Mesoamerican Empires Before Columbus

	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Government	Independent city-states ruled by god-kings	Military empire headed by god-king	Empire governed by central bureaucracy and god-king
Social Structure	Mayan kings; nobility (warriors and priests); merchants and artisans; peasants	Emperor; nobility (priests, warriors, and government officials); commoners; slaves	Inca (emperor); council of state; priests; citizens
Religion	Worshiped many gods, including Kukulcan; made human sacrifices	Worshiped many gods, including Quetzalcoatl; made human sacrifices	Worshiped many gods; preserved mummies; sacrificed llamas
Economy	Agriculture-based economy; trade linked city-states	Agriculture-based economy; extensive trade network; huge central market; tribute from conquered peoples	State controlled the reproduction/distribution of goods; labor tribute called *mita* required of all citizens
Communications	Complex writing system of hieroglyphics; made bark-paper books called codexes	Used simpler glyph system; painted codexes; used pictures to convey information	Used runner-messenger system; used knotted ropes or *quipu* as an accounting system
Science and Technology	Used two calendars; invented zero, used base 20 number system; built pyramids; astronomy observations	Used two calendars; built pyramids and temples, aqueducts, dams, and irrigation systems	Elaborate calendar system; massive water management system; system of roads, bridges, and tunnels

DBQ – READ THE PROVIDED DOCUMENT, THEN ANSWER THE PROVIDED QUESTIONS BELOW.

A Bloody Religion and a Love of Beauty

The chief god of the Aztecs was Huitzilopochtli, a young warrior who was identified with the sun. Each sunset was his death but he was born again at sunrise to fight the darkness away and scatter the moon and stars.

In order to be reborn each day, Huitzilopochtli required the nourishment that only human blood could provide. Therefore, the Aztecs believed that regular human sacrifices were needed to assure the preservation of the sun.

Although human sacrifice to gods was a practice of some other tribes, none emphasized it so strongly as the Aztecs. Special occasions might involve the sacrifice of many people. It is reported that the Temple of Tenochtitlan was dedicated with the sacrifice of 20,000 prisoners of war. The need for a continual supply of sacrifices made the Aztecs warlike and alarmed other peoples. Captured enemies were sacrificed by priests who cut open their chests and tore out their hearts.

The Aztecs believed that if they served Huitzilopochtli faithfully the god would help them conquer the world. The Aztec king was called *Cemanáhuac tlatoani,* meaning "Ruler of the World."

Warfare and human sacrifices were not the only concerns of the Aztecs. Like people everywhere they were chiefly concerned with home, family, and other daily matters. That they had a love for beauty is revealed by some of their literature, such as the poem below:

My heart wishes with longing for flowers,
I suffer with the song, and only rehearse songs on earth,
I, Cuacuauhtzin:
I want flowers that will endure in my hands . . . !
Where shall I gather beautiful flowers, beautiful songs?
Never does spring produce them here:
I alone, torment my self, I, Cuacuauhtzin.
Can you rejoice perchance, may our friends have pleasure?
Where shall I gather beautiful flowers, beautiful songs?

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1. **WHO WAS HUITZILOPOCHTLI?** _____
2. **WHAT DID HUITZILOPOCHTLI NEED TO SURVIVE?** _____
3. **WHAT TRIBE IS THIS DOCUMENT DEALING WITH?** _____
4. **HOW DID THIS GROUP GET WHAT IT NEEDED FOR THEIR RITUAL SACRIFICES?** _____
5. **WHAT PART OF THE BODY WAS USED IN THE SACRIFICE?** _____
6. **HOW DID THEY GET THIS BODY PART?** _____
7. **HOW DID THEY TREAT FELLOW KINSMEN?** _____
8. **WHAT DID OTHER TRIBES THINK OF THIS NATIVE AMERICAN GROUP?** _____