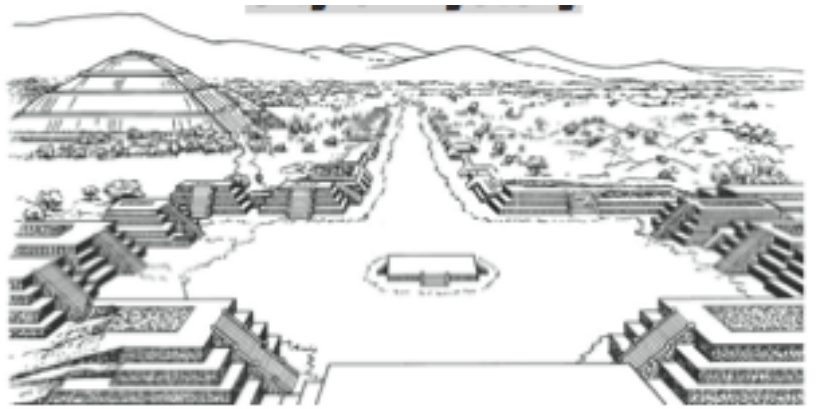


City of Mystery

Travelers to central Mexico can visit the ruins of a great city. The ruins can be found about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northeast of Mexico City. No one knows the name of the city or what language its people spoke or who built the city's gigantic pyramids. Scientists have been trying to answer these questions for almost a century.



Every day, archaeologists dig up clues that are helping them learn the facts about this mysterious city. They know that around 100 BC, there were only small villages scattered throughout the area. Three hundred years later, seventy-five thousand people lived in the city. By AD 600, twice as many people lived there. The city had grown to be one of the largest in the world.



The Aztecs, who settled where Mexico City is today, arrived hundreds of years after the ancient city had been destroyed. Discovering the ruins, the Aztecs saw massive apartment complexes, and they marveled at the city's two towering pyramids. They named them the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon.

The largest, the Pyramid of the Sun, is as tall as a 20-story building! It rises more than 200 feet (61 meters) into the air, and its base covers about 500,000 square feet (46,450 sq m). Because the Aztecs didn't believe that ordinary people could have built such huge structures, they named the ruins Teotihuacán (tay-uh-tee-wah-kahn), which means "city of the gods."

The Aztecs began making pilgrimages to Teotihuacán to pray. They also searched the ruins for artifacts left behind by the people who had lived there. They found pottery and stone masks but nothing made of metal. The knives and other tools they found were made of stone or a type of volcanic rock known as obsidian. No wooden or cloth objects were found because they disintegrate with time.

The walls of some of the city's buildings and underground chambers had huge paintings, or murals, on them. The signs and symbols on the paintings showed that the people of Teotihuacán probably had a system of picture writing. It also seems that the ancient inhabitants of the city studied the stars, the planets, and geometry. Specially marked stones showed that the people measured and used the solar system and the positions of the stars to plan their streets and buildings. The structures were built so that the walls faced north, south, east, and west.

Up to one hundred people probably lived in each of the city's apartment complexes. The living quarters were arranged around a patio. Some of the patios had altars set up on them, at which the residents of the apartments may have left offerings and prayed to their gods. The artifacts found in the apartment areas showed that people came from long distances to live in this city. Perhaps they came because of the marketplace. Some may have been artisans who made objects to trade.

Teotihuacán was a great trading center. Traders came with a variety of goods from faraway places. Chocolate, vanilla, salt, fish, pottery, obsidian, and even elegant bird feathers were probably exchanged in the marketplace. Other valuable trade items included nose plugs and earrings carved from jade, polished obsidian mirrors, and stone images of the feathered serpent god, the storm god, and the great goddess. Jointed pottery dolls and stone masks may also have been



offered for sale. While people bargained and exchanged goods in the marketplace, incense burning in large pots by the temples perfumed the air.

Many ceramic figures of people have been unearthed in Teotihuacán. Were their 1,500-year-old faces modeled after ordinary citizens or important officials? That's one of the questions archaeologists and anthropologists are still trying to answer.

Will all the questions about this city of mystery be answered one day? Scientists haven't given up looking for more pieces to this ancient puzzle. If you decide to become an archaeologist and dig up the past, you, too, could help solve the mysteries of Teotihuacán.

Questions About City of Mystery

1. Why is Teotihuacán called the “City of Mystery”?
2. Who named the city Teotihuacán? What does the name mean?
3. How tall is the Pyramid of the Sun? How much ground does it cover?
4. Why do you think archaeologists didn’t find any metal objects in Teotihuacán?
5. What do you think happened to Teotihuacán and the people who lived there?
6. Would you want to have lived in Teotihuacán? Explain why or why not.

Vocabulary

A. Write the letter and number of each word and its meaning.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| A. to view with wonder or astonishment | 1. anthropologist |
| B. many buildings or units together in a single group | 2. archaeologist |
| C. to discuss an agreeable payment or price | 3. complex |
| D. the remains of a city that was destroyed | 4. artifact |
| E. a journey to a religious place | 5. obsidian |
| F. a dark, glassy rock that is used as a gem | 6. disintegrate |
| G. an object from an earlier or ancient time | 7. bargain |
| H. a person who studies people and their cultures | 8. pilgrimage |
| I. to fall apart or decay into very small pieces or particles | 9. marvel |
| J. a person who looks for and studies the objects and structures of ancient times | 10. ruins |

B. Fill in the blank with the correct word from the list below to complete each sentence.

system scattered marketplace ceramic incense murals

1. The great city grew from small villages that were _____ around the area.
2. The walls of underground chambers had _____ painted on them.

3. The people of Teotihuacán probably used a _____ of painted signs and symbols for writing.
4. Traders brought many goods from far away to the at _____ Teotihuacán.
5. Burning _____ perfumed the air around the temples.
6. Many _____ figures and clay masks of people have been found in the ruins.

Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefixes and suffixes are added to base (root) words to change their meanings.

Different prefixes and suffixes sometimes change the meanings of words in the same way.

Example: The prefixes **un** and **dis** can both mean not having or without.

unkindness—without kindness

discomfort—without comfort

Use the meanings of the following prefixes and suffixes to help you write a definition for each of the words below.

Prefixes:	un, dis	not, not being; not having, without; (to do) the opposite of
Suffixes:	er, ist, ant/ent	a person or thing that does a particular action (makes, works with, studies, knows, plays, specializes in)

1. unearthed:
2. trader:
3. inhabitant:
4. disintegrated:
5. scientist:
6. archaeologist:

7. discover:

8. traveler:

9. anthropologist:

10. resident:

Write About It

Imagine that it is three hundred years in the future. You are an archaeologist, digging at the site where your school is located today. Write a paragraph describing the objects you are finding and explain how the objects show what went on at your school.