



## What were the Americas like, before and after Christopher Columbus?

**(Intention) What we intend to cover in our learning:**

**Pre-Columbian societies:**

**First arrivals through the Bering strait**

**Chahokia and the mound builders**

**Indigenous tribes: different viewpoints on the 'Red Indians'**

**Spain, Aztecs and Incas- three different kinds of empire**

**Agriculture and torsion technology**

**Cortez and Pizarro, how did they conquer the Aztecs and Incas so quickly, with so few people?**

What were the Americas like,  
before and after Christopher  
Columbus?

**'Discovery' and settlement**

**St Brendan, the Vikings and the Chinese discovery.**

**Christopher Columbus: Why did he sail west? What did he find? What were the consequences for Europe and the peoples of the Americas?**

**The Pilgrim Fathers- the Mayflower, New Plymouth and thanksgiving.**

**The war of Independence- Boston Tea Party, King George and the colonies.**

**The Statue of Liberty: a nation of immigrants.**

## (Implementation) Key words I will use and need to know:

Chronology The New/ Old World Society Indigenous  
Pagan Pre-Columbian Colony Trade Pathogen Agriculture  
Persecution Puritan Technology Protestant Immigration  
Liberty Constitution Europe Central America Biased.

## (Implementation) Key information we will learn:

- The Americas had been settled, farmed and governed for thousands of years before Columbus arrived
- North American tribes were not passive mystics in tune with nature, but shaped their environments significantly. They built huge cities. Some societies collapsed because of climate change, over farming and diversion of rivers.
- The Aztecs ruled by allowing conquered tribes freedoms and autonomy, the Incas imposed even their building techniques on their subjects.
- Corn, tomatoes, beans, chocolate, cassava, avocado, peanuts, peppers, potatoes, squash and many more were all developed in South America.
- Indigenous peoples actively planted and 'farmed' large parts of the Amazon for fruit and nuts.
- The conquests of The Incas and Aztecs were helped by guns, horses and steel but also by the death of up to 90% of their population through germs.
- There are many early claims to have 'discovered' America, some could well be true.
- Columbus was trying to find an easier route to the far east, to access precious spices.
- The Pilgrim fathers were hoping to set up a colony where they could freely practise their own version of Protestantism, not begin a new country.
- The shift to independence began with an argument over taxation.
- America nearly voted to use German, not English as their common language. Rights of

## (Implementation) Things to do and find out at home:

Chahokia: <http://justfunfacts.com/interesting-facts-about-cahokia/>

Aztecs and Incas: <https://aztecs.mrdonn.org/>

Columbus, Pizarro and Cortes: <https://www.ducksters.com/biography/explorers/>

The Pilgrim Fathers: <http://www.fiveminded.com/the-pilgrim-fathers-short-animation-for-kids/>

Can you find a map of North America and its native tribes?

Try building an Aztec temple out of sugar cubes!

(Implementation) Some key pictures and maps linked to the topic:



Ancient earthworks discovered beneath the Amazon



The Plymouth colony struggled to survive until the locals helped them.



A supposed 1418 map of the Americas by a Chinese explorer.



Francisco Pizarro:

Conquered the Incan empire-the largest the world had ever known-with less than 500 men.



Cahokia:

The largest urban settlement north of Mexico.

(Impact) The learning covered will be assessed against:

The national curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

- **know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind.**
- **gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'**
- **understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses**
- **understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed**

#### Key stage 2

Pupils should continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narrative within and across the periods they study.

They should note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms.

They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance.

They should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.

They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.