#### **Three Worlds Meet**

Section 1

## **Peopling the Americas**

#### **Terms and Names**

nomadic Moving one's home

**Olmec** People who created a civilization along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, beginning around 1200 B.C.

**Maya** People who created a civilization in Guatemala and the Yucatan Peninsula, about A.D. 250 to 900

**Aztec** People who built an empire in Mexico, beginning in the 1200s

**Inca** People who built an empire along the west coast of South America, beginning in the 1400s

**Hohokam** Native Americans who lived in the Southwest from about 300 B.C. to A.D. 1300

Anasazi Native Americans who lived in the Southwest from about A.D. 300 to 1300

Adena Mound-building people who lived in the Ohio River valley

**Hopewell** Mound-building people who lived in the Ohio River valley

**Mississippian** Mound-building people who lived in the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys

#### **Before You Read**

In this section, you will learn about early peoples who first settled in the Americas. In the next section, you will learn about the different Native American groups who lived in North America.

#### As You Read

Use a chart to take notes on the early civilizations of the Americas.

# ANCIENT PEOPLES COME TO THE AMERICAS (Pages 4-5)

### How did people first arrive in the Americas?

The first people in the Americas may have arrived 22,000 years ago. Ice age glaciers had frozen vast amounts of water. This lowered sea levels enough to expose a land bridge between Asia and Alaska called Beringia. Ancient hunters came across the land bridge from Asia to Alaska. These early people most likely hunted large animals. Over thousands of

years, these people spread out across North and South America.

Changes occurred when the Ice Age ended around 12,000 to 10,000 years ago. The sea once again covered the land bridge. People no longer came to the Americas across this bridge. The climate grew warmer. Large animals began to disappear and people switched to hunting smaller animals. They also began to fish and to gather nuts and berries.

Many groups of people settled in North America. Other groups continued south into present-day Mexico and South America. Wherever these people settled, they adapted to the environment in which they lived.

Between 10,000 and 5,000 years ago (3000 to 800 B.C.), people living in Mexico discovered a new way to get food. They began to raise plants or to farm. They first grew maize. Soon they raised other crops. The practice of farming spread throughout the Americas.

People who farmed no longer had to search for plant foods. They could stay in one place. They had more time to learn new skills and to build settled communities. In this way, farming made possible the growth of complex cultures. Some Native American groups never gave up their **nomadic** way of life and continued to move from place to place in search of food and water.

1. How did people first come to the Americas?

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#### COMPLEX SOCIETIES FLOURISH IN THE AMERICAS (Pages 5–7) Where did civilizations develop in the Americas?

Beginning about 3,000 years ago, many advanced Native American civilizations arose. The **Olmec** peoples began their civilization in Mexico around 1200 B.C. They created a thriving civilization in the humid rain forests. Other civilizations influenced by the Olmec appeared after their mysterious collapse around 400 B.C. They included the **Maya**. The Maya built their civilization between A.D. 250 and 900.

It was located in what is today Guatemala and the Yucatan Peninsula.

The **Aztec** people built their empire in central Mexico in the 1200s. Starting around 1400, the **Inca** created a large, rich empire. It stretched along the western coast of South America.

All of these empires had achievements that were as great as those of other ancient cultures. All had great skills at mining and working precious metals, such as gold and silver. All built great cities or ceremonial centers with huge palaces, pyramids with temples, and central plazas. To record their histories, some of the later groups invented some form of writing that used symbols or images to express words or ideas.

In North America, the **Hohokam** and **Anasazi** built their civilizations in desert areas. Both groups settled in the Southwest. By 300 B.C. to A.D. 1400, each group had grown large enough to carve out its own civilization. The Hohokam settled in the river valleys in Central Arizona. The Anasazi lived in the canyon bottoms of the Four Corner region. This is an area where the present-day states of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet.

The Adena, Hopewell, and Mississippian civilizations developed east of the Mississippi River. These civilizations are called the Mound Builders. They created large burial mounds. The Mississipian also built huge pyramids.

areas of southwestern North America?

2. What civilizations started in the desert

Name	Class	Date
Section 1, continued		

As you read about the development of Native American cultures, fill out the chart below by writing notes that describe the achievements of those cultures.

	Achievements
1. The Olmec	
2. The Maya, Aztec, and Inca	
3. The Hohokam and Anasazi	
4. The Adena, Hopewell, and Mississippian	