

Urban Planning

Topic

Ancient Mayan Civilization

Objective

Students will describe and explain the significance of the building plan of a Mayan city.

Materials

- the accompanying set of Mayan societal class cards (page 88)
- the accompanying class seating diagram (page 89)
- an overhead transparency (optional)
- an overhead projector (optional)

Preparation

1. Make enough copies of the cards to allow for two Priests, Nobles, Artisans, and Merchants each. The remainder of the class should receive cards marked Peasants. You may wish to use heavy stock that can be laminated so that cards may be held for future use.
2. Using an overhead transparency or the chalkboard, recreate the seating diagram so students can easily position themselves according to its layout.

Procedure

1. Use the sample diagram to reposition the desks in your room before the students arrive for the start of the day. (**Note:** *The sample is set to a standard rectangular room formation; feel free to improvise the seating to meet your individual room configuration. It is only necessary to maintain the concentric effect of Priests/Nobles in the center followed by an outer ring of Artisans/Merchants with Peasants on the exterior fringes.*)
2. As students enter the classroom, randomly dispense the role cards one by one.
3. Instruct students to view the seating diagram and sit in any position that corresponds to their specific role cards.

(**Note:** *You should be sure to collect the role cards once all students have been properly seated. This is especially important if you teach in a departmentalized format where several classes will enter your room throughout the course of a day.*)
4. Before the instructor proceeds with the day's lesson about the Mayan civilization, he or she should inform the students that the peculiar seating arrangement represents the layout of a typical Mayan city. The teacher may ask students to offer conjecture as to the significance of this residential pattern. (See Background, page 87.) Depending upon the content of previous lessons, students may readily offer an accurate explanation, or they may just hypothesize if "Urban Planning" is being used as an anticipatory set for information that is to be initially presented on that day.

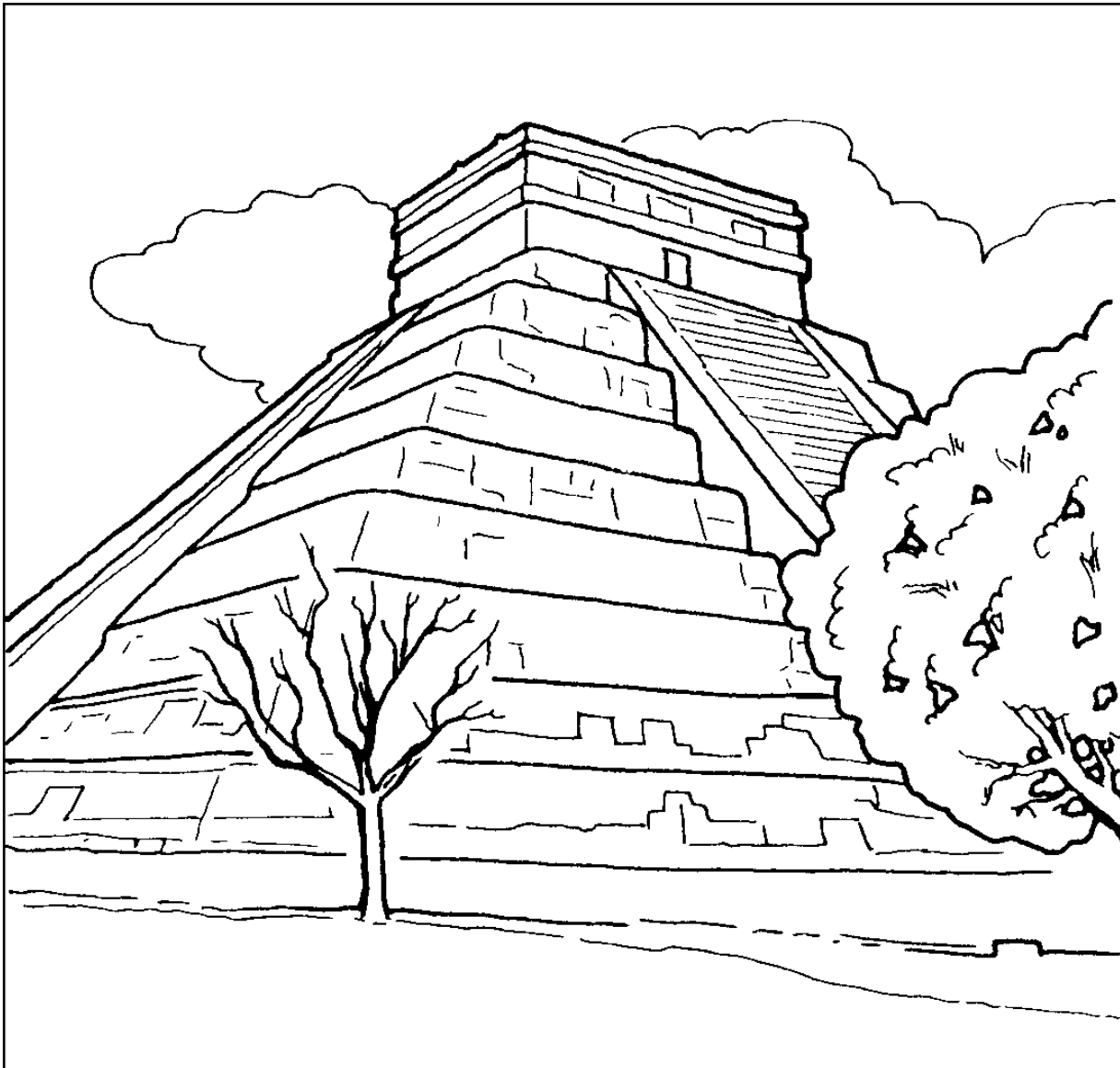
Urban Planning *(cont.)*

Background

The Mayan civilization of southern Mexico and northern Central America (Guatemala, Belize) reached its height between the third and tenth centuries, A.D. Its cities were focal points of religious celebrations involving pyramid-style temples and the worship of numerous gods. Government was conducted and priests and rulers lived in these communities as well.

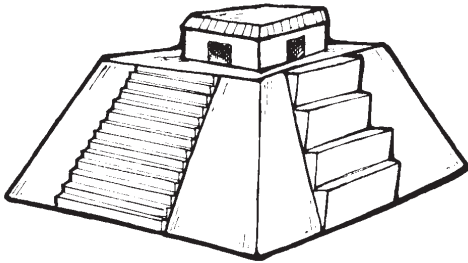
To that end, the hub of a Mayan city was its temple with priests residing close by. Since nobility ruled, ruling families also lived close to the city's center. With declining status, people lived farther away from the core of the city. Wealthy artisans and merchants resided farther out than the ruling classes, yet they were much closer than the multitude of peasants. They were farthest removed as they took care of the fields on the perimeter of a city.

Once again, "Urban Planning" takes some flexibility on the part of the teacher. For a day, it offers a bit of variety to the class(es) as it attempts to illuminate one aspect of life in a once dominant civilization.

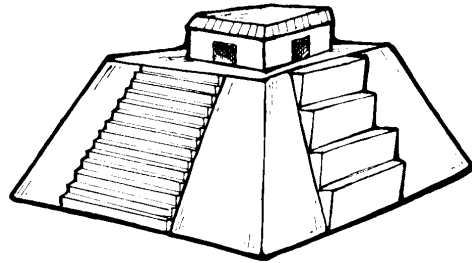


Urban Planning Societal Role Cards

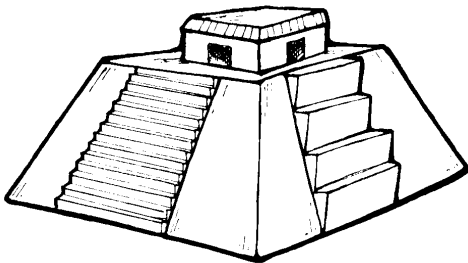
Priests



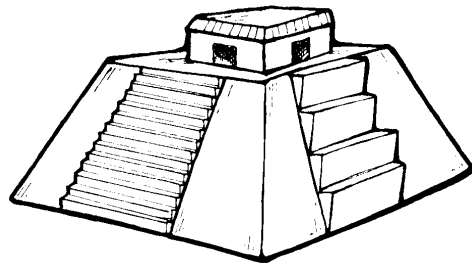
Nobles



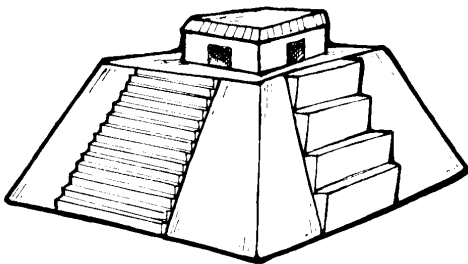
Artisans



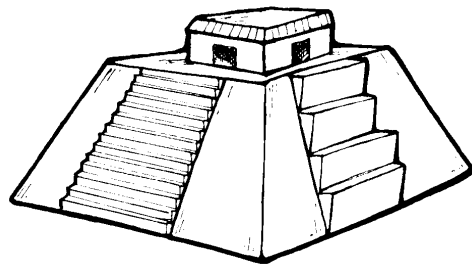
Merchants



Peasants



Peasants



Urban Planning Seating Diagram

