



GUIDE TO READING NOTES 24

Read Sections 24.2 to 24.4. Complete these steps for each section:

1. Record your answers to the questions in the corresponding section of the flag.
2. Lightly shade that section of the flag the appropriate color.
3. Complete the matching sentence below.

Possible answers:

- The color green could help you remember this part of Aztec history because...
the Aztecs were looking for a place to settle and found the fertile Valley of Mexico.
- The color white could help you remember this part of Aztec history because...
the Aztec capital, considering the number of people who were living there, was very clean.
- The color red could help you remember this part of Aztec history because...
the relations between the Aztecs and their neighbors were often marked by warfare and human sacrifice.

24.2 The Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico

Name two important groups that lived in the Valley of Mexico before the Aztecs. Give an example of how they influenced the Aztecs. *The Teotihuacans and the Toltecs lived in the Valley of Mexico before the Aztecs. The Aztecs adopted the feathered serpent god, Quetzalcoatl, from the Teotihuacans, and married into the Toltec royal line.*

How did other groups already living in the Valley of Mexico treat the Aztecs? Why might the Aztecs have eliminated this part of their story for their “official” histories later on? *Other groups generally either forced the Aztecs to move away or hired them as mercenaries (paid soldiers). The Aztecs were not very powerful during this period and thus may have decided to eliminate it from their later “official” histories.*

According to Aztec history, how did the Aztecs know where to build their new city of Tenochtitlan? Why was this a good location? *According to Aztec history, their priests were told to look for an eagle perched on a cactus and holding a snake in its beak. This was where the Aztecs were to build their new city. This location, on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco, was a good site because there were plenty of fish and water birds to eat and the island was easy to defend.*

Lightly shade this section of the flag green.



24.3 Tenochtitlan: A City of Wonders

How did the Aztecs build their capital in the middle of a lake?

They filled in areas of the lake and built small islands called chinampas.

Name at least one important building in Tenochtitlan, and describe what happened there.

Possible answer: The Great Temple was one of the most important buildings in Tenochtitlan. It was 150 feet tall. This is where important religious ceremonies took place, including human sacrifices.



Describe at least two aspects of Tenochtitlan that allowed so many people to live there comfortably.

Tenochtitlan had four wide avenues, which were swept and washed every day and allowed people to move around easily. The city also had an aqueduct that carried fresh water into the city from miles away.

Leave this section of the flag white.

24.4 The Aztec Empire

What kinds of goods did the Aztecs receive in tribute from conquered peoples? Why was tribute so important to the Aztecs?

Aztec tribute included food, cacao, gems, cotton, animals, animal skins, shells, building materials, and soldiers. This tribute was important because it was used to help feed the huge population of Tenochtitlan and to pay warriors, priests, officials, and servants.

Typically, what happened before, during, and after an Aztec declaration of war?

Before a declaration of war, the Aztecs would request that the city to join their empire as an ally. If they refused, the Aztecs would declare war and attack the city. After the battle, captives were brought to Tenochtitlan. Some became slaves, and others were sacrificed.

What did the Aztecs demand of cities they defeated? Name one advantage and one disadvantage of this Aztec policy.

The Aztecs demanded that the city pay tribute to the Aztecs, promise to obey the ruler, and honor the Aztec god. These lenient conditions made it easy for the Aztecs to rule. However, most conquered people never felt any allegiance to the Aztecs, and this led to a lack of unity in the empire.

Lightly shade this section of the flag red.