

Ancient Mexico: The Legacy of the Plumed Serpent

*The greatness of Mexico is that its past is always alive . . . Mexico exists in the present, its dawn is occurring right now, because it carries with it the wealth of a living past, an unburied memory.*¹

— Carlos Fuentes

MUCH OF THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF MESOAMERICA, a cultural region encompassing most of Mexico and northern Central America, can be traced through a pictorial language, or writing system, that was introduced around AD 950. By 1300 it had been widely adopted throughout Southern Mexico. This shared art style and writing system was used to record and preserve the history, genealogy, and mythology of the region. It documents systems of trade and migration, royal marriage, wars, and records epic stories that continue to be passed on through a pictorial and oral tradition today.

This pictorial language was composed of highly conventionalized symbols characterized by an almost geometric precision of line. It was manifested in polychrome (brightly painted) ceramic objects, codices (illustrated manuscripts), and other small-scale, portable works of art in bone, wood, shell, precious metal, and stone. Artisans used vivid colors, and the imagery on artworks shared many attributes of contemporary cartoons, particularly an exaggerated emphasis on the head and hands. Often depicting figures and animals, the style was employed primarily to convey historical or ritual narrative. Certain symbols were reduced to simple icons that could signify either an idea or a spoken word and facilitated communication for a multi-lingual population.

The system of pictographic communication and its accompanying shared art style was an ingenious response to the needs of communities whose leaders spoke as many as twelve different languages. Beginning in the tenth century, Southern Mexico was dominated by a confederacy of city-states (autonomous states consisting of a city and surrounding territories). Largely controlled by the nobility of the Nahua, Mixtec, and Zapotec peoples, these city-states claimed a common heritage. They believed that their kingdoms had been founded by the hero Quetzalcoatl, the human incarnation of the Plumed Serpent. They shared a culture, worldview, and some religious practices but operated independently. Residents of these city-states called themselves the Children of the Plumed Serpent. More than fifteen distinct ethnic groups, including the Mixtecs and Zapotecs, lived (and still thrive today) in what are now the Mexican states of Oaxaca, Puebla, and Tlaxcala. These communities transformed Mesoamerica with their innovative system of social and economic exchange. This curriculum and the corresponding exhibition, *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico*, examine the shared art style and pictographic writing system that served to unite the broad network of elites across the region.

As you explore these curriculum materials, consider the following:

- Why do people record and preserve their history and belief systems? What are the ways in which they do so?
- How do we use stories (oral, written, and pictorial) to communicate our identity and beliefs?
- How do we record our family histories and rituals?
- How do beliefs and ideas circulate today? What are the systems that support the exchange of goods and ideas?

Origins of Quetzalcoatl: The World of Tula and Chichen Itza

Who is Quetzalcoatl, or the Plumed Serpent? He is the human incarnation of the ancient spirit force of wind and rain that combined the attributes of a serpent with those of the quetzal, a bird in Mesoamerica that was prized for its green plumage. He is also an epic hero, a Mesoamerican god whose story and veneration have influenced generations.

According to legend, Tollan (or present-day Tula) in Central Mexico was founded by Quetzalcoatl. Tula, or Tollan, translates as the Place of Reeds in Nahuatl, an indigenous language spoken in Central Mexico. The city was considered an ancestral place of origin for many of the civilizations of Mexico. The Toltecs (the people who lived in Tula) were revered for their sophisticated culture, wisdom, and skilled artistry—attributes associated with the city’s legendary founder and ruler. Tula became an important religious center, attracting pilgrims from across Mesoamerica and emerging as a dynamic marketplace and international center between AD 900 and 1200.

Like Tula, the Maya city of Chichen Itza on the Yucatan Peninsula claimed an important relationship to the Plumed Serpent (who was known to the Maya as Kukulcan). Its art and architecture include numerous depictions of him. As hubs of an extensive web of exchange networks, Tula and Chichen Itza drew merchants and traders from across the Americas.

For over two centuries, both cities flourished, until their decline in AD 1200. The archaeological records of both cities reflect their cosmopolitan nature. Ceramic vessels and gold from Central America, along with turquoise from the American Southwest (used on the shield featured in this resource), are among the rare materials found at each site.

The New Tollan: The Rise of Cholula and the Birth of the International Style

The city of Tula fell in AD 1200. According to legendary accounts, Quetzalcoatl was corrupted by a rival and banished. Another cause could be the arrival in Tula of semi-nomadic tribes that undermined local alliances. The reasons for the city’s destruction are unclear, but many Toltecs migrated south to Cholula (in the modern state of Puebla), where they built a new Tollan. They dedicated the city to Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent and god of wind, in whose honor they erected a conical-roofed temple. Cholula soon emerged as the center of religious authority in Mesoamerica, and confederations of kingdoms throughout Southern and Central Mexico referred to themselves as the Children of the Plumed Serpent. Cholula was considered the holiest of cities, according to the sixteenth-century Spanish chronicler Gabriel de Rojas, and could be compared to Rome for Christians or Mecca for the Moors.

As the most important pilgrimage destination in the region, Cholula became a crossroads for people and goods. The constant flow of exotic materials fostered the development of one of the most significant marketplaces in the Americas, an achievement befitting the city’s deity, Quetzalcoatl, who was also known as the patron of merchants. By the fourteenth century, a new art style had emerged alongside a pictographic system of communication. Known as the International Style, it was characterized by a vivid palette and bold symbols that reduced ideas and spoken words to simple icons in order to promote the exchange of ideas across ethnic and linguistic boundaries.



Feasting, Trade, and the Spread of the International Style

The performance of religious stories as depicted in masterful works of art was an integral part of royal feasts among the Children of the Plumed Serpent. Poets used codices (illustrated manuscripts) like storyboards to recite royal genealogies and heroic histories. Nobles even donned costumes and enacted specific roles, dancing and singing their parts to musical accompaniment.

Feasting was an essential part of alliance building and elite economic exchange. For example, finely crafted polychrome drinking vessels were not only props for the drama of ancestor rituals, but also promoted political alliances when given as prized gifts that could later be buried with their owners. Other luxury goods, such as works of precious stone and metal, the feathers of tropical birds, and exquisitely woven and embroidered textiles, served as currency in the buying and selling of prestige and political power. These goods moved along strategic alliance corridors through bridewealth, dowry, and other forms of gift exchange.

The Aztec Conquest of Oaxaca and the Spanish Incursion

The Children of the Plumed Serpent were the dominant cultural, political, and economic force in Southern Mexico for three hundred years until the arrival of the Aztecs in the fifteenth century. The Aztec Empire forced the Mixtec and Zapotec kingdoms to produce luxury goods for their own system of exchange as tribute. The confederacies' military expertise and deft negotiating skills enabled them to retain some of their trading networks, however, and prevented the Aztecs from fully subjugating them.

Spaniards arrived in 1519, further derailing Aztec attempts to gain more power and territory. The Aztecs' imperialism had engendered hostility from surrounding communities, who readily forged alliances with the Spaniards and soon brought down the Aztec Empire. Native ruling lords, or *caciques*, allied themselves with Spanish clergy and acted as intermediaries between the indigenous past and colonial present. Today, descendants of the Children of the Plumed Serpent continue to thrive in Southern Mexico.

Turquoise-mosaic Shield

MEXICO, PUEBLA, ACATLAN, MIXTEC, AD 1100–1521

INTRICATELY COMPOSED OF TINY PIECES OF TURQUOISE tesserae, or tiles, this ceremonial shield portrays an origin story important to the Mixtec, a group of people who occupied the rugged mountains of what is today the Mexican state of Oaxaca. A visually stunning object, it reveals much about the values of the Mixtec nobility from the exotic materials used, the fineness of its construction, and its depiction of pictorial language to its function as a symbol of wealth and status.

Origin Stories

The scene at the center of the shield depicts a hero descending from the sun to a mountain with a curved peak, where two priests are making offerings. Legends like these appear in historical codices originating from the Oaxaca-Puebla border region that depict the founding of the first kingdoms by sacred ancestors who were miraculously born from trees, rivers, stones, the earth, and the sky.

Turquoise

This shield was carved of wood and inlaid with more than ten thousand pieces of turquoise mosaic. Feathers were once attached to the holes in the rim. Turquoise does not occur naturally in Mesoamerica. Traders known as *pochteca* had to import the stone from the American Southwest through extensive, long-distance trade routes. Desired for its color and rarity, it became a highly prized material. This turquoise was mined in the Cerillos Hills of New Mexico, transformed into tiny tesserae (tiles), and exchanged for hides and parrot feathers across Mesoamerica's northern frontier.

Wealth and Status

Made of exotic material and rich in color, this shield would have been a part of a military costume intended to demonstrate wealth and power. During the tenth century, Toltec artisans fashioned smaller disks out of turquoise mosaic. Known as *tetzcuapilli*, these small objects formed part of Toltec military costume and were unearthed from ritual offerings in Chichen Itza's Great Pyramid and Tula's Burned Palace.

In scenes from painted manuscripts like the Codex Nuttall on the following page, epic heroes are portrayed in elaborate costumes carrying armor, including shields. Evidence of other military costumes appears in the form of shell tunics made of spiny oyster, or *Spondylus*. See the enclosed CD for examples.

Clothing and personal adornment like this shield were more than just symbols of prestige. By possessing a shield on which an origin story is depicted the carrier would have aligned himself as protector and defender of the lineage represented.



TURQUOISE-MOSAIC SHIELD

Mexico, Puebla, Acatlan, Mixtec, AD 1100–1521

Wood, stone, tree resin, and turquoise

12¹³/₁₆ x 12³/₄ x ¹³/₁₆ in.

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (108708.000)

Photo © National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

Codex Nuttall

MEXICO, WESTERN OAXACA, MIXTEC, 15TH–16TH CENTURY

THE ANCIENT MEXICAN PICTORIAL LANGUAGE APPEARS most prominently in painted books called codices. The Mixtec codices, like the Codex Nuttall, are some of the greatest chronicles of tenth- to sixteenth-century Mesoamerica, providing the longest continuous record of an indigenous civilization in the Americas. The codices record heroic stories and royal genealogies. The screenfold manuscripts were made of animal hide or bark paper, which were covered with a plaster-like foundation upon which artisans painted figures. The manuscripts folded so that they could be stored compactly or displayed fully on the walls of royal palaces, where they created a storyboard for court poets to use in the recitation of religious stories, histories, and genealogies at royal feasts. Episodes in the codices are divided by red vertical lines that direct the reader in an up-and-down pattern from right to left.

The Epic of Lord Eight Deer

This manuscript recounts in detail the epic of Lord Eight Deer, a Mixtec conqueror and hero who lived nearly a thousand years ago, between AD 1063 and 1115. The Mixtec people, over whom Lord Eight Deer ruled, occupied the mountains of what is today the Mexican state of Oaxaca. During Mesoamerica's Postclassic period (AD 950–1521), the Mixtecs and their allies the Zapotecs, were organized into numerous small royal estates, each ruled by kings and queens who lived in palaces and formed alliances with each other through intermarriage. Lord Eight Deer emerged as a cult hero for the Mixtec people after he united a number of independent kingdoms under the protection of his community, Tilantongo, and elevated their status within the regional hierarchy. Eight Deer's biography was part of an *Iliad*-like epic poem containing tales of marriage, war, murder, adventure, and political intrigue. This page illustrates one of the final events in Eight Deer's epic.

He travels with his companion Four Jaguar to seek the counsel of Lord One Death, the Mixtec sun god. After this meeting, they embark on the long journey home. The three travelers re-cross a body of water they had traversed in an earlier page, but the artist indicates that the second crossing is plagued by rough waters (see waves). The scene below the water crossing illustrates Eight Deer (on right) and one of his companions making an offering at a ballcourt upon their return home.

- Who are some of the epic/mythical heroes that you know about? Make a list of heroes and their deeds. What are the sources of these stories? Greek and Roman history? Mesoamerican history? What are the means by which these stories have passed and will continue to pass from one generation to the next?

The Mixtec, Zapotec, and Nahuatl peoples used a sacred calendar of 260 days. People portrayed in the codices were named after their birthdays; each name was represented by a combination of numerals and day signs. For example, Lord Eight Deer can often be identified by the image of a deer's head, the seventh day sign, and eight colored dots. In this pictorial form, the symbols could be understood by speakers of different language groups.

- Imagine yourself as the hero of a twenty-first-century epic. What choices will you make in your life to bring change to your people, school, or community? Document your historical contribution in a codex that recounts important events in your life. Consider how you will depict yourself and other important characters as well as how you will represent the passage of time from one scene to the next in a storyboard narrative.



CODEX NUTTALL (detail)

Mexico, Western Oaxaca, Mixtec, 15th–16th century

Deerskin, gesso, and pigments, 44¹¹/₁₆ x 7¹/₂ x 9¹/₄ in.

Trustees of the British Museum, London (MSS 39671)

Photo © Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY

Family Trees

Arranged marriages enabled Mixtec and Zapotec elites to improve their economic status, control their people, and link their communities politically. The Mixtecs thus were especially concerned with recording the genealogies, or family trees, of their historic and divine ancestors in their codices. By 1521, every noble house claimed descent from the epic hero Lord Eight Deer and other heroic figures like Lady Six Monkey and Lord Eleven Wind.²

- *Record your Family Tree* – What important memories do you have of your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents? If you never had a chance to meet these people, interview family members or family friends about your ancestors. Make a chronological list of names and events, then find a picture of a tree that you can use as a template. (See the CD for an example.) Record your familial history starting with the roots. Document successive generations as you move up the trunk. Use branches and leaves to draw scenes of special people, places, and events.

Vessel

NAYARIT, MEXICO, AD 1350–1521

THIS VESSEL IS PAINTED LIKE A CODEX, WITH RADIANT colors, intricate geometric designs, and delicate figurative imagery. It depicts more than thirty figures, both human and supernatural, engaged in mythic and historic actions. The scenes resemble those found in painted books (like the Codex Nuttall on the previous page), which recorded dynastic and mythological events of importance to the Children of the Plumed Serpent. This style of painted ceramic was prevalent throughout Oaxaca and Puebla in the fourteenth century.

Codex-style Vessels

This vessel depicts an origin story whose protagonist wears the red buccal (mouth) mask associated with Quetzalcoatl. The narrative begins with an event in which two birds descend from the neck of the vessel through a red vertical band to a small structure. The protagonist is born, baptized in a water ritual, named, and raised. Thirty-six individuals enact a series of mythic rituals related to the establishment of water blessings for children.

Vessels ornamented with scenes taken from the historical codices indicate a close connection between royal feasting and the recounting of creation stories and historical sagas.

This vessel was hand built from clay. Once the clay had dried to a leatherlike consistency, its surface was polished to prepare it for treatment with a fine slip, a mix of clay and water, called *terra sigilatta* (literally “sealed earth”) that resembles a glaze. Designs were painted in narrow dark lines and colors were created by adding mineral-based pigments to *terra sigilatta*. Each application of the color had to be smoothed and burnished. It then would undergo at least two firings.³

This vessel comes from the state of Nayarit, on the northwest coast of Mexico, several hundred miles from the Southern Mexican sites of Oaxaca and Cholula where similar vessels were made. The prominence of the red buccal-masked character suggests a West Mexican narrative associated with Quetzalcoatl.



VESSEL

Nayarit, Mexico, AD 1350–1521

Slip-painted ceramic, 13¼ x 7½ in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by Camilla Chandler Frost (M.2000.86)

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

Relación Geográfica Mapa de Teozacoalco

MEXICO, OAXACA, AD 1580

THIS MAP FROM 1580 WAS PRODUCED BY THE inhabitants of the community of Teozacoalco, in the modern state of Oaxaca, Mexico. Spanish officials in 1560 had asked town leaders to describe who they were and where they were from. This drawing is how the community chose to answer the survey. It serves as a map, identifying the community's boundaries and providing the dynastic history of the community with an emphasis on the importance of marriages. It also reveals the longevity of the pictographic system of communication and shared art style, which extended into the colonial period.

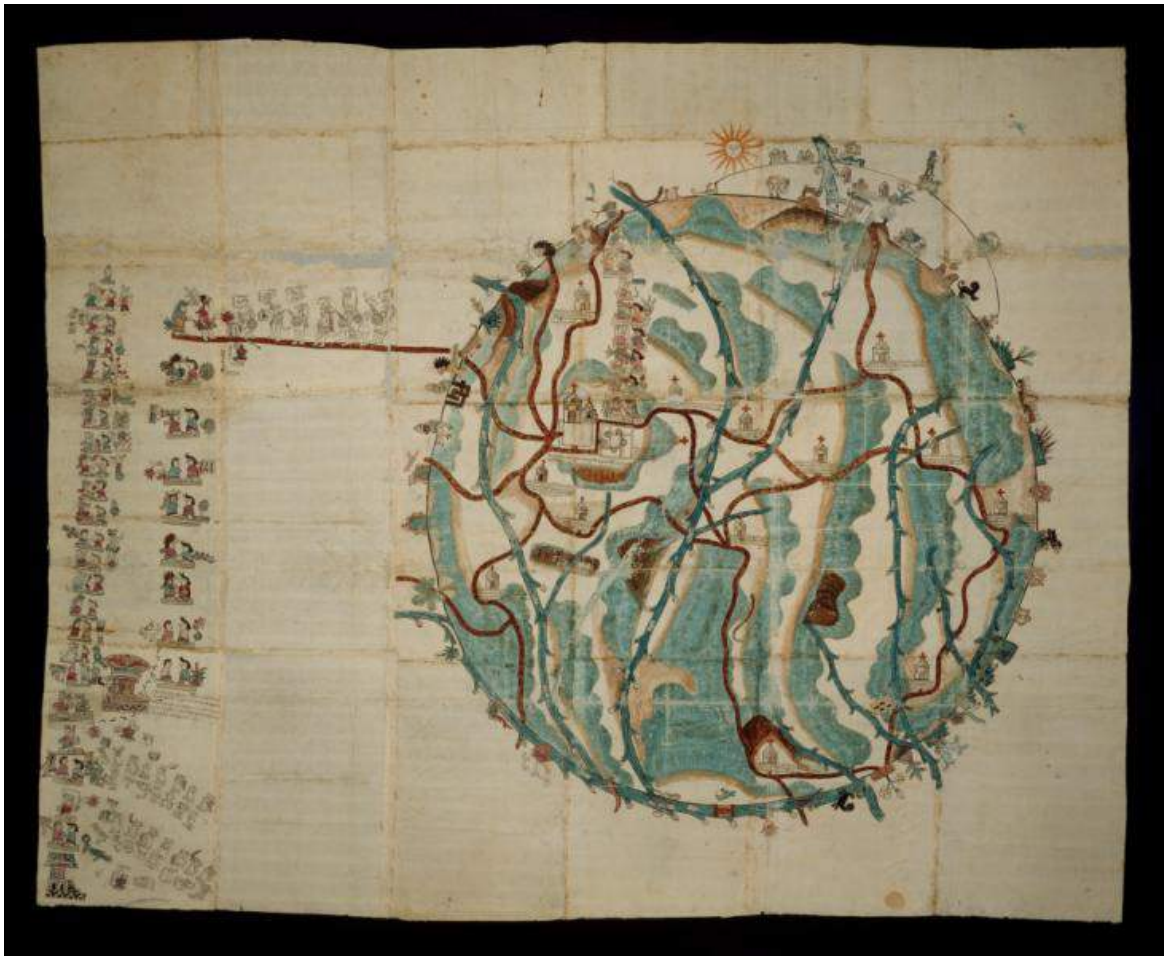
Cultural Continuity

The map represents a fusion of Mesoamerican and European styles; Nahua-Mixteca figures wearing jaguar helmets are juxtaposed with Romanesque Gothic churches. On the right, the map illustrates the township of Teozacoalco drawn in a circular format and dotted with rivers and hills, features of the town's topography. Visible at the very top of the town is a Catholic church. On the left, two columns of paired figures record the lineages and the significant marriages of the ruling families of Teozacoalco and Tilantongo. Tilantongo's royal line traced its origins to the eleventh-century ruler Lord Eight Deer, immortalized in the Codex Nuttall; Teozacoalco came to control Tilantongo through interdynastic marriage. The map illustrations emphasize that place and royal lineage remained unchanged from the epics recorded in the painted codices of the fourteenth century. The images of the church steeples, however, speak to the processes of negotiation and adaptation to colonial rule that were undertaken by local elites in order to maintain continuity with their past.

- Draw a map of your neighborhood using your school as a point of reference. What kinds of symbols will you use to illustrate the boundaries that surround your school? What other important locations, such as your home, local library, or park, will you include in your map? Create an accompanying legend that defines the symbols that you used so that others are able to decipher the map. Compare your map with those of your classmates. Notice where the maps overlap and intersect.

In the colonial period, some indigenous pictorial documents remained important, especially practical documents such as legal accounts, land records, tribute lists, and genealogies. Documents like this map validated a community's lineage and land claims. Many of these histories were painted based on memory or shared memory rather than on measurements, helping to configure community identity by recording how things came to be.

- Combine all of the students' neighborhood maps and make a list of the most commonly referenced landmarks. Use these landmarks as the boundaries for creating a three-dimensional map of the community, using the school as the central reference point. Lay a grid of local streets on the floor using colored or masking tape. Ask each student to create a structure out of construction paper or cardboard that signifies their place on the map. The structure can represent an existing site or a dream for a site that fulfills a community need. Ask students to reflect on their choice by writing a description of the site's importance and/or what it contributes to the history or legacy of the community.



RELACION GEOGRAFICA MAPA DE TEOZACOALCO

Mexico, Oaxaca, AD 1580

Paper, 56 x 69¹¹/₁₆ in.

Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries (JGI xxv-3)

Photo © Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin

Notes

¹ Carlos Fuentes, “A New Time for Mexico,” in *Legends of the Plumed Serpent: Biography of a Mexican God*, ed. Neil Baldwin (New York: Public Affairs, 1998).

² John M. D. Pohl, *The Legend of Lord Eight Deer: An Epic of Ancient Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

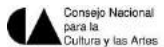
³ John M. D. Pohl, *Narrative Mixtec Ceramics of Ancient Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: The Princeton University Program in Latin American Studies, 2007).

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles, and by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.




The Los Angeles presentation was made possible in part by LACMA's Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund.

The organizers are grateful for the special collaboration of the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA), Mexico, and the National Institute for Anthropology and History (INAH), Mexico.



These curriculum materials were prepared and edited by Rachel Bernstein, Jennifer Reid, and the Education Department, and designed by Jenifer Shell, with selections adapted from the exhibition text and catalogue for *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico*. Copyright © 2012 Museum Associates/Los Angeles County Museum of Art. All rights reserved.

Evenings for Educators is presented by **CHASE** 

Additional funding is provided by the Joseph Drown Foundation, Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation, and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Education programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art are supported in part by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund for Arts Education, and Rx for Reading.



*Children of the Plumed Serpent:
The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico*



LACMA | Evenings for Educators | April 17, 2012

About the Exhibition

LACMA presents *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico*, the first large-scale exploration of the ancient kingdoms of southern Mexico and their patron deity, Quetzalcoatl, the human incarnation of the Plumed Serpent. On view from April 1 through July 1, 2012, this groundbreaking exhibition features more than two hundred objects—including painted codices, turquoise mosaics, gold, and textiles—from Mexico, Europe, and the United States. These rare artworks trace the development of an extensive trade network that resulted in a period of cultural innovation that spread across ancient Mexico, the American Southwest, and Central America during the Postclassic (AD 900–1521) and early colonial periods.

About this Resource

This resource examines some of the history and traditions of Mesoamerica, a cultural region encompassing most of Mexico and northern Central America (see the map on the following page), which can be traced through a pictorial language, or writing system. Introduced around AD 950, it became widely adopted by 1300 throughout Southern Mexico. This shared art style and writing system was used to record and preserve the history, genealogy, and mythology of the region. It documents systems of trade and migration, royal marriage, wars, and records epic stories that continue to be passed on through a pictorial and oral tradition today.

This pictorial language was composed of highly conventionalized symbols characterized by an almost geometric precision of line. It was manifested in polychrome (brightly painted) ceramic objects, codices (illustrated manuscripts), and other small-scale, portable works of art in bone, wood, shell, precious metal, and stone. Artisans used vivid colors, and the imagery on artworks shared many attributes of contemporary cartoons, particularly an exaggerated emphasis on the head and hands. Often depicting figures and animals, the style was employed primarily to convey historical or ritual narrative. Certain symbols were reduced to simple icons that could signify either an idea or a spoken word and facilitated communication for a multilingual population.

Share the enclosed images with your students. Use or adapt the following discussion questions and activities to your students' diverse needs and learning styles.

- Why do people record and preserve their history and belief systems? What are the ways in which they do so?
- How do we use stories (oral, written, and pictorial) to communicate our identity and beliefs?
- How do we record our family histories and rituals?
- How do beliefs and ideas circulate today? What are the systems that support the exchange of goods and ideas?



Turquoise-mosaic Shield

Mexico, Puebla, Acatlan, Mixtec, AD 1100–1521

Wood, stone, tree resin, and turquoise

$12^{13/16} \times 12^{3/4} \times 1^{13/16}$ in.

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C. (108708.000)

Photo © National Museum of the American Indian
Smithsonian Institution

Turquoise-mosaic Shield

(AD 1100–1521)

Mexico, Puebla, Acatlan

Wood, stone, tree resin, and turquoise

$12^{13/16} \times 12^{3/4} \times 1^{13/16}$ in.

National Museum of the American Indian

Intricately composed of tiny pieces of turquoise tesserae, or tiles, these ceremonial shields would have been a part of a military costume intended to demonstrate wealth and power. See the essay for more information.



Turquoise-mosaic Disk
(AD 900–1200), Mexico, Yucatán, Chichén Itzá
Wood and turquoise, $9\frac{7}{8}$ x $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (diam.)
Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City
Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA, by Jorge Pérez de Lara

Known as *tetzcuapilli*, this disk with a plumed serpent design formed part of Toltec military costume and was recovered from the Castillo pyramid at Chichen Itza.



Tunic (Coraza de Tula)

Mexico, Hidalgo, Tula, Pyramid B, Toltec, AD 900–1200

Spondylus and olivella shell, 49 x 16½ in.

Centro INAH Hidalgo (10-5689940/2)

Photo © CNCA-INAH Museo Nacional de Antropología

Mexico City, by Ignacio Hernandez Guevara

In addition to the ceremonial shields on the previous pages, evidence of other military costume appears in the form of shell tunics made of spiny oyster, or *Spondylus*, like the one pictured above.



Codex Nuttall (detail)

Mexico, Western Oaxaca, Mixtec, 15th–16th century

Deerskin, gesso, and pigments, 44¹/₁₆ x 7¹/₂ x 9¹/₄ in.

Trustees of the British Museum, London (MSS 39671)

Photo © Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY

The ancient Mexican pictorial language appears most prominently in painted books called codices. The Mixtec codices, like the Codex Nuttall above, are some of the greatest chronicles of tenth- to sixteenth-century Mesoamerica, providing the longest continuous record of an indigenous civilization in the Americas. The codices record heroic stories and royal genealogies. See the lesson plan included in this curriculum for more information on how to read a codex.



Codex Nuttall (detail)

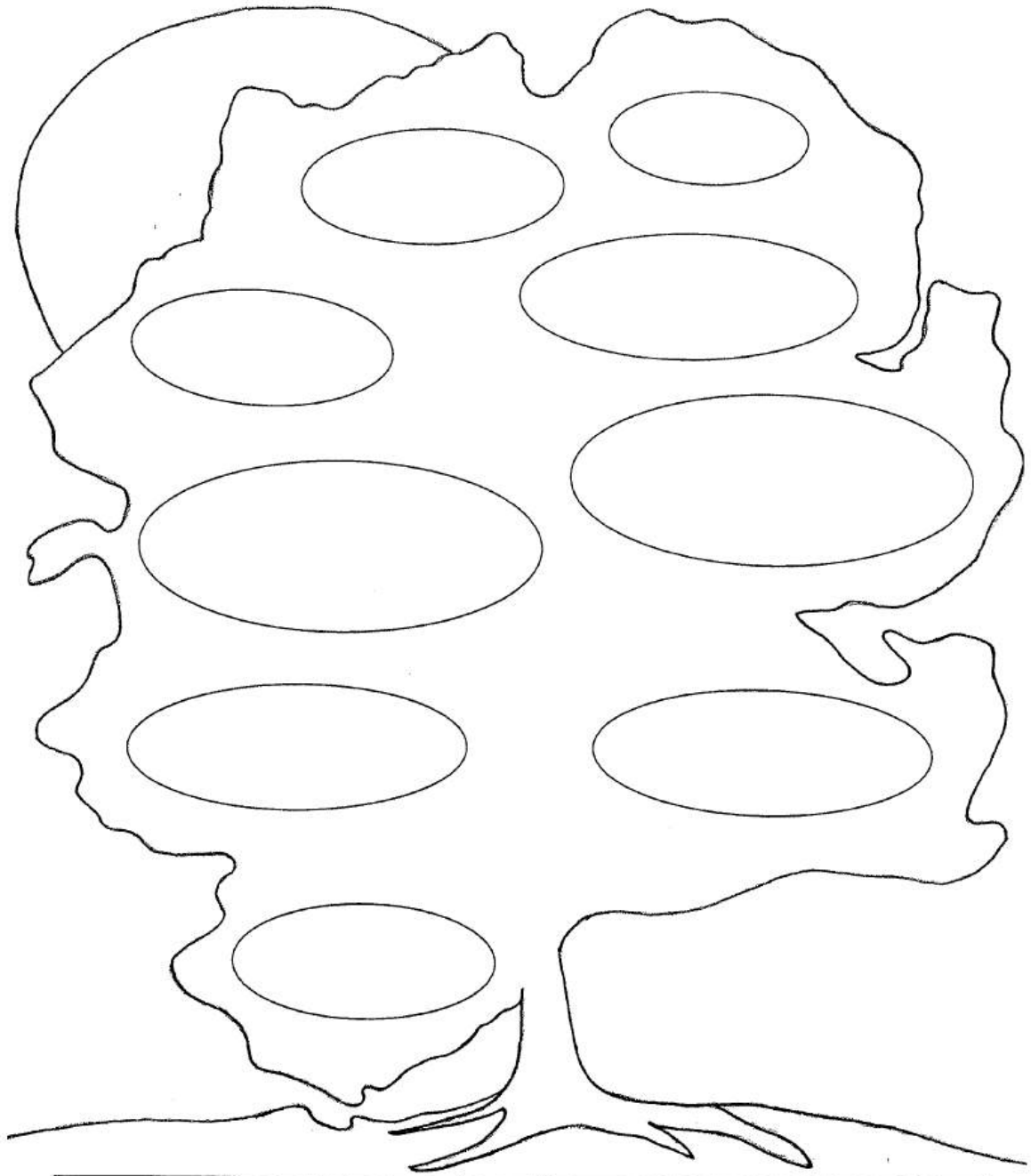
Mexico, Western Oaxaca, Mixtec, 15th–16th century

Deerskin, gesso, and pigments, 44¹¹/₁₆ x 7¹/₂ x 9¹/₄ in.

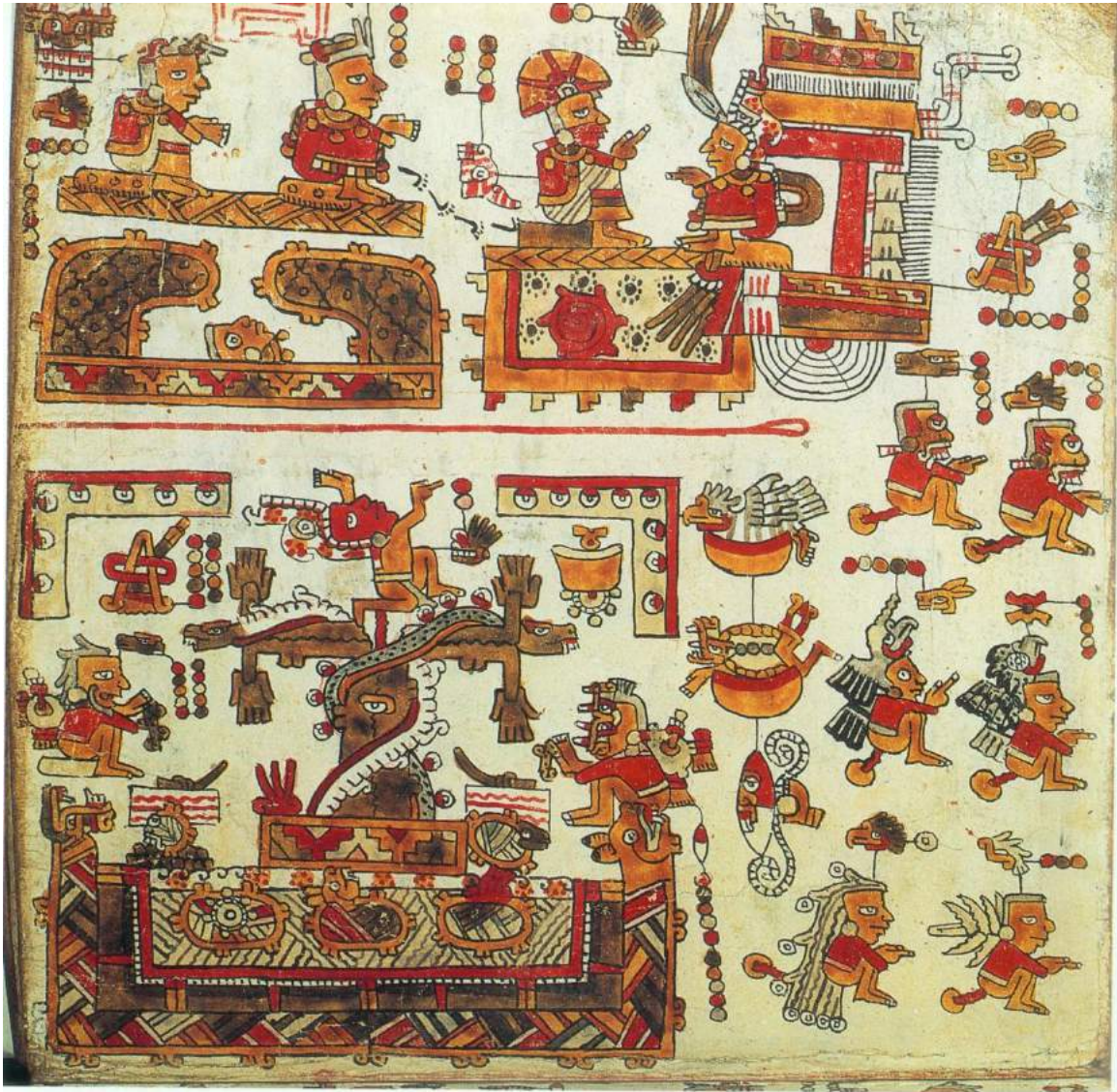
Trustees of the British Museum, London (MSS 39671)

Photo © Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY

Record your Family Tree – What important memories do you have of your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents? If you never had a chance to meet these people, interview family members or family friends about your ancestors. Make a chronological list of names and events, then find a picture of a tree that you can use as a template (or see the following page). Record your familial history starting with the roots. Document successive generations as you move up the trunk. Use branches and leaves to draw scenes of special people, places, and events.



FAMILY TREE



Codex Selden (detail)

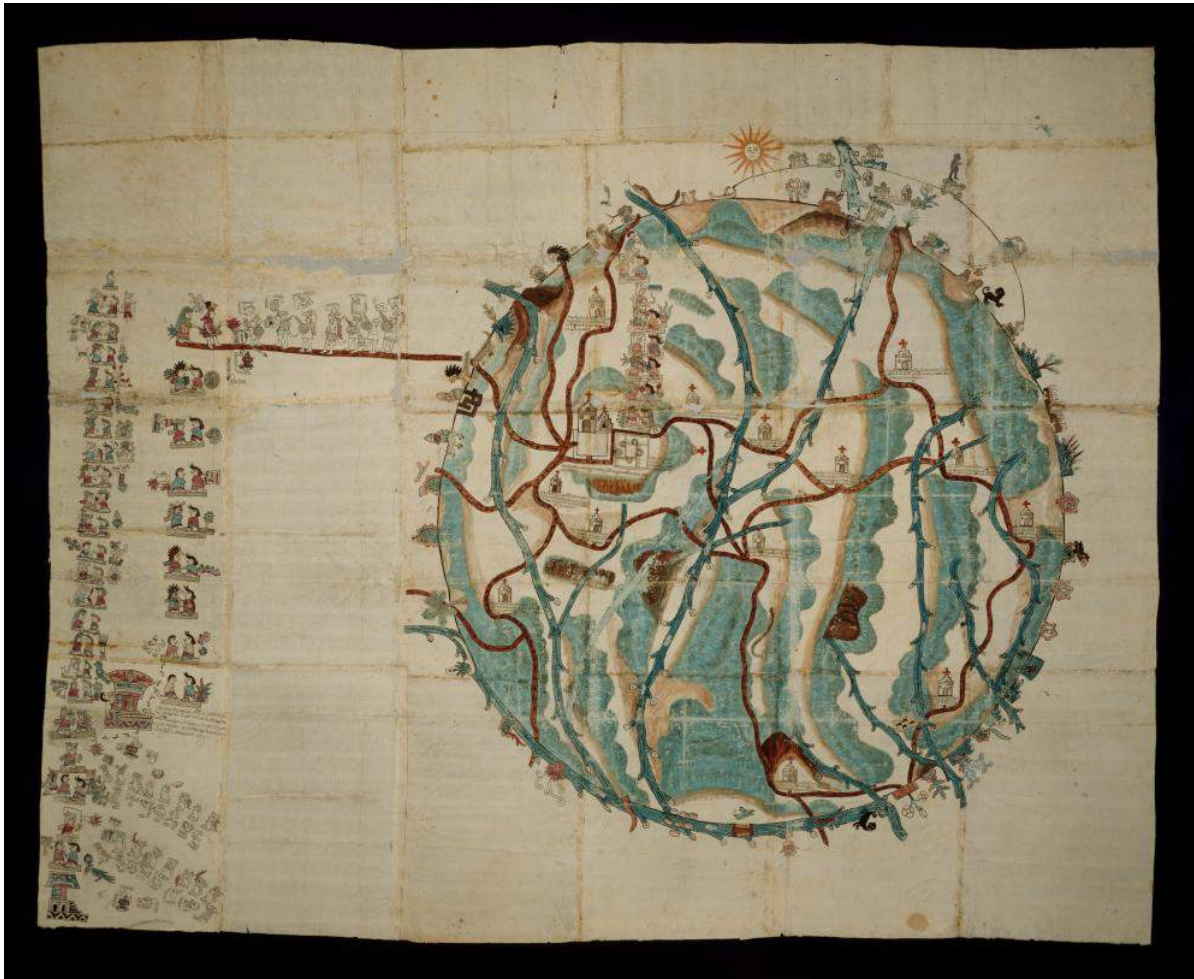
Mexico, Western Oaxaca (AD 1556–1560)

Deerskin, gesso and pigments, 20 leaves: 10⁷/₈ x 10⁷/₈ in. each

Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Photo © The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Imagine yourself as the hero of a twenty-first-century epic. What choices will you make in your life to bring change to your people, school, or community? Document your historical contribution in a codex that recounts important events in your life. Consider how you will depict yourself and other important characters as well as how you will represent the passage of time from one scene to the next in a storyboard narrative.



Relación Geográfica Mapa de Tezacoalco
Mexico, Oaxaca, AD 1580, Paper, 56 x 69¹¹/₁₆ in.
Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection
University of Texas Libraries (JGI xxv-3)

Photo © Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin

This map from 1580 was produced by the inhabitants of the community of Tezacoalco, in the modern state of Oaxaca, Mexico. It serves as a map, identifying the community's boundaries and providing the dynastic history of the community with an emphasis on the importance of marriages. See the lesson plan included in this curriculum for a mapping project.

Classroom Activities

- Draw a map of your neighborhood using your school as a point of reference. What kinds of symbols will you use to illustrate the boundaries that surround your school? What other important locations, such as your home, local library, or park, will you include in your map? Create an accompanying legend that defines the symbols that you used so that others are able to decipher the map. Compare your map with those of your classmates. Notice where the maps overlap and intersect.
- Combine all of the students' neighborhood maps and make a list of the most commonly referenced landmarks. Use these landmarks as the boundaries for creating a three-dimensional map of the community, using the school as the central reference point. Lay a grid of local streets on the floor using colored or masking tape. Ask each student to create a structure out of construction paper or cardboard that signifies their place on the map. The structure can represent an existing site or a dream for a site that fulfills a community need. Ask students to reflect on their choice by writing a description of the site's importance and/or what it contributes to the history or legacy of the community.



MESOAMERICAN ART AT LACMA



Vessel

Nayarit, Mexico, AD 1350–1521

Slip-painted ceramic, 13¼ x 7½ in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by Camilla Chandler Frost (M.2000.86)

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/ LACMA

This vessel is painted like a codex, with radiant colors, intricate geometric designs, and delicate figurative imagery. It depicts more than thirty figures, both human and supernatural, engaged in mythic and historic actions. The scenes resemble those found in painted books, which recorded dynastic and mythological events of importance to the Children of the Plumed Serpent.



Pipe with Hummingbird

Mexico, Western Oaxaca or Puebla, 1100–1400

Ceramic with postfire application of Maya blue pigment, Length: 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Gift of the Art Museum Council in honor of the museum's 25th anniversary (M.90.168.30)

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/ LACMA



Vessel with Hummingbird Rattle

Mexico, Oaxaca, Zapotec, 1300–1500

Slip-painted ceramic with postfire application of Maya blue pigment, 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Gift of the 2003 Collectors Committee (M.2003.44)

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/ LACMA



Skull with Turquoise Mosaic

Mexico, Western Oaxaca or Puebla, 1400-1521

Human skull with turquoise, jadeite and shell

6 ½ x 6 x 8 in.

Gift of Constance McCormick Fearing

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

Skulls of Mixtec ancestors, preserved in shrines, were sometimes adorned with a mosaic of turquoise, shell, and other rare minerals. The turquoise, signifying the wealth of the palace to which the ancestor belonged, also testifies to long-distance exchange up the west coast of Mexico and into New Mexico, where turquoise was mined and distributed.



Labret in the Form of an Eagle Head
Mexico, Western Oaxaca or Puebla, 1200–1500
Gold, $\frac{3}{4}$ x $1\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Gift of Constance McCormick Fearing (AC1992.134.29)
Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/ LACMA

Objects made of gold and silver were worn by the elite in public ceremonies. This ornament in the shape of an eagle head was worn pierced through the lower lip or in the skin just below the lower lip. It was not mere jewelry, but confirmed the wearer's rank of nobility and power.

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS



Enrique Chagoya (Mexico, b. 1953)

Tales of the Conquest – Codex II (Historias de la conquista – Códice II) (details), 1992

Mixed media on handmade paper, Framed: 16½ x 117¼ x 4 in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Gift of Ann and Aaron Nisenson in memory of Michael Nisenson (AC1995.183.10a–e)

© Enrique Chagoya, Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/ LACMA

Contemporary artist Enrique Chagoya combines American popular culture elements, like Superman, with historic images from Pre-Columbian mythology. Notice the detail of the Codex Nuttall included in the top right image and lower left.



Enrique Chagoya (Mexico, b. 1953)

Uprising of the Spirit (Elevación del espíritu), 1994

Acrylic and oil on paper, 48 x 72 in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Gift of Ann and Aaron Nisenson in memory of Michael Nisenson (AC1995.183.9)

© Enrique Chagoya, Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/ LACMA

In scenes from painted manuscripts like the Codex Nuttall (pages 6 and 7), epic heroes are portrayed in elaborate costumes carrying armor, including shields. Here, artist Enrique Chagoya features Nezahualcoyotl, a ruler of the Mexican city-state Texcoco, from the 16th century *Ixtlilxochitl Codex*. When placed together, Chagoya's compositions reference the codices created in pre-colonial Mexico.

Cover: *Codex Nuttall*
Mexico, Western Oaxaca, 15th–16th c.
The British Museum Library, London
Photo © Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles, and by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.



The Los Angeles presentation was made possible in part by LACMA's Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund.

The organizers are grateful for the special collaboration of the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA), Mexico, and the National Institute for Anthropology and History (INAH), Mexico.



These curriculum materials were prepared and edited by Rachel Bernstein, Jennifer Reid, and the Education Department, and designed by Jenifer Shell, with selections adapted from the exhibition text and catalogue for *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico*. Copyright © 2012 Museum Associates/Los Angeles County Museum of Art. All rights reserved.

Evenings for Educators is presented by **CHASE**

Additional funding is provided by the Joseph Drown Foundation, Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation, and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Education programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art are supported in part by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund for Arts Education, and Rx for Reading.



Classroom Activity

Pictorial Language: Mesoamerican Reading and Writing

Enduring Understanding The basic unit of pictorial language is the pictogram, a graphic symbol that represents an idea or concept. Pictorial language, although an ancient tradition, is still employed in colloquialisms today.

Grades K–12

Time One class period

Visual Art Concepts Symbol, meaning, representation, communication,

Materials Paper and pencils. Optional: colored pencils

Talking about Art



Lord Eight Deer

Pictorial language, or an ideographic writing system is a method of communication based on the ideogram/pictogram. An ideogram is a symbol that represents an idea or concept, while a pictogram conveys meaning through realistic resemblance. These symbols, unique to every ancient civilization, formed a hieroglyphic dictionary for Mesoamerican scribes.

Much of the history of Mesoamerica can be traced through their pictorial language, independently developed around 950 and widely adopted throughout southern Mexico by 1300. It was used to record and preserve the history, genealogy, and mythology of Mixtec, Nahuatl, and Zapotec cultures and appears most prominently in painted books called codices. (For more information about codices and for tips on how to create one, see the accompanying lesson plan *Create Your Own Codex*.)

View and discuss the *Codex Nuttall*, Mexico, Western Oaxaca, 15th–16th century. What is going on here? Who are the characters? What is the setting? What action is taking place? How did the scribe or artist use line, shape, space, color, and composition to tell the story?

This codex tells the story of Lord Eight Deer, an epic Mixtec conqueror and cult hero who lived between 1063 and 1115. This plate, or page of the codex, recounts one of the final events in Eight Deer's famous journey.

Can you find the main character? You can identify him, and other characters, based on what they are wearing. As seen at left, Eight Deer often wears a deer's headdress and is accompanied by eight colored dots, both of which signify his birthday.

Start reading this plate from right to left. These scenes recount Eight Deer's journey home to Tilantongo, Oaxaca after he and his companion, Four Jaguar, visited Lord One Death, the Mixtec Sun God. The first scene begins with Eight Deer and Four Jaguar's travels through the Yuta River, represented by a rectangle lined with squares. The *ollin*, or wrench-like shape at the bottom of the river symbolizes movement and describes the waters as rough and the journey treacherous. In the second scene below the river crossing, Eight Deer and Four Jaguar make an offering to mark their return at the Yuhua Ballcourt.

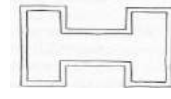
The vertical red line at the center of the plate represents the transition to a new scene. What do you think might happen next? What symbols for people, actions, and places will be repeated?



Yuta River*



Movement*



Yuhua Ballcourt*

Art Activity

Although these literary devices were created in antiquity, the ideogram and pictogram remain very pertinent to contemporary methods of communication. What symbols do you see, read, and use to communicate with others? Consider everything from restroom and wayfinding signage to the emoticon. What tools do we use to communicate these messages? What advantages do these symbols and methods offer that the written word does not? Disadvantages? The Mesoamerican writing system facilitated communication among people who spoke as many as twelve different languages. Of the symbols that you brainstormed, which can be considered almost universal? Consider the hexagonal shapes pictured below—an international ideogram individualized with regional text.

Create a shared pictorial language with your class by drafting a list of frequently used national, cultural, religious, or commercial symbols. Divide students into pairs or small groups, assigning each a symbol or set of symbols to define and draw with colored pencils.



USA



China



Iran

Reflection

Collect all definitions and drawings to create a hieroglyphic alphabet that will serve as the class' pictorial language dictionary. Draft a writing prompt that allows students to utilize the dictionary as a reference text.

Evenings for Educators, *Ancient Mexico: The Legacy of the Plumed Serpent*. April 2012.

Prepared by Stephanie Lozano with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Education Department.

*Adapted from Byland, Bruce E. and John M.D. Pohl. *The Archaeology of the Mixtec Codices: In the Realm of Eight Deer*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994.

Classroom Activity

Music and Dance of the Plumed Serpent

Enduring Understanding	Music and dance are expressions of humanity. They articulate and preserve cultural history, mythology, and tradition.
Grades	K–12
Time	One to three class periods
Visual and Performing Art Concepts	Music and sound, dance and movement, ritual, cooperative and collaborative teamwork, and multimodal teaching and learning
Materials	Feathers, string, rice, paper or cardstock, cardboard circles and cylinders, and glue or tape.
Talking about Art	<p>The ancient music and dance traditions of the Mesoamerican peoples evolved concurrently with other arts disciplines. Materials, motifs, and designs spanned the visual and performing arts and were employed by artists, dancers, and musicians alike. Take, for instance, the conch shell, which artists used as both a palette for storing paint and as a source material for mosaics. Musicians played the conch as a trumpet while dancers wore them as jewelry and in tunics, woven from cut shells and string. The image of the conch is even incorporated into the Mesoamerican writing system as an ideogram, exemplifying the material's importance to Mesoamerican culture and ideology.</p> <p>View and discuss the <i>Turquoise-Mosaic Shield</i>, Mexico, Puebla, AD 1100–1521. This shield is a mosaic, or collage inlaid with stone pieces, made not of conch but of more than 10,000 pieces of turquoise! Feathers were once attached to the holes in the rim, which allowed the artwork to be mounted and used for ceremonial purposes.</p> <p>If you were a dancer who had the honor of dancing with this shield, what might it convey about your role in the performance and in the story being told? Imagine that the dance is accompanied by musicians playing rattles, drums, and trumpets. Can you feel the sound align with the rhythm of your heartbeat?</p> <p>Shields were important to two performances called the dance <i>chimali</i> (shield) and the dance of the <i>guerreros</i> (warriors). These complementary dances highlight the shield and how it's used in a battle between two warriors. Traditional dances such as these have been passed down through generations and are still practiced by dance troupes today.</p>

Art and Performance Activity

Create your own shield and rattle out of simple materials, which you will use while you practice a few basic Mesoamerican dance moves. Use a cardboard circle or cake pad as the foundation for the shield. Adorn it with faux Quetzal feathers using glue or tape and adhere a sturdy piece of string to the back to serve as a strap. To make a rattle, fill a cylinder, such as a cardboard toilet paper insert, with rice and tape circular pieces of paper or cardstock to both ends.

Before the dance begins, experiment with the rattle to produce sounds of varying frequency, volume, and quality, from fast, loud, rough sounds to slow, quiet, soft sounds. Ask a partner to clap a rhythm for you to mimic with your rattle. Join another pair of partners to form a troupe. Can you and your partner add onto their rhythm to create a song?

Incorporate dance by practicing the basic steps of the "permission" dance. This dance serves as the introduction to many Mesoamerican rituals, where dancers ask the ancestors for permission to dance on the underworld. Start by taking four steps forward, then four steps back. Now spin in a circle to your left, to mark the creation of the earth. Next, spin to the right, to mark life's destruction. Practice these four basic steps with your partner. When you're ready, try the dance as a troupe.

Supplement your dance with the sound that you and your troupe created. First, assign two members to the roles of musicians and two as dancers. Talk as a troupe about the vision or inspiration for your ritual. What story will you tell in your performance and how? Practice the music and dance parts separately, incorporating the rattle or shield into your score or choreography. Once each member of the troupe has mastered their individual role, combine all components to create your ritual performance.

Reflection

Rearrange the classroom as a stage and ask students to perform with their troupes. Leave some time after each performance for troupes to talk with the class about the vision and stories that inspired the performances. After the classroom ceremony, ask students to reflect on the collaborative process by answering the following questions with their group members:

What was the troupe's vision?

What steps did the troupe take to realize that vision?

What cooperative role did you play in the process (a leader, an idea-generator, the devil's advocate, etc.)?

What role did your troupe members play?

How did the different roles work together?

Did the troupe's final performance match the original vision?

What problems arose in the process?

How did you solve those problems?

If you were to try the process again, what would you change or do differently?

Classroom Activity

Create Your Own Codex

Enduring Understanding	Civilizations throughout the world and all periods of time document their culture to mark their place in history.
Grades	3–12
Time	Two class periods
Visual Art Concepts	Storytelling, pictorial language, composition, paper sculpting and bookmaking, oil pastel techniques (blending, layering, mixing)
Materials	Brown paper grocery or lunch bags, scissors, hole punches, pencils, oil pastels. Optional: yarn and gold beads
Talking about Art	<p>What tools do civilizations use to document their achievements? How do local communities and people record their histories? How do you and your family or friends mark memories?</p> <p>All cultures create methods and materials to document their worldview, historic achievements, and great leaders. The ancient Mesoamericans used codices to record heroic stories and royal genealogies. A codex is a painted book or manuscript made of animal hide or tree bark that was folded for easy storage and later displayed on the walls of royal palaces for ceremonial use. The Mixtec codices are some of the greatest chronicles of the 10th- to 16th-century, providing the longest continuous record of an indigenous civilization in the Americas.</p> <p>View and discuss the <i>Codex Nuttall</i>, Mexico, Western Oaxaca, 15th–16th century. What’s going on here? Who are the characters? What is the setting? What action is taking place? How did the artist use line, shape, space, color, and composition to tell this story?</p> <p>This codex tells the story of Lord Eight Deer, an epic Mixtec conqueror and hero who lived nearly a thousand years ago. (For more information about the story, see the curriculum essay and accompanying lesson plan <i>Pictorial Language: Mesoamerican Reading and Writing</i>.)</p> <p>How did the artist distinguish one scene from the next? How did s/he direct your eye to the next part of the story? Who do you think is the main character? What do you see that makes you say that? How is this character differentiated from others? What do you think happened before this scene and what might happen next? Document your version of the story in writing to accompany this page.</p>

Making Art

Create your own codex using brown paper grocery or lunch bags. Cut the bags into long strips, 5–8 inches wide. Fold the strip like an accordion to create a book. Punch a hole on one side of the stack of pages, which will serve as the binding.

Before you begin drawing, brainstorm an inspiration for your story. You can recount a major event in U.S. history or imagine yourself as the hero of a 21st-century epic. Consider how you will depict yourself and other important characters, using style of dress and accessories. How will you depict the setting in the background and story's action in the foreground and middle ground? Lastly, think about how you will represent the passage of time and how you will guide the reader's eye.

Use these details to write a paragraph-version of your story in English. Divide your story into 4–5 scenes that capture its essence. Now it's time to translate the story into your own pictorial language!

Open up the book and decide how you will storyboard your narrative. Mesoamerican authors did not write in the linear fashion that we write sentences today; instead, their stories followed the shape of a wave with peaks and valleys. Lay out your narrative by drawing either a geometric (straight, angular) or organic (curvy, wiggly) line along the length of the paper strip. Next, consider how you will transition from one scene to the next. Episodes in the codices are often divided by red vertical lines that direct the reader in an up-and-down pattern from right to left. Divide the page into 4–5 sections and draft your 4–5 corresponding scenes in pencil first. Next, add color by blending, layering, and mixing different oil pastels together. When you're finished, collapse the book into an accordion again and loop a piece of yarn or faux leather, through the punched hole. Tie gold beads on either end as decorative toggles.

Reflection

In royal Mesoamerican ceremonies, codices hung on palace walls while poets recited their epic stories. Transform your classroom into a palace by displaying students' codices on bulletin boards. Invite students to read their paragraph in front of their codex to share with classmates.

Classroom Activity

Mapping Your Community

Enduring Understanding	Maps survey the geographic details of a town or city. They can also document residential population and community history.
Grades	3–12
Time	One to two class periods
Visual Art Concepts	Geography, cartography, topography, recording, painting techniques
Materials	Brushes, sets of paint (such as tempera cakes), paper. Optional: black India ink, classroom map or old Thomas Guides, Google map
Talking about Art	<p>View and discuss <i>Relación Geográfica Mapa de Teozacoalco</i>, Mexico, Oaxaca, 1580. (See the accompanying Selected Resources page for a link to a high-resolution image.) What do you see? The shrubbery, roads, and waterways identify this artwork as a map. Compare this map with one in the classroom. What features do the maps have in common? How are they different?</p> <p>Most maps include topographical information that describes a landscape such as streets, plazas, rivers, ports, coastlines, and, sometimes, inhabitants. Where do you see people represented on this map?</p> <p>The Mixtec cartographers who painted this map created it in response to a government survey. In 1560, Spanish officials asked the town leaders of Teozacoalco, in the modern state of Oaxaca, to describe who they were and where they were from. This painted map is what they chose to submit and identifies both the community's physical boundaries (everything encompassed within the circle) and its dynastic history (notice the marriages represented on the right).</p> <p>What contemporary surveys ask people to identify themselves, their family, and where they live? Who administers these surveys and why? What methods do they use to record this information? In what form do they record it? Brainstorm a list of surveys, such as the census or the school roster, and compare and contrast what types of information are gathered and how.</p>

Making Art

Students can create painted maps of their communities using the same methods employed by the Mixtec. First, set boundaries for the maps by asking students to research a Google map or find an old printed map of the neighborhood. Next, draft a list of landmarks that fall within these boundaries, including libraries, stores, restaurants, bridges, freeways, parks, or other identifying places and topographic features. Lastly, compose and sketch city streets on the page in pencil that will serve as the foundation for the map.

Before you start painting the map, paint a few brushstrokes on a sheet of scratch paper as a warm-up. Use the brush to create a variety of marks of different lengths and widths, varying the amount of pressure you use with your hand. Use this set of marks as reference for painting both city streets and landmarks after you have had enough time to experiment with the paint.

Paint different geometric and organic shapes on the grid to represent various landmarks. Try blending and placing different warm and cool colors next to each other. (Be advised that tempera appears opaque.) Next, add details such as people, plants, and animals that live in the neighborhood. Lastly, supplement the picture with writing, by creating a legend that defines the symbols that you used so that viewers can decipher the map.

Reflection

Ask students to compare maps with a classmate. Notice if and where the maps overlap and intersect. Combine all of the maps and facilitate a classroom gallery walk. Regroup and compile a list of commonly reference landmarks. Extend the lesson by using these landmarks as the boundaries for creating a three-dimensional map of the community, using the school as the central reference point. Lay a grid of local streets on the floor using colored or masking tape. Ask each student to create a structure that signifies their place on the map out of construction paper or cardboard. The structure can represent an existing site or a dream for a site that fulfills a community need. Ask students to reflect on their choice by writing a description of the site's importance and/or what it contributes to the history or legacy of the community.

Math Connection

Integrate this art lesson with math by requiring students to draw a number and letter grid or an x and y axis as the map structure. Students can practice their math skills with each other by choosing coordinates and identifying the accompanying landmarks.

Ancient Mexico: The Legacy of the Plumed Serpent

Selected Resources

Related Curriculum Materials

Evenings for Educators resources include an illustrated essay, color images or overhead transparencies, classroom activities, and related resources. Printed curriculum is available for purchase through LACMA's Education Department or browse selected curricula online at www.lacma.org (Programs /Education/Evenings for Educators).

Cross-Cultural Exchange
February 2011

Olmec: Masterworks of Ancient Mexico
October 2010

Artistic Heritage: Latin American and Chicano Art
September 2008

Telling a Story: Narratives and Symbols in Art
November 2007

The Arts of Latin America, 1492–1820
October 2007

History, Identity, and Community in Art
October 2006

World Views: Exploring Maps in Art
March 2001

Ancestors: Art and the Afterlife
November 1998

Online Resources

Art of the Ancient Americas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

<http://www.lacma.org/art/collection/art-ancient-americas>

Browse LACMA's rich array of objects from the major civilizations of ancient Mexico. Recently reinstalled in galleries designed by contemporary artist Jorge Pardo, the collection features material culture from Western Mexico, the Gulf Coast, Peru, and more.

John Pohl's Mesoamerica

Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

<http://www.famsi.org/research/pohl>

A chronology of Mesoamerican art, writing, and books from researcher John Pohl, including printable codices and photographs of major archaeological sites.

Classroom Resources

Mesolore

<http://www.mesolore.net/classroom>

Syllabi, lesson plans, and lectures on ancient to contemporary Mesoamerican culture. Check out the Nahua tutorials, featuring translations of glyphs and visual poetry.

Relaciones Geográficas Collection

The Benson Latin American Collection

The University of Texas at Austin

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/benson/rg>

A digitized collection of original responses to the Spanish Crown's 1577 census, created by indigenous communities throughout the Americas. Highlights include high-resolution images of two maps featured in the exhibition.

The Indigenous Movement in Mexico Today

Onda Latina: The Mexican American Experience

The Benson Latin American Collection

The University of Texas at Austin

http://www.laits.utexas.edu/onda_latina

Search "The Indigenous Movement in Mexico Today" for access to the Spanish-language interview with Andres Segura, captain of the Confederación de Concheros, where he discusses traditions and beliefs that thrive in contemporary native communities.

Books for Teachers

- Brotherston, Gordon. *Painted Books from Mexico*. London: British Museum, 1995. Selections from The British Museum's collection of Mesoamerican codices and other painted books.
- Fields, Virginia M., John M.D. Pohl, and Victoria I. Lyall. *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico*. Los Angeles: LACMA, 2012.*
Catalogue for the LACMA exhibition, featuring high-resolution color reproductions of featured artworks.
- Fuentes, Carlos. "A New Time for Mexico" in *Legends of the Plumed Serpent: Biography of a Mexican God*, ed. Neil Baldwin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
A biography of Mesoamerican mythology surrounding the 5,000-year legacy of Quetzacoatl.
- Pohl, John M.D. *Narrative Mixtec Ceramics of Ancient Mexico*. Princeton: The Princeton University Program in Latin American Studies, 2007.
A series of monographs published by the Latin American Studies Program and the University Art Museum at Princeton University.

* Books available in the Museum Shop

Books for Students

- Pohl, John M.D. *The Legend of Lord Eight Deer: An Epic of Ancient Mexico*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
A storybook retelling of Lord Eight Deer's adventures in the *Codex Nuttall*, the epic saga of the Mixtec people.
- Sullivan, Charles (Ed.). *Here is My Kingdom: Hispanic-American Literature and Art for Young People*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.
Explore the multi-faceted Hispanic-American experience in this colorful anthology of poems, prose, and art.