The Road to El Dorado

Just how true is this movie???

A Post-Viewing Reading Activity
The Road to El Dorado
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Topics Included in the Reading Assignments:

1. The Mayan Civilization
2. The Aztec Civilization
3. The Incan Civilization
4. Legend of El Dorado
5. Hernán Cortés
6. The Mesoamerican Ballgame

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http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/SraStephanie
Lesson Plan:

1. Before this lesson (and after watching the movie), make about 4-5 copies of each of the following reading tasks on DIFFERENT colored paper. You will need six different colors for the six reading tasks. No colored paper at your school? Print them off and highlight the top in different colors! Works just as well!

2. If you have them, it’s a good idea to put the papers in sheet protectors to use for future classes so they don’t get written on. You can keep these in a notebook and use them forever!

3. Divide students into six groups, pushing desks together to make “stations.” They will work with this group for the entire class period, but will rotate to different stations with their group.

4. Set a timer for about 7-8 minutes and have the group read whatever color reading assignment they have in their station.

5. They must, as a group, come up with FIVE FACTS that they learned from the reading, and, in 1-2 sentences, EXPLAIN how what they have learned relates to the movie. They will write these on their own paper.

6. When timer goes off, rotate stations! Repeat until stations all are complete, and go over answers as a class. Done! 😊
The movie begins in 16th century (1519) Seville (in the south of Spain) and tells about two men named Tulio and Miguel. During a dice game using loaded dice, they win a map that purportedly shows the location of the legendary city of gold in the New World. However, their cheating is soon discovered and as a result, they end up as stowaways on Hernán Cortés' fleet to conquer Mexico. They are discovered, but manage to escape in a boat with Cortés' prize war horse and eventually discover the hidden city of El Dorado where they are mistaken for gods.

El Dorado is portrayed as a utopian civilization that combines facets of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas.

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Mayas - The Maya civilization is a Mesoamerican civilization, noted for the only known fully developed written language of the pre-Columbian Americas, as well as its art, architecture, and mathematical and astronomical systems. Initially established during the Preclassic period, around 2500 BC, many Maya cities reached their highest state development during the Classic period, 250 AD to 900 AD, and continued until the arrival of the Spanish. At its peak, it was one of the most densely populated and culturally dynamic societies in the world.

Like the Aztec and Inca who came to power later, the Maya believed in a cyclical nature of time. The rituals and ceremonies were very closely associated with celestial and terrestrial cycles which they observed and inscribed as separate calendars. The Maya priest had the job of interpreting these cycles and giving a prophetic outlook on the future or past based on the number relations of all their calendars. They also had to determine if the "heavens" or celestial matters were appropriate for performing certain religious ceremonies.

The Maya practiced human sacrifice. In some Maya rituals people were killed by having their arms and legs held while a priest cut the person's chest open and tore out his heart as an offering. This is depicted on ancient objects such as pictorial texts, known as codices. It is believed that children were often offered as sacrificial victims because they were believed to be pure.

Maya gods were not separate entities like Greek gods. The gods had affinities and aspects that caused them to merge with one another in ways that seem unbounded. There is a massive array of supernatural characters in the Maya religious tradition, only some of which recur with regularity. Good and evil traits are not permanent characteristics of Maya gods, nor is only "good" admirable. What is inappropriate during one season might come to pass in another since much of the Maya religious tradition is based on cycles and not permanence.


Grupo #2

**The Road to El Dorado** – Just how true IS this movie???

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**Aztecs** - The **Aztec** people were certain ethnic groups of central Mexico, particularly those groups who spoke the Nahuatl language and who dominated large parts of Mesoamerica in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries.

Aztec culture and history is primarily known:
- From archaeological evidence as it is found in excavations such as that of the renowned Templo Mayor in Mexico City and many others.
- From indigenous bark paper codices (a codex is a handwritten book).
- From eyewitness accounts by Spanish conquistadors such as Hernán Cortés and Bernal Díaz del Castillo.

For most people today, and for the European Catholics who first met the Aztecs, human sacrifice was the most striking feature of Aztec civilization. While human sacrifice was practiced throughout Mesoamerica, the Aztecs, if their own accounts are to be believed, brought this practice to an unprecedented level. For example, for the consecration of the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan in 1487, the Aztecs reported that they sacrificed 84,400 prisoners over the course of four days, reportedly by Ahuitzotl, the Great Speaker himself.

However, most experts consider these numbers to be overstated. For example, the sheer logistics associated with sacrificing 84,000 victims would be overwhelming, 2,000 being a more likely figure. A similar consensus has developed on reports of cannibalism among the Aztecs.

Accounts by the Tlaxcaltecas, the primary enemy of the Aztecs at the time of the Spanish Conquest, show that at least some of them considered it an honor to be sacrificed. In one legend, the warrior Tlahuicole was freed by the Aztecs but eventually returned of his own volition to die in ritual sacrifice. Tlaxcala also practiced the human sacrifice of captured Aztec Citizens.
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Incas - The Inca civilization began as a tribe in the Cuzco area of Peru, where the legendary Manco Capac founded the Kingdom of Cuzco around 1200. According to myth, Incan civilization began with Manco Capac, who carried a golden staff called the ‘tapac-yauri’. The Inca were instructed to create a Temple of the Sun in the spot where the staff sank into the earth, to honor their celestial father.

After a long journey, including a tour of the underworld, the Inca arrived at Cuzco, where they built the temple. In another version of this legend, instead of emerging from a cave in Cuzco, they emerged from the waters of Lake Titicaca, on the border of Peru and Bolivia.

The Inca lived in mountainous terrain, which is not good for farming. To resolve this problem, terraces were cut into steep slopes, known as andenes, in order to plant crops. They also used irrigation. They grew maize, quinoa (a grain), squash, tomatoes, peanuts, chili peppers, melons, cotton, and potatoes. Though all of their agriculture was important, their main food source was potatoes, unlike the Maya and the Aztecs, whose main food source was maize. The Inca was the first civilization to plant and harvest potatoes (NOT the Irish!!)
Grupo #4

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El Dorado - Spanish for "the golden one" is a legend that began with the story of a South American tribal chief who covered himself with gold dust and would dive into a lake of pure mountain water. Imagined as a place, El Dorado became a kingdom, an empire, the city of this legendary golden king. El Dorado, from the beginning, belonged to the category of "lost cities" and "lands of nowhere." But too many imaginations had been captured by the concept of a place with streets of gold.

El Dorado is applied to a legendary story in which precious stones were found in fabulous abundance along with gold coins. The concept of El Dorado underwent several transformations, and eventually accounts of the previous myth were also combined with those of the legendary city. The resulting El Dorado enticed European explorers for two centuries, and was thought to be in Colombia.

Sir Walter Raleigh, who searched for El Dorado in 1595, described it as a city on Lake Parime far up the Orinoco River in Guyana (a tiny country in South America). This city on the lake was marked on English and other maps until its existence was disproved by Alexander von Humboldt during his Latin-America expedition (1799–1804).
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Hernán Cortés – (Full name: Hernán Cortés de Monroy y Pizarro) was a Spanish conquistador (conqueror) who led an expedition that caused the fall of the Aztec empire and brought large portions of mainland Mexico under the King of Castile, in the early 16th century. Cortés was part of the generation of Spanish colonizers that began the first phase of the Spanish colonization of the Americas.

There are relatively few sources to the early life of Cortés; his fame arose from his participation in the conquest of Mexico and it was only after this that people became interested in reading and writing about him. Probably the best source is his letters to the king which he wrote during the campaign in Mexico, but they are written with the specific purpose of putting his efforts in a favorable light and so must be read critically.

Another major source is the account written by the Conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo. He does not paint Cortés as a romantic hero but rather tries to emphasize that also Cortés' men should be remembered as important participants in the undertakings in Mexico.

In the years following the conquest also more critical accounts of the Spanish arrival in Mexico were written. The Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote his A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies in which he raised strong accusations of brutality, and heinous violence towards the Indians, against the conquistadors in general and Cortés in particular. The accounts of the conquest given in the Florentine Codex by the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún and his native informants are also less than flattering towards Cortés.

The result of the scarce sources to the life of Cortés has been sharp divisions in the description of Cortés' personality and a tendency to describe him as either a vicious and ruthless person or a noble and honorable cavalier.
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The Mesoamerican ballgame - This was a sport with ritual associations played for over 3000 years by the pre-Columbian peoples of Mesoamerica. The sport had different versions in different places during the millennia, and a modern version of the game, ulama, is still played in a few places by the local indigenous population.

Pre-Columbian ballcourts have been found throughout Mesoamerica, as far south as Nicaragua, and possibly as far north as the U.S. state of Arizona. These ballcourts vary considerably in size, but all have long narrow alleys with side-walls against which the balls could bounce.

The rules of the ballgame are not known, but judging from its descendent, ulama, they were probably similar to racquetball or volleyball, where the aim is to keep the ball in play. The stone ballcourt goals (as seen in the movie) are a late addition to the game.

In the most widespread version of the game, the players struck the ball with their hips, although some versions allowed the use of forearms, rackets, bats, or handstones. The ball was made of solid rubber and weighed up to 9 pounds or more, and sizes differed greatly over time or according to the version played.

The game had important ritual aspects, and major formal ballgames were held as ritual events, often featuring human sacrifice. The sport was also played casually for recreation by children and perhaps even women.

The association between human sacrifice and the ballgame appears rather late in the archaeological record. The association was particularly strong within the Classic Veracruz and the Maya cultures, where the most explicit depictions of human sacrifice can be seen on the ballcourt panels, as well as on the well-known decapitated ballplayer “stelae” (carved, stone slab) from the Classic Veracruz site of Aparicio (700-900 CE).

Captives were often shown in Maya art, and it is assumed that these captives were sacrificed after losing a rigged ritual ballgame. Rather than nearly nude and sometimes battered captives, however, the ballcourts at El Tajin and Chichen Itza show the sacrifice of practiced ballplayers, perhaps the captains of the losing team. Decapitation is particularly associated with the ballgame – severed heads are featured in much Late Classic ballgame art. There has even been speculation that the heads and skulls were used as balls.