

Chapter Summary

The Americas

Lesson 1 *The First Americans*

- The Americas are made up of four geographical areas: North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. These areas include many different geographical features and climates. Major features in North America include the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River. Major features in South America include the Andes and the Amazon River.
- The first people came to America from Asia. They were hunters and gatherers who used the resources of their environments for food, clothing, and shelter.
- At the end of the last Ice Age, agriculture began in the Americas. The earliest farming areas were in Mesoamerica and the Andes. Farming led to the development of complex civilizations in the Americas.
- Early Mesoamerican civilizations included the Olmec and Maya, followed later by the Toltec and Aztec. In South America, early civilizations included the Moche and the Inca.
- In North America, early people developed a variety of cultures. In the area now known as the American Southwest, the Hohokam and the Anasazi developed two different cultures based on agriculture.
- East of the Mississippi River, another culture arose. They are known as Mound Builders because they built large mounds to serve as tombs and places for ceremonies.
- The Mound Builders known as the Hopewell were mostly hunters and gatherers, but those known as the Mississippians were full-time farmers who grew corn, squash and beans. Some Mississippian cities contained 10,000 people or more.

Chapter Summary *Cont.*

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Lesson 2 *Life in the Americas*

- About A.D. 300 the Maya developed a civilization with over 50 city-states in southern Mexico and Central America. Maya achievements included calendars, mathematics, and a written language.
- About A.D. 900 Maya civilization collapsed although historians are not sure why. The collapse may have been caused by warfare among the city-states or by falling food production.
- Around A.D. 1200, the Aztec moved into central Mexico. They eventually built a city called Tenochtitlán. This city became the center of their empire and the largest city in Mesoamerica.
- The Inca formed an empire centered in the valleys of the Andes in the A.D.1400s. The Inca Empire had a strong central government. The government oversaw large building projects, including a system of roads for trade and travel.
- Many different Native American cultures developed in the different geographic regions of North America. These regions included the Far North, the Pacific Coast, the Southwest, the Great Plains, and the Eastern Woodlands.