar. The heads may have been designed to frighten away evil spirits. ▼





**Religion and Art** Some archaeologists believe that Chavín de Huantar was a holy city. The culture's ruler-priests may have called on farmers, who made up most of the society, to build the religious center. The farmers probably worked at Chavín de Huantar to fulfill their religious duty. Followers of the Chavín religion probably traveled to the center for special festivals.

The Chavín culture spread across much of northern and central Peru. Archaeologists know this because they have found the Chavín art style in religious images throughout the northern coast of Peru. This style is seen in stone carvings and in beautiful black and red pottery. The Chavín also embroidered images into woven cloth called **textiles**.

**REVIEW** How did the Chavín influence other cultures?

## The Nazca Civilization

**2 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did the Nazca adapt to their harsh environment?

After the decline of the Chavín, other cultures arose in Peru. One of these was the **Nazca** (NAHZ•kuh) culture, which arose along the southern coast of present-day Peru. The Nazca prospered from around 200 B.C. to A.D. 600.

**Irrigation and Agriculture** Much about the Nazca remains a mystery. Like the Chavín, little is known about the political and economic structures of the Nazca. One of the things we do know about the Nazca is that they developed an extensive irrigation system. Their economy was based on farming, but the Nazca lived in an area that received less than an inch of rainfall a year. So to water their crops, the Nazca built a network of underground canals.

