

# The Writing Process

## 10 Steps

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Please check your audio setup and get your materials ready!

*This session will be recorded for learning purposes. Learning purposes include: a lesson review for students who are absent, students who want to review for a test, etc. and will be distributed for learning purposes.*

# Writing Objective:

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- I can compose an introduction that identifies the topic and clearly conveys the purpose of the text (W.5.2a)

Climbing the steps to writing success!



1

Read the Question Carefully

2

Highlight Keywords

3

Restate Question As A Thesis

4

Review Sources

5

Take Notes/Map Out

6

Complete Thesis

7

Write Response Using Map

8

Repeat Key Words

9

Paragraph Response

10

Reread and Edit

Today we will be working on the first 5 steps of the 10 Steps of Writing.

# Your Assignment

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You watched two videos and read two articles about Mayan and Aztec civilizations, taking notes on all of these sources. You will now write an informational essay comparing the Mayan rise and fall to the Aztec rise and fall, discussing how these civilizations are similar and different, and considering various possible effects they each had on our modern lives.

- **Task:** Compare and contrast the rise and fall of the Aztecs to the Mayans, discussing how these civilizations are similar and different. Include various effects they each had on our modern lives.

# Today's Lesson: We Do

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1. **Review Sources:** Is the source you are reading from credible and reliable?
2. Take notes and map out what you are going to write. Think of our **Topic, Main Idea, and Details.**
3. Complete your introduction paragraph. It should include your topic sentence and 2-4 supporting sentences. (Don't be **TOO** specific)

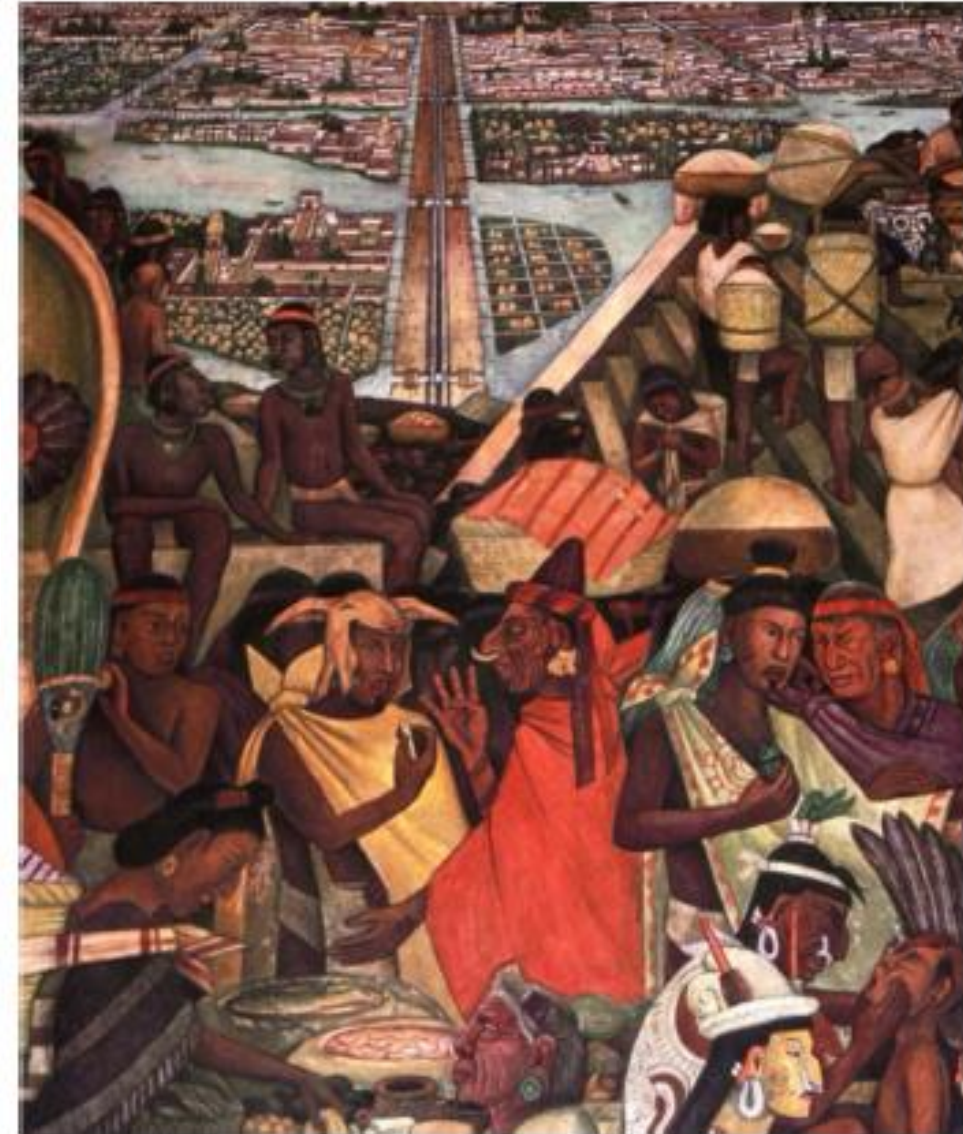
**\*Email your work to your teacher on Friday, Oct 14 to receive credit and full participation points.**

## The Maya

As the Olmecs declined, their neighbors to the east — the Maya — prospered. The Maya lived in an area the size of Great Britain. This part of the Yucatan Peninsula had poor, infertile soil and no large rivers. Not ideal conditions for a successful civilization. Yet its people grew corn, beans, squash, peppers, and cacao (chocolate). The Maya had no horses or oxen. Without animals to carry things, they had portable luxury goods. Feathers, jade, gold, and shells were very valuable to them.

The Maya organized themselves into small city-states instead of one big empire. The largest city-state was Tikal. By 750 CE, it had about 40,000 inhabitants. Tikal's residents had specialized jobs and were ruled by elites. Mayan city-states fought each other frequently, mainly to capture enemies and sacrifice them to the Mayan gods.

We know a lot about the Maya because they had an advanced writing system. Mayan writing included both pictographs and symbols for syllables. Scholars have made great progress in translating the language. Though few books have survived, there are many carved inscriptions.



Mayan priests were known as shamans. They were quite advanced in cosmology and mathematics. They invented three kinds of calendars. A 365-day solar year calendar was used for agricultural cycles. A 260-day ritual calendar was used for daily affairs. A third calendar, called the Long Count calendar, went back to 3114 BCE. It recorded the longer passage of time.

The Maya calculated a solar year as 365.242 days. That number is only 17 seconds shorter than the figures of modern astronomers. They also introduced the idea of zero. In Afro-Eurasia, Hindu scholars first represented zero in the 800s CE.

The Maya believed the world had ended four times already. They thought they were living in the fifth world, or Fifth Sun. They believed its survival depended on the life energy that came from the blood of sacrificed humans.

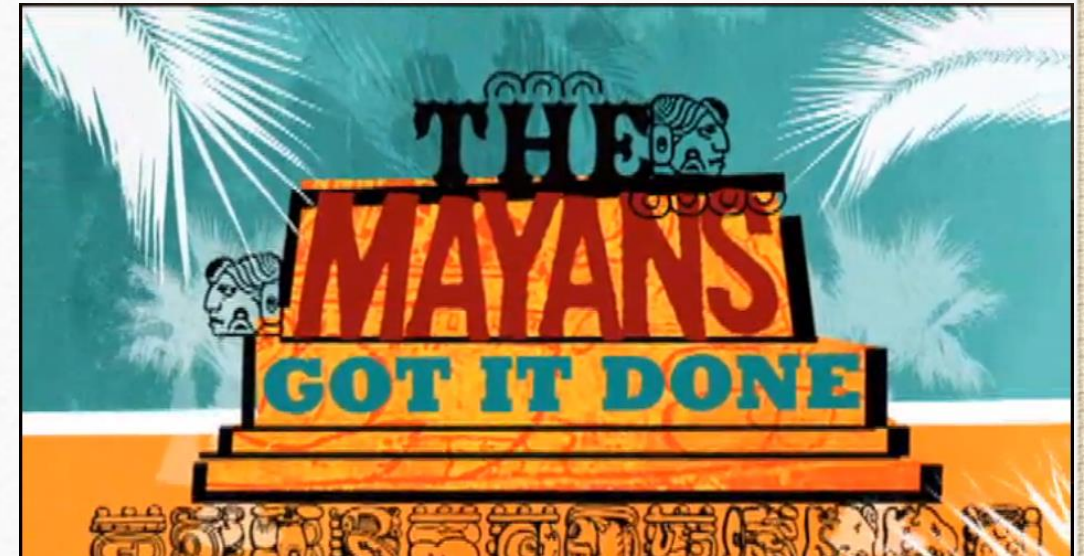
Human sacrifice was important in Mayan culture. In their creation story, the gods started the Sun burning by sacrificing themselves to it. The only way to keep the Sun going was to offer human blood.

The Maya bled themselves using cactus or bone spines. They would pierce their earlobes, hands, or penises. They also ritually killed and sacrificed humans. Some of these customs may have been passed down from the Olmecs.

A ball game the Maya played was definitely taken from the Olmecs. This game was played with a rubber ball about 8 inches in diameter. The object was to put the ball through high rings. But you couldn't use your hands. It was like basketball, just with no hands! Sometimes the game was played for simple sport. But sometimes, captives were forced to play for their lives. Losers were sacrificed to the gods. Their heads were displayed on racks alongside some ball courts.

Mayan society changed rapidly between 800 and 925 CE. People left the cities and moved back into the countryside. Historians aren't sure why. Perhaps it was earthquakes, erosion, or drought. Or maybe revolts and invasions. Probably some combination of these brought down Mayan civilization. The Maya didn't just disappear. Several million descendants are still alive today.

<http://www.history.com/topics/maya>



## Tenochtitlan and the Aztecs

Mexica people, better known as Aztecs, carried Mesoamerican civilization to its height. They built the city of Tenochtitlan (the-noch-tee-TLAHN), or "place of the cactus fruit."

The Mexica (me-SHI-ka) came from northern Mexico. They settled on an island in a large lake in the Valley of Mexico in 1325. The group was given the name Aztecs by the German explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt in the early 1800s. In 1428, the Aztecs joined two other neighboring cities to form the Triple Alliance. The Alliance conquered other cities to collect payments that could support its expanding population. The conquests also provided sacrificial victims for their religious rituals.

By the early 1500s, the Aztecs had conquered most of Mesoamerica. They ruled about 11 million to 12 million people. The annual tribute they received in corn alone was 7,000 tons. They also received 2 million cotton cloaks, as well as jewelry, obsidian knives, rubber balls, jaguar skins, parrot feathers, jade, emeralds, seashells, vanilla beans, and chocolate. They had no money. Everyone was paid in food and goods. Their population was at least 200,000 to 300,000 in the capital. This was several times the size of London at the time.

Warriors were honored in Aztec culture. They built their society around a military elite. A council of the most successful warriors chose the ruler. Warriors could wear fine cotton cloth and feathers instead of clothing made from plant fibers. Aztecs believed that warriors who died in battle went straight to the paradise of the Sun God. Priests were also considered among the elite. Most people were commoners who worked the land or were slaves.

The god of war, Huitzilopochli (we-tsee-loh-POCK-tlee), became the most important god in Tenochtitlan. His priests placed more emphasis on human sacrifice than did earlier traditions. Priests laid the victims — mostly captives of war — over a curved stone high on a pyramid. They then cut open the chest with an obsidian blade and flung the still-beating heart into a ceremonial basin. The blood flowed down the pyramid.

The elites supported warfare, but they also devoted themselves to poetry. This, they considered the highest art. One Aztec ruler composed this poem in the early 1400s. It reveals the Aztec sense of the fleeting world:

*Truly do we live on earth?*

*Not forever on earth; only a little while here.*

*Be it jade, it shatters.*

*Be it gold, it breaks.*

*Be it quetzal feathers, it tears apart.*

*Not forever on earth; only a little while here.*

*Like a painting, we will be erased.*

*Like a flower, we will dry up here on earth,*

*Like plumed vestments of the precious bird,*

*That precious bird with an agile neck,*

*We will come to an end.*



## The fall of the Aztecs

The Aztec civilization of the Fifth Sun was destroyed as it reached its peak. In 1520, Spanish conquistadors led by Hernán Cortés used horses, guns, and steel swords to defeat the Aztecs in battle. Eventually, the Spanish surrounded Tenochtitlan and starved its inhabitants.

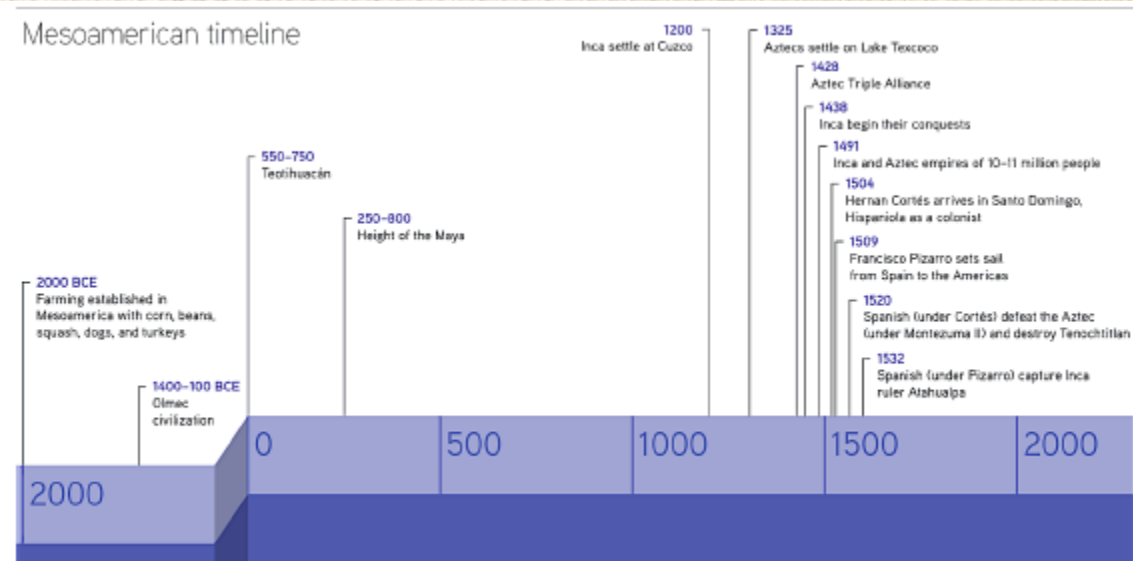
Many Aztecs died of smallpox. They had no immunity to the disease since it originated in cows. When the Aztecs surrendered, 80 percent of their population was already dead. The Spanish controlled all of Mexico within 10 years, easily defeating the survivors of this new disease.

How do we know this? The Aztecs had a system of writing, though it was not as advanced as the Maya's. The Spanish conquerors destroyed the Aztecs' books in an attempt to wipe out their religious beliefs. Many inscriptions and a few books survive.

But a Franciscan priest, Bernadino de Sahagún, learned the Aztec language. He interviewed many Aztec survivors. He produced a 12-volume encyclopedia of their customs and beliefs. The Aztec language Nahuatl is still used by hundreds of thousands of Mexicans. It has given English words such as chocolate, tomato, coyote, and tamale.

There are some surprising similarities between Tenochtitlan and Uruk in Mesopotamia. Both cities had a social rank, with rulers at the top and slaves at the bottom. War was common in both places. Both cities required others to pay them tribute. Large public structures, powerful religious rituals, and fantastic art and literature were found in both

places. The differences are also striking. Tenochtitlan believed strongly in human sacrifice and was worried about the world coming to an end. It also formed thousands of years later than Uruk.



<http://www.history.com/topics/aztecs/videos>

