

## Axe Monies and the Aztec people

Grade: 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>

Subject: Social Studies

Topic- History

Lesson: Supplemental Lesson

### Learning Objectives:

The purpose of this lesson is to find a fun and creative way to expose students to the cultural contributions made by ancient inhabitants of modern-day Latin America. Students will get the opportunity to expand on their vocabulary as well as learn about the value and use of precious metals by ancient people as well as practice negotiation and presentation skills

### Materials

#### Needed:

- Map of Mexico
- Paper Plates or recycled cardboard dimensions
- Safety Scissors
- Glue

### Structure Activity:

Take at least 15 minutes to discuss with students the fact that, the land that is now central Mexico had a rich culture and society that they developed many years ago. It would be beneficial to have prepped materials to demonstrate to students and act as guides along with a map of Mexico.

Take some time to discuss the purpose of axe-monies and allow students the time to create their pieces. Let students know that they can make as many as they would like within the time frame allowed. In the last few minutes, the students can stack the axe-monies that they created and see who has the highest stack of ancient currency.

### Assessments: Informal

You can allow two or three students to stack the axe monies they made into a tower. You can allow them to discuss what they would use the trade for if you were a member of society from ancient meso America/ western Mexico.

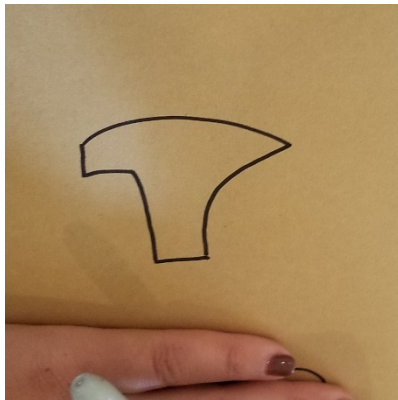
Content Standard- 6.02,7.53,7.57

## Axe Monies and the Aztec people

South America is composed of 14 different countries each place has its own unique culture and contributions to society. This activity focuses on the Aztec people of central Mexico and the form of currency that they used known as axe-monies. The Aztec people settled over multiple islands across Mexico and inhabited what we now call Mexico City. They made beautiful artwork most notably pottery, artwork and feather garments. They also made detailed and complex items made of precious metals<sup>1</sup>.

Axe monies are made of copper and were used to exchange goods and complete a purchase or sale among the Aztec people.<sup>2</sup> Axe monies are some of the oldest known forms of money in the world. Normally, they were unstamped. They were a convenient form of currency because they could be stacked and weighed during trades and exchanges.

The bronze was smelted and then hammered into thin sheets. While they had economic value they were also believed to be used during religious ceremonies. Many scientists and archeologist have found Axe monies in what's known as modern day western Mexico, Ecuador and Peru<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> [www.guggenheim.org](http://www.guggenheim.org). "The Aztec Empire." 2004. [www.guggenheim.org/publication/the-aztecempire](http://www.guggenheim.org/publication/the-aztecempire)

<sup>2</sup> HOSLER, DOROTHY, HEATHER LECHTMAN, and OLAF HOLM. "AXE-MONIES AND THEIR RELATIVES." *Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, no. 30 (1990): 1–103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41263471>.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, M.E. (1993). "Axe-Monies and Their Relatives" by Dorothy Hosler; Heather Lechtman; Olaf Holm. (Review). *Ethnohistory*, 40(1), p. 148-149