

# Lesson Plans: SS 06 WHis LPQ3 032 Olmecs: MesoAmerican Civilizations

Title: SS 06 WHis LPQ3 032 Olmecs: MesoAmerican Civilizations

Grade Level : Grade 6

Subject : Reading - Middle, Social Studies - Middle

**Standards/Assessed Benchmarks:** Florida STATE FL Social Studies Standard (2008)  
Grade 6

Florida Sunshine State Standards

World History

2: Describe the emergence of early civilizations (Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, Indus, and Yellow Rivers, Meso and South American).

SS.6.W.2.10 Compare the emergence of advanced civilizations in Meso and South America with the four early river valley civilizations.

**Description/Abstract of Lesson:** The student will analyze evidence to support or refute an hypothesis that about migration of Africans to Meso America around 1200 B.C

**Essential Question- Scope & Sequence:** **How do geographic factors influence civilizations?**

**Technology Connections and Teacher Materials:** Olmec civilization. Retrieved June 11, 2008, from Crystalinks Web site:  
<https://www.crystalinks.com/olmec.html>

Teacher's Guide and Blackline Masters

*Did Africans Migrate to Mesoamerica* Worksheet (attached)

**Duration :** 3 Days

**Vocabulary:** **Mesoamerica** – "Middle America" - The area from central Mexico to western Honduras and El Salvador, including the Yucatan Peninsula. Ancient civilizations were spread across Mesoamerica, and they shared important characteristics: agricultural economies based primarily on corn, certain gods, solar and ritual calendars, and a mathematical system based on the number 20. **Olmec:** The oldest civilization in Mesoamerica; the Olmecs influenced all of the civilizations that followed them. They developed a calendar and hieroglyphic writing. The first ritual ball game was invented by the Olmecs. **Maya** – The people and ancient civilization situated in Guatemala, Belize, and parts of Mexico and Honduras, beginning in about 900 B.C. **Aztec** – A semi-nomadic, Nahuatl-speaking people who migrated into the Valley of Mexico from the north in about 1200 A.D. and later built an empire with its capital at Tenochtitlan. **Hieroglyphic writing** – Also called picture writing. Writing using pictures to represent ideas or objects. Each picture is called a glyph. **Jade** – A very hard, green gemstone that was highly valued and traded throughout Mesoamerica. **Yucatan** – The large Mexican peninsula that protrudes into the Gulf of Mexico. After the collapse of the classic Maya city states, such as Tikal, many of the lowland Maya migrated to the north into the Yucatan, where, with the Toltecs, they built new ceremonial centers. **Social organization** – The separation of people within a culture into social classes and different occupations. Civilization is marked by the existence of different classes and groups, such as nobles, commoners, priests, traders, artisans, builders, and farmers. **Maize** – Corn; the most important grain crop in Mesoamerica. The Aztecs used maize to make tortillas, tamales, and a porridge called "atole." **Archaeologist** – A scientist specializing in archaeology: the study of past cultures. Archaeologists often dig up the physical remains of ancient peoples, such as their houses, tools, pottery, and art work (artifacts).

**Steps to Deliver  
Initial Instruction:**

- Students will read analyze multiple sources of information about the development of the Olmec civilization which lasted from 1,300 BCE to around 300 BCE.
- Display the definition of Meso-America. Discuss the definition with the students. Using the map on page 198 in the Glencoe textbook, ask the students to identify the area of Meso-America. Students will use the maps to answer the questions and show where the Olmec, Maya, and Aztec civilizations were located.

**Guided Practice with  
Feedback:**

- Students read pages 197-200 in the Glencoe textbook and use the Graphic Organizer (page 200) to take notes (This may be assigned as homework). Tell the students that they will use this chart again after watching the video. Students will use their notes to participate in a class discussion about the reading.
- Students view the United Streaming video – *Ancient Americans: The Mayas and Aztecs*. Distribute Blackline Master 1 prior to the viewing. Students will complete as they watch. Students will work in small groups after the video to discuss their answers and add to if needed. As a whole group, check the corrected answers. Collect.
- Return Blackline Master 1. In the same small groups, students will read the handout – *Did Africans Migrate to Mesoamerica?* They will complete questions one and two with the group. As a whole group, discuss their answers. Individually, students will complete question three. Remind the students they will be graded on how well they support their opinion, not their opinion. Collect.

**Differentiated  
Instruction/Small  
Groups:**

- See small group instruction above.
  - All work may be done individually and just discussed as a whole group.
  - Students may draw the map on page 198, adding the modern countries today.
  - Students may make models of the Olmec art of the large helmeted heads.

**Lesson  
Closure/Review:**

- Return opinions. Discuss the student opinions about Africans migrating to Mesoamerica.
- Students will add to their Graphic Organizer about the Olmec, Maya, and Aztec civilizations.
- Students will work in small groups to create a poster about the three civilizations. Display posters.

**Creator :** Middle SS Content Team

**File Attachments:** Olmec reading.pdf

**Date Created :** June 24, 2008

**Date Modified :** November 03, 2011