 Investigating ancient history – Teotihuacan case study

This document references the [Ancient History Stage 6 Syllabus](https://syllabus.nesa.nsw.edu.au/ancient-history-stage6/) © 2017 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

Unit description

Students investigate aspects of the history of the ancient world using a range of sources. The Historical concepts and skills content is to be integrated as appropriate.

Focus questions

* How important was religion to the people of Teotihuacan?
* What sources of evidence or records are important in the study of Teotihuacan everyday life?
* What are the key features of Teotihuacan?
* How does the site study of Teotihuacan influence our understanding of past civilisations.

Outcomes

A student:

* AH11-1 – describes the nature of continuity and change in the ancient world
* AH11-2 – proposes ideas about the varying causes and effects of events and developments
* AH11-3 – analyses the role of historical features, individuals and groups in shaping the past
* AH11-4 – accounts for the different perspectives of individuals and groups
* AH11-5 – examines the significance of historical features, people, places, events and developments of the ancient world
* AH11-6 – analyses and interprets different types of sources for evidence to support an historical account or argument
* AH11-7 – discusses and evaluates differing interpretations and representations of the past
* AH11-9 – communicates historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in appropriate and well-structured forms

Related Life Skills outcomes – AHLS6-1, AHLS6-2, AHLS6-3, AHLS6-4, AHLS6-5, AHLS6-6, AHLS6-7, AHLS6-8, AHLS6-9, AHLS6-11

Historical concepts and skills

Analysis and use of Sources

* Explain the meaning and value of sources for an historical inquiry (ACHAH007, ACHAH009)
* Analyse and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop reasoned claims (ACHAH008)
* Use evidence from a range of sources to inform investigation and research (ACHAH005)

Historical Interpretation

* Analyse the extent and nature of continuity and change over time (ACHAH001)

Historical Investigation and Research

* Identify and analyse problems relating to sources in the investigation of the past (ACHAH011)
* Acknowledge sources appropriately (ACHAH015)

Explanation and Communication

* Communicate historical understanding, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms, in forms appropriate to purpose and audience (ACHAH014).

Assessment

Formative and Summative assessment will be conducted throughout this program. Each must be implemented to develop student knowledge and assist progress. Forms of student assessment can be found in the unit content table.

* Assessment for Learning opportunities
	+ Application of prior knowledge
	+ Presentation on Historiography

| Content | Teaching and learning |
| --- | --- |
| Students investigate:* representations of Teotihuacan – ancient and/or modern
* the geographical and historical context, including:
	+ the location and geographical features of the Teotihuacan Valley: urban and rural inhabitants, chinampas, caves
	+ plans and streetscapes of Teotihuacan
	+ the stages and nature of occupation – Maya, Mixtec, Zapotec, arrival of the Aztec
 | * Brainstorm anything students understand about the world of the Aztec/maya
* Copy the provided glossary of key terms
* Locate the site of Teotihuacan on a map
* Individually create two columns, one examining ancient representations and modern representations of Teotihuacan. Students to complete this individually.
* Investigate the practice of Chinampas – create a 5 slide powerpoint with images outlining the importance of the practice on agriculture in the region.
* Media File – Students to gather a variety of articles about Teotihuacan and compare 3 key ideas that appear commonly across the articles
* Students to separate into groups to investigate one of the following civilizations
* Maya
* Mixtec
* Zapotec
* Aztec
 |
| * The range of sources, including:
	+ features of the city, for example barrios and apartment compounds, Pyramids of the Sun and Moon, Temple of the Feathered Serpent, Avenue of the Dead
	+ the nature of limitations of the sources.
* The history of Teotihuacan as revealed through the sources, including:
	+ the role of religion: deities, ritual sacrifice, burials
	+ the significance of the Teotihuacan Mapping Project
 | Students to provide a 10 point summary of the key elements of this civilization, complete with link to Teotihuacan* Observe the interactive map of Teotihuacan (http://vft.asu.edu/VFTTeotihuacan/panos/Teo/Teo.html) – on a blank map, students are to label the buildings featured on the site.
* Source activity – Students read the information at http://ppcteotihuacan.org/en/analyses/relative-chronology/ - Using this information and other sources, Students are to prepare a response/presentation assessing the importance of pottery and one other source to archaeologists in providing context to the stages of settlement of the site.
* Groups exchange information, then as a group, prepare a structure for an essay addressing the role and importance of Religion at Teotihuacan. (Students to model response using the appropriate literacy technique for the school – TEEL, PEEL, ALARM etc.)
* Examine the Website for the “Plaza of the Columns Complex” archaeological project. Students are to list the finds presented in the 2015 annual report (http://ppcteotihuacan.org/en/results/2015-2/) and provide their own summation of what the archaeologists have found. Students to suggest 3 additional things they would investigate in the following season related to these finds, and discuss the archaeological methods they would use.
 |
| * + the nature of everyday life: social classes, economic activity
	+ contact with other peoples: trade, diversity of the inhabitants
	+ theories about the collapse of Teotihuacan: natural disaster, internal rebellion, external attack
 | * Compile 1 page of evidence of obsidian craft and trade within Teotihuacan. Student to investigate EITHER the importance of this trade to the region, or the importance of obsidian tools to the wider civilization.
* In groups, research everyday life in Teotihuacan. Groups will complete information on either regular everyday life, social classes or the economic activity of the time. Information will be collaborated as a class.
* Break into 3 groups, and prepare a multimedia news report about a chosen theory of destruction for Teotihuacan (natural disaster, internal rebellion, external attack). The report should use a variety of techniques, including video, audio, image and should seek to evaluate the evidence for that method of destruction.
 |

Resources

* Millon, Rene. [“The Teotihuacan Mapping Project.”](http://www.jstor.org/stable/277873)
* [World Monuments Fund](https://www.wmf.org/project/teotihuac%C3%A1n-archaeological-site)
* Hearn, Kelly, [Teotihuacan - The Mayan city in today's Mexico has mysterious origins.](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/archaeology-and-history/archaeology/teotihuacan/)
* Jarus, Owen, [Teotihuacan: Ancient City of Pyramids](https://www.livescience.com/22545-teotihuacan.html),
* UNESCO World Heritage Centre (n.p.), [Pre-hispanic city of Teotihuacan](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/).
* [Plaza of the Columns Complex](http://ppcteotihuacan.org/en/home/): Archaeological Project
* Arizona State University: [Teotihuacan Research Library](https://shesc.asu.edu/centers/asu-teotihuacan-research-laboratory)

Reflection and evaluation