



Mesoamerican & South American Myth

Belief Study Guide Version 3.1

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Introduction to the past beliefs of people living in what is now Mexico, Central America (Mesoamerica), and South America. For the purpose of these sheets, "myth" indicates belief systems that are no longer widely practiced.

Maya Civilization

Mesoamerica, 2000s BCE-1700s CE

Answer	Details
<u>Popul Vuh</u>	religious-historical text recording the myths and history of the K'iche Mayan people; the source of modern understanding of Mayan religion
<u>Hero Twins</u>	Hunahpu [hoo-nah-poo] and Xbalanque [sh'bah-lon-kay]; played the Mesoamerican ball game in Xibalba ; defeated Seven Macaw while in Xibalba
<u>Xibalba</u> [shee-bahl-bah]	Mayan underworld
[Mayan History]	Long Count Calendar; constructed Chichen Itza

Aztec Civilization

Mesoamerica, 1300s-1500s

Answer	Details
<u>Quetzalcoatl</u> [ket-zal-koh-ah-tul]	" Feathered Serpent ;" enemy of Tezcatlipoca ; traveled to Mictlan with his twin brother, Xolotl , and mixed his own blood with the bones of a destroyed world to create a fifth world of humans
<u>Tezcatlipoca</u> [tets-kot-lee-poh-kah]	"Smoking Mirror;" enemy of Quetzalcoatl who transformed into a jaguar to destroy the world; after sacrificing his foot, he replaced it with an obsidian mirror
<u>Xolotl</u> [shoh-lah-tul]	twin brother of Quetzalcoatl ; psychopomp who guided the dead to Mictlan ; god of thunder
<u>Huitzilopochtli</u> [hweet-zil-oh-pokt-lee]	"Left-Handed Hummingbird;" god of war
<u>Tlaloc</u>	god of rain
<u>Mictlan</u>	Aztec underworld

Inca Civilization

South America, 1400s-1500s

Answer	Details
<u>Viracocha</u>	creator god
<u>Manco Cápac</u>	semi-legendary founder of the Incan Empire; descendent of Viracocha
<u>Inti</u>	sun god, sometimes considered the son of Viracocha and/or father of Manco Cápac
[Incan History]	capital at Cuzco