

MI CASA, MI PUEBLO Y LOS MAY

Level: high school
Course: Spanish I and Spanish II

Lesson Overview

This lesson introduces or reinforces general vocabulary that students need in order to talk or write about where they live. It compares and contrasts their houses and towns with those of the late classic Maya period in Central America. Basic research skills for finding useful facts and applying their findings are also promoted.

Although the Maya did not originally speak Spanish, it is the language of Central America--where the descendents of the Maya still live. The Mayan sites in the Yucatan and surrounding area are very impressive and are a real draw for tourists and scholars. In this unit, students will use their understanding of where they live in temperate climates to compare and contrast this with the subtropical zone where the Maya live. Students will also look at their own towns from the perspective of a town planner to compare their post colonial style towns with those of the Mayan sites.

Students should be able to draw conclusions based on the following concepts:

- * The Maya city plans were different than ours in scale and purpose, yet they share the features of common space, religious areas, living areas away from the main square, etc.
- * Climate determines building structure types as well as materials for construction.
- * Economic factors contribute to the lifestyle of societies.

by
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- * The present day Mayan descendents have adopted the Spanish colonial environment but still maintain their own traditions.
- * Transportation of goods and people plays a role in the establishment of cultures of people.
- * Spanish can be used to describe our own surroundings as easily as those of Spanish speaking cultures.

General vocabulary is stressed and its use in higher thinking skills.

Objectives

Establish a common vocabulary, compare and contrast the climatological differences and the types of materials needed for housing construction in temperate and sub-tropical environments and establish the current presence of the Mayan influence in present Central American living.

Communication Objectives

- * Students will be able to describe their own house and towns in Spanish.
- * Students will compare orally or in writing their own towns or cities with those of the Maya (English/Spanish)

Cultural Objective

- * Students will show how climate, available building materials and general society structure influence living conditions.

Time Needed

This lesson uses three class hours minimum (see suggested time outline in each day's procedures).

Procedures

Day 1

Materials

Blank paper, overhead of a typical house - labeled in Spanish. Overhead projector. A large scale map (or transparency) of your town would be helpful for showing the relationship of buildings.

(15 minutes)

Have everyone in the class draw a front view of their house or of one that they would like to live in. - facade only -

You would expect the students to draw a typical house with a garage.

(10 minutes)

Put up on overhead with a house and then a labeled overlay. Say outloud vocabulary and have class repeat. Have each student find one of each of the following words on their own: puerta, ventana, techo, madera, bloque, garaje, ladrillo while you say the words outloud.

Repeat two or three times.

Esta es mi casa. Tiene muchas ventanas, dos puertas, un techo y un garaje. Es de madera y ladrillo. Tambiéb tiene bloques. Es blanca y verde.

(5 minutes)

Have each student describe their own house to their neighbor.

(15 minutes)

Discussion: what do we need to live in our climate? building materials, heat, insulation, etc. How do we live? Cities, streets, highways, common areas, buildings? What is common to our town and to others? How do we use our common space (parks, cemeteries, churches, shops, libraries, etc.) (Use your town and maybe a city nearby for comparison)

Make a list on the board (white paper or transparency) of what we think we know about the Maya and have students copy this down as well.

Discussion: what do you think or know that is the living conditions of the Maya going to be like? What are the climate and shelter needs? What materials are going to be available? Do we know? Do we need more information?

Form four areas:

climate

economy

building types and materials

town/city layout

(10 minutes)

Assign topics - climate, economy, building materials, town layout by groups.

Students should form four groups and use the research worksheet part that is applicable to their group. A team captain can divide the questions further into pairs.

Groups should determine who is going to research what and have a general idea of where to start to get the answers to their questions the next day.

(You may use any references you have available - an HTML page with a few starting points is included for the Internet.)

Day 2

Materials

Blank paper, reference materials, computers/Internet

(10 minutes)

Review vocabulary from previous day.

See vocabulary list.

Add new words to practice--el país, la frontera, la montaña, el río, la ciudad, el pueblo, la aldea, la, carretera, el camino, el parque, la plaza, el bosque, la represa, el arroyo, el templo, el pirámide, el bloque, la madera, la piedra, la herramienta, el clima, la paja, el centro ceremonial, el mercado, el municipio, los indígenas--

If possible use a local town map with the appropriate labels attached (could be a transparency).

(30 minutes)

Continue research. Team captians should make sure that their group is finding the information. Incomplete will be marked down.

Use worksheets.

Simultaneous activity: Draw a Maya house, building or "site" and label it with the appropriate vocabulary from the list.

(15 minutes)

Have each group transfer their findings to white paper or a transparency by --climate, building materials, town layout and economy to present in class the following day.

Use the same format as the previous day. Finish worksheets.

Day 3

Materials

Blank butcher paper and markers, Overhead projector.

(5 minutes)

Have students quiz each other in pairs over vocabulary until time.

(15 minutes)

Have each group present their findings to the class.

Hang the white paper up on one wall for each hour.

The remaining students should fill in their worksheets with the data collected from the groups other than their own.

Generalize--compare and contrast in discussion.

(5 minutes)

Discussion: Compare and contrast what we know about the Maya with what we thought we knew.

(20 minutes)

Using what we have found out about the Maya, discuss what changes you would make to your own town if you were the Head Mayan city planner. What changes would you make, where would you put things?

Make a town plan based on the Maya design. Label it in Spanish. Use your sketches from the previous day as your guide.

(5 minutes)

Hang the final results for everyone to see.

Follow-up

Elicit any last minute comments as well as a vote for which of the four new Mayan towns would be the best to live in and why.

Spanish II students should write a brief paper on your group's town. Use at least 5 of the verbs in the list as well as 12 of the vocabulary words.

Leave the towns on the wall for a few days to allow the students to compare with the other classes. Give more time to the drawing if necessary.

Grading: you may choose to assign a group grade for the four groups, a graded oral presentation for your level II classes, or have the other groups assign a grade to the presenter group. For the Spanish II paper, offer a grade for meeting the grammar part as well as the creative part. You may want to share a few of these in your other classes. The principal grading emphasis should be on the vocabulary; a quiz would be appropriate solely on the vocabulary of this unit for both levels I and II.

Research Worksheet

Central America
(Honduras, Guatemala, Yucatan, Belize)

Your Home Town

Climate

What is the average rainfall in:

What is the highest and lowest temperature in:

Economy

What is the value of the currency:

\$1.00 = \$1.00

What is the average income in:

Housing

What is the typical house like in a rural area?

What is the typical house like in an urban area?

What is the main building material for housing?

Town Layout

What is the center of your town?

Where do most people live in your town?

What are the communal buildings in your town?

What are the important buildings in your town?

What form of transportation do you use to get to your town?

Worksheet 1

Name three public buildings in your community.

Name three places you go where other people go to buy food, clothing, to worship and to study, etc.

How close do your extended family live from you--i.e.: your grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins?
What is the approximate distance for each (for example, the other side of town, next door, in your house, Hudsonville, California, etc)?

What places you normally go to are within walking distance?

Does your town have a downtown area? What is there?

What are some common elements you would expect to find in any town?

Worksheet 2

What generalizations can you make about your answers above in regard to the distribution of:

Buildings (where are the churches, stores, cemeteries, etc.?)

Transportation (do you need transportation, can you use a car, walk, etc.?)

Town Layout (does your town layout make sense?)

How do you think the town would be improved if you could pick things up and move them around?
(Think of the free space, the communal space, the space between houses, the orientation to the sun or as compass, etc.)

Worksheet 3

Pretend that your house is in the Tropics. What would be different?

What would it be made of?

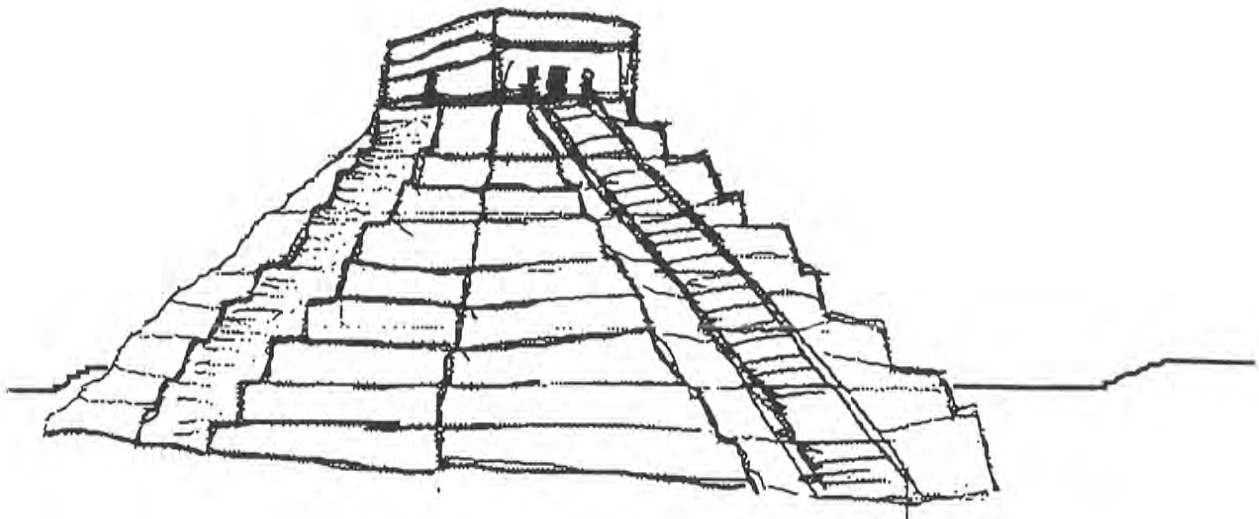
What would be special in this climate?

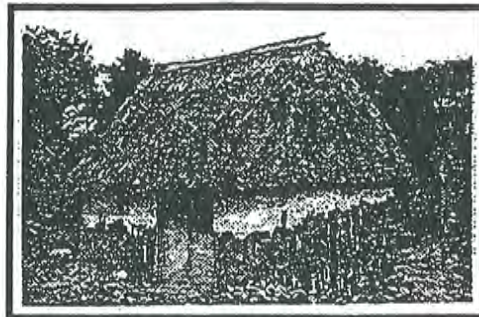
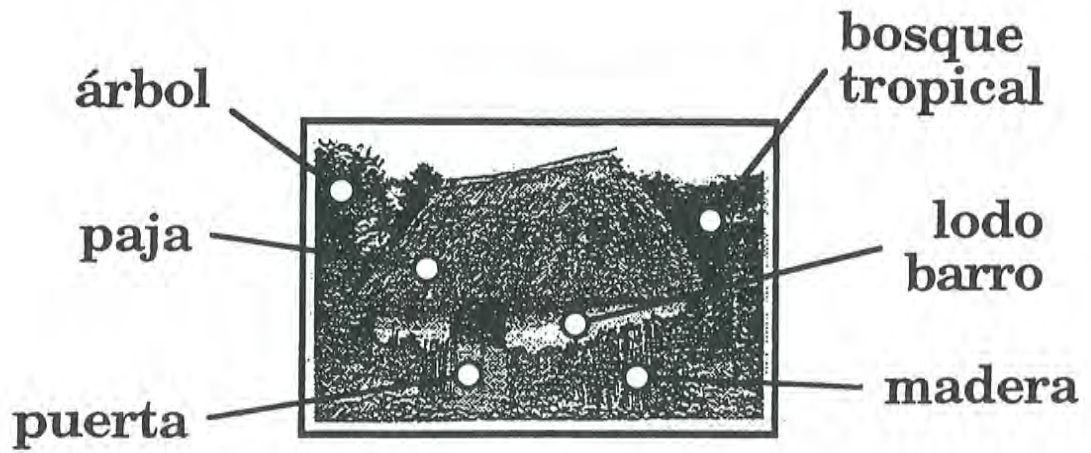
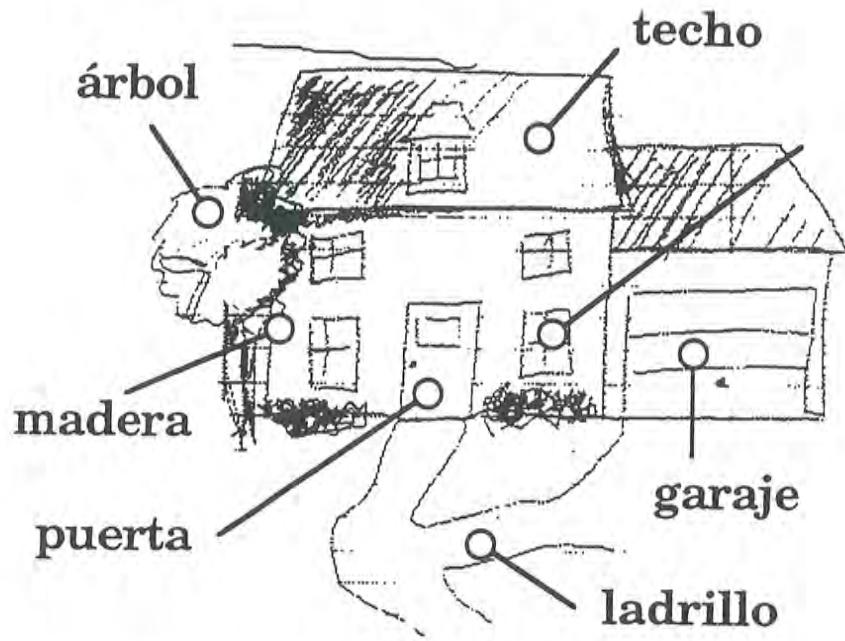
What if you didn't have a car or other transportation?

Vocabulario

el país _____	cal _____
la frontera _____	el centro ceremonial _____
la montaña _____	el mercado _____
el río _____	el municipio _____
la ciudad _____	los indígenas _____
el pueblo _____	moderno _____
la aldea _____	antiguo _____
la carretera _____	tradicional _____
el camino _____	diferente _____
el parque _____	campesino _____
el bosque _____	trabajar _____
la represa _____	utilizar _____
el arroyo _____	caminar _____
el templo _____	viajar _____
el pirámide _____	cambiar _____
el bloque _____	abrir _____
la madera _____	andar _____
la piedra _____	cultivar _____
la herramienta _____	ser _____
la ventana _____	estar _____
la puerta _____	vender _____
el techo _____	usar _____
el clima _____	transportar _____
paja _____	

templo o pirámide





Bibliography

Books and Articles

Adams, Richard E. W. "Rio Azul (Guatemala's lost city of the Maya)" National Geographic 4/1986: 420-450.

This article has excellent diagrams of a town layout in color.

Agurcia Fasquelle, Ricardo. "Copan: a royal Maya tomb discovered" National Geographic 10/1989: 481-488.

This is less of an article on architecture than on art.

Agurcia Fasquelle, Ricardo. "Maya Artistry Unearthed" National Geographic 9/1991: 94-106.

This short article shows some good artist's renderings of Copán.

Carlson, John B. "America's Ancient Skywatchers" National Geographic 3/1990: 76-108.

This article does not deal with architecture directly but does show the links of astronomical references to the location of certain buildings within the Maya realm.

Dahlin, Bruce H. An Anthropological look at the Pyramids: A Late Classic Revitalization Movement at Tikal. 1976.

He points out that the Maya architecture did not necessarily have a practical purpose but was built very intentionally. The use of space was clearly important.

Garrett, Wilbur E. "La Ruta Maya" National Geographic 10/1989: 424-496.

This is an excellent look at the Yucatan with maps and many photos of monuments. It has a very rich collection of cultural photographs.

Kubler, George. Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican Maya and Andean Peoples. Penguin Books, 1975. 123-155.

Very broad scope but the chapter on the Maya architecture is very thorough. This shows how the sites were built one upon the other through diagrams. He makes an interesting comparison between the fact that they were very advanced with their use of numbers, but were still a stone and pottery building culture.

Matheny, Ray T. "El Mirador: an early Maya metropolis uncovered" National Geographic 9/1987: 316-340.

Miller, Mary. "Maya Masterpiece Revealed at Bonampak" National Geographic 2/1995: 50-68.

This is a superbly created article on the art in its original splendor. It is revealing in its detail.

Stierlin, Henri. Art of the Maya; from the Olmecs to the Toltec-Maya. Rizzoli, N.Y., 1981. 133 - 204.

Excellent color plates from the Late Classic Period of Maya. The text is a bit dated, but the buildings have not changed.

Stuart, George E. "Copan: city of kings and commoners" National Geographic 10/1989: 488-506.

Waisman, Marina. Algunos Conceptos Críticos para el Estudio de la Arquitectura Latinoamericana. Caracas, 1974. Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estética, Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Universidad Central de Venezuela, no. 18

She points out that the Colonial art and architecture was done with reference to human life whereas precolombian architecture embraced the open space in reverence of deities.

Internet World Wide Web Sites

URL's to country information for research teams

Mayaquest WWW Page

URL: <http://www.mecc.com/mayaquest.html>

The MayaQuest project was carried out in the Spring of 1995 on bicycle touring the Mayan sites of Central America, documenting and photographing their visits digitally and available via Gopher and WWW clients. These photographic resources are very good. There is a wealth of cultural and general information as well.

About Guatemala

URL: <http://www.ualr.edu/~degonzalez/guatemala.html>

Facts about Belize for the visitor

URL: <http://www.belize.com/facts.html>

Project Central America

URL: <http://informns.k12.mn.us/~eroberts/pca/>

Multicultural Cosmology Home Page

URL: <http://arcturus.pomona.claremont.edu/>

The World Of The Mayas

URL: <http://bertha.pomona.claremont.edu/cs10/mcushman/final.html>

CIA World FactBook 1993 (search by word)

URL: <http://www.research.att.com/cgi-wald/dbaccess/411>

Images Of Architecture & Architectural Sculpture

URL: <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Experimental/anu-art-history/architecture.images.html>