



**Awesome  
museum**



Sculpture of Xiuhtecutli. Photo by Michel Zabe © The Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH)

## Secondary Education Kit

# AZTECS

**Exhibition 13 September 2014 – 1 February 2015**

[australianmuseum.net.au](http://australianmuseum.net.au)    

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Aztecs was developed by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in partnership with Mexico's National Council for Culture and the Arts and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (CONACULTA-INAH), along with the Australian Museum and Museum Victoria.

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# Excursion Essentials

## Familiarising students

Our research indicates that students gain maximum benefit from their excursion if they have an overview of their program for the day and are familiar with the Museum's floor plan (attached).

## Accompanying adults

We highly recommend additional adults accompany each group of 25–30 students. This allows classes to be divided into smaller groups and enhances access to the exhibits. All accompanying adults should be familiar with the day's program, floorplans and any written materials the students will be using.

**One** adult is admitted free for every **ten** secondary school students.

## Photocopying

Please photocopy the appropriate materials for students and all accompanying adults before your visit.

## Further questions

If you have any questions, please phone our Bookings Officer on (02) 9320 6222.

## Briefing

On arrival at the Museum the students will be met and briefed about the Museum. It is important that accompanying adults are present for this briefing.

## Bag Storage

Museum staff will securely store the students' bags.

## Exhibitions

Outside of any programmed session times students may explore the Museum's exhibitions. Please manage large groups to avoid crowding in any one exhibition or around individual exhibits.

## Lunch

We recommend that students bring their lunch and eat it in Hyde Park (just across the road). Re-entry to the Museum is free. Alternative locations will be provided in wet weather.

## Photography

Photography **is** permitted in the Aztecs exhibition but **not flash photography or video recording**.

## About the Aztecs exhibition

Over 200 cultural treasures from Mexico's major museums tell the story of Aztec daily life, beliefs and values, war and human sacrifice, social structure, economy, sport and agriculture, their downfall at the hands of the Spanish and their resounding legacy.

Students are able to walk into the Great Temple, reconstructed at one-tenth real size and, through archaeological finds, intricate models, multi-media, and objects, students can learn about this fascinating culture.

# Teacher Notes

The activities are designed for a self-guided visit to the Aztecs exhibition.

## Photocopying

Please photocopy the following materials for each student:

- The onsite student activity sheets you have selected to use
- Australian Museum Guide Map

## Pre-visit student activities

To make the most of your visit to the exhibition we recommend that you prepare your students by completing the suggested pre-visit activities on pages 6-8.

## At the Museum

We suggest that you divide the students into groups to move through the exhibition to prevent overcrowding of the displays.

## On-site student activities

We have included two suggested activities:

### 1. Aztec exhibition self-guided activities.

We recommend that these 8 onsite activities for the Aztecs exhibition be completed in groups, with a group focusing on **one** (or two maximum) aspects of Aztec culture:

- Activity 1A: Aztec Daily life – clothing **or** jewellery
- Activity 1B: Aztec Daily life – weaponry **or** armour
- Activity 1C: Aztec Daily life – Food
- Activity 1D: Aztec Daily life - Sport and Leisure
- Activity 1E: Aztec Daily life - Music
- Activity 1F: Aztec Society - Social Structure
- Activity 1G: Aztec Society - Economic Activities
- Activity 1H: Aztec Society – Beliefs

### 2. A contrast of cultures: the Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

Students need to visit both the *Aztec* and *Indigenous Australians* exhibitions to complete this activity. There are two self-guided activities (Activity 2A and 2B) for students to do in both exhibitions.

We recommend that these activities be completed in groups with each group focusing on **one or two** aspects of both Aztec and Indigenous Australian culture.

## Post-visit student activities

After your visit your students will be full of enthusiasm and ideas. We recommend some post-visit activities on pages 17-19 to harness their interest.

# Syllabus links

The exhibition and the student activities are relevant to the following New South Wales Board of Studies Syllabuses:

## Mandatory History Years 7-10

### Historical Skills

- Comprehension
- Analysis and use of sources
- Perspectives and interpretations
- Empathetic understanding
- Research

### Civics and Citizenship

### Gender

### Literacy

## Content for Stage 4

### Topic 1 – Investigating History

- Students learn about - the terminology and concepts of historical time, including year, decade, generation, century, age, BCE/CE
- Students learn to - interpret and construct time lines, define terms that describe historical periods of time, sequence societies and events within specific periods of time, identify significant people of the past

### Topic 2 - Societies and Civilisations of the Past

- Medieval and Early Modern Societies: the Americas – the origins of the society, daily life of men and women in the society, civics and citizenship of the society, rights and freedoms, beliefs and values of the people of the society, impact of significant people and/or events, contacts with other peoples, the legacy of the ancient, medieval and early modern world

## History Elective Years 7-10

### Topic 1 – Constructing History

- The nature of history, heritage and archaeology
- The methods of historians and archaeologists
- The collection, display and reconstruction of the past

### Topic 2 – Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Societies – the Americas

- The nature of historical inquiry
- Past societies and historical periods
- Events and people in the context of their own time
- Significant historical issues in historical context

### Topic 3 – Thematic Studies

Children in History, Heroes and Villains, Religious Beliefs and Rituals through the Ages, War and Peace, World Myths and Legends

- Students learn about – historical change and continuity, historical themes and concepts. events and people in the context of their time

# Pre-visit Activities

To make the most of your visit to the exhibition we recommend that you prepare your students before their excursion with some of the following suggested activities.

## 1. Determining prior knowledge

An introductory activity could include a class discussion or brainstorm activity to determine what students already know about Aztec culture.

## 2. Historical terminology

Before their visit to the exhibition it would be useful to familiarise students with the following terminology:

- Primary sources, secondary sources, BCE/CE, perspective, bias

## 3. Research: finding out about the Aztecs

Students could do some research about the Aztecs before their visit.

### General:

- What did the Aztecs call themselves?
- What was the location of the city Tenochtitlan?
- When did they found the city Tenochtitlan?
- What was the extent of the 'empire' that they established?
- Where had these people been, before they arrived in the Valley of Mexico?
- When did they live?
- When were they conquered by the Spanish?
- What are some of the things that the Aztec culture is well known for?

### Daily Life of Aztecs:

- What were the different levels in Aztec society?
- What did they use for weapons and armour?
- What did they wear?
- What did they eat?
- How did they acquire food?
- What did they use for transport?

### Aztec beliefs and customs

- What gods did they believe in?
- What customs did they practise?

## 4. Personal profile of an Aztec

Students could imagine themselves as an Aztec and create a personal profile using the template provided on page 7. They could be:

- A farmer
- A warrior
- A priest
- A slave
- An emperor

## 5. The Aztec Fact File

This activity, on page 8, necessitates analysis and evaluation of a secondary source. It encourages students to question the interpretation, perspective and reliability of the source to determine its usefulness as evidence for their understanding of Aztec culture.

Students research: levels of society, agriculture and beliefs.

# Pre-visit Activity: Personal Profile of an Aztec

Profile of \_\_\_\_\_

**Hometown:**

**Birthday:**

**Education:**

**Occupation:**

**Family:**

**Relationship status:**

**Favourite quote:**

**Interests:**

**Great things about me:**

**Not so great things about me:**

Profile Picture

(Draw picture)

# Pre-visit Activity: The Aztec Fact File

Use **secondary sources** to complete the fact file below.

Facts	Name of source:
Levels of society:	
Agriculture:	
Beliefs:	

## Analysis of a secondary source

Select **one** of the secondary sources you used in the fact file.

Name of source: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the perspective of the author?

Is bias present? Explain why or why not.

Is this a reliable source of evidence for your understanding of Aztecs? Explain why or why not.

## Onsite Activity 1A:

## Aztec Daily Life – Clothing or Jewellery

Select one object that tells us about Aztec clothing or jewellery.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:

3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?



## Onsite Activity 1B:

## Aztec Daily Life – Weaponry or Armour

Select one object that tells us about Aztec weaponry or armour.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:

3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?



## Onsite Activity 1C:

## Aztec Daily Life – Food

Select one object that tells us about food in Aztec daily life.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:

3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?



## Onsite Activity 1D:

## Aztec Daily Life – Sport and Leisure

Select one object that tells us about sport and leisure in Aztec daily life.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:

3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?



## Onsite Activity 1E:

## Aztec Daily Life – Music

Select one object that tells us about music in Aztec daily life.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:

3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?



## Onsite Activity 1F:

## Aztec Society – Social Structure

Select one object that tells us about the social classes in Aztec society.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:

3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec society?



## Onsite Activity 1G:

## Aztec Society – Economic Activities

Select one object that tells us about economic activities such as agriculture, trade and markets in the Aztec society.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:



3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

## Onsite Activity 1H:

## Aztec Society - Beliefs

Select one object that tells us about beliefs in Aztec society.

1 My object is a:

2 Sketch your chosen object:



3 Where is it from?

4 What year was it made?

5 What is it made from?

6 How was it made? (if known)

7 Who would have used it?

8 What does the object tell us about Aztec society?

## Onsite Activity 2A

### A contrast of cultures: Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

You will need to visit the *Aztecs* exhibition **and** the *Indigenous Australians* exhibition for this activity.

For each of the 2 cultures find **one object** for each of the aspects of culture down the left hand side of the table below. Use the words in the boxes as a guide to the object that you could choose.

You have space in the boxes to:

- Draw a picture of your chosen object. You could photograph the object too.
- Describe your chosen object. You could say the size, colour, what it is made from.
- Take some notes from the object label, for example, what it is made for, how old it is, where it is from, who would have used it.

Aspects of Culture	Aztec object (Use the words below as a guide)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australians) object (use the words below as a guide)
<b>Tools for obtaining and carrying food</b> Look for items for hunting, collecting, farming or holding food.	Spear, spear-thrower, bowls, plate, vase, goblet	Fish trap, coolamon, digging stick, spear, boomerang, spear, woomera (spear-thrower), tree climber, stone axe, basket, dilly bag, wallaby trap
<b>Clothing and adornments</b> Look for items worn for warmth or decoration.	Feathers, mask, headband, jewellery, lip plug, sceptre	Jewellery, head dress,

## Onsite Activity 2A

Aspects of Culture	Aztec object (Use the words below as a guide)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australians) object (use the words below as a guide)
<b>Toys</b> Look for items related to sport, leisure, play	Ball game ring, pelota (rubber ball), rattle, whistle	Practice boomerang , string games, spinning top, sling shot, rattle
<b>Music</b> Look for items related to making music	Flute, drum, bell, whistle, conch shell	Didgeridoo, clap sticks, boomerang
<b>My random point of interest</b>  <i>Choose a topic that takes your fancy...( words on the right provide suggestions, but you don't have to limit yourself to these topics)</i>	An object relating to: chocolate, architecture, Aztec law, tribal markings and status, jade.....	An object relating to: astronomy, tribal markings and status

## Onsite Activity 2B

### A contrast of cultures: Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

You will need to visit the *Aztecs* exhibition **and** the *Indigenous Australians* exhibition for this activity.

For each of the 2 cultures find **one object** for each of the aspects of culture down the left hand side of the table below. Use the words in the boxes as a guide to the object that you could choose.

You have space in the boxes to:

- Draw a picture of your chosen object. You could photograph the object too.
- Describe your chosen object. You could say the size, colour, what it is made from.
- Take some notes from the object label about what it is made for, how old it is, where it is from, who would have used it.

Aspects of Culture	Aztec object (Use the words below as a guide)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australians) object (use the words below as a guide)
<b>Warfare</b>  Look for weapons and armour	Human and horse armour, spear, weapon	Nulla nulla, shield, hunting boomerang, spears
<b>Beliefs</b>  Look for objects related to gods and religious practices	Statue of a god, mask, ceremonial object, sacrificial knife, funerary urn, incense burner, tombstone, altar, temple plinth	Pukumani pole, tunga, crocodile mask, women's song and dance board

## Onsite Activity 2B

Aspects of Culture	Aztec object (Use the words below as a guide)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australians) object (use the words below as a guide)
<b>Influence of colonisation</b> -made with materials of colonisers -reflect beliefs of colonisers -reflect designs of colonisers	Baptismal font, objects relating to Christianity	Breastplates, portrait busts, objects relating to Christianity
<b>Trade</b>  Look for items that people exchange	Markets, beads	Tobacco pipes (Macassan)
<b>My random point of interest</b>  <i>Choose a topic that takes your fancy...( words on the right provide suggestions, but you don't have to limit yourself to these topics)</i>	An object relating to: chocolate, architecture, Aztec law, tribal markings and status, jade....	An object relating to: astronomy, tribal markings and status

# Post-visit Activities

After your visit, students will be full of enthusiasm and ideas. We recommend that you lead one or more of the following activities.

## Activity 1 – Comparing technology of the present with the past

Students should refer to an object they have studied in depth while visiting the Aztecs exhibition.

Students could:

1. Show what their chosen object is in a photo or drawing.
2. Show the modern day equivalent in a photo or drawing.
3. List the similarities between the two objects i.e. materials, design and use.
4. List the differences between the two objects i.e. materials, design and use.

## Activity 2 – A contrast of two cultures: the Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

This activity is for students who completed the “Onsite Activity 2A and/or 2B: A contrast of two cultures: the Aztecs and Indigenous Australians” at the Museum.

Students could do some research into the aspects of Aztec and Indigenous Australian culture that they investigated during the onsite activity at the Museum.

They should look at the similarities and differences they see in the two cultures.

They could communicate their ideas in a table, drawing, essay or oral presentation.

Each student or group could focus on one aspect of both cultures.

You could finish with a whole class discussion of some of the similarities and differences between the cultures.

**Please note:** You should emphasise that the aim is **not** to decide that one culture is better than the other, but to gain in experience in the way that the process of comparing and contrasting cultures can lead to a keener understanding of the individual cultures.

## Activity 3 – The Storyboard

1. Divide the class into 4 groups.
2. Assign each group one of the following scenarios from the Aztec story:
  - ☐ Arrival in the valley of Mexico, after a long search for their homeland
  - ☐ Banishment to island in Lake Texcoco, founding of Tenochtitlan
  - ☐ Gaining power over other people in the area, establishment of empire
  - ☐ Conquest by the Spanish
3. Each group could create a poster to depict their scenario, with images and supporting text. The poster should indicate the historical time being covered, in years AD.
4. The class could display their posters together in chronological order, to form a storyboard (and timeline) of the time of the Aztecs.

#### **Activity 4 – The Diary**

1. Allow each student to choose one of these roles with which to identify:
  - ☐ warrior
  - ☐ farmer
  - ☐ artisan
  - ☐ emperor. Perhaps even the last emperor, Moctezuma
  - ☐ priest
  - ☐ slave
  - ☐ Spanish conquistador
  - ☐ Spanish leader – Cortez
2. Students can draw on learning from the exhibition visit, and undertake further research, so as to understand what life would have been like for 'their' person, and what happened during the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs.
3. Students think about the person's 'normal' life? What would they have seen during the Spanish Conquest? What might have been happening to them, and what would they have thought and felt? What would have been their plans, hopes and fears?
4. Students each write a diary entry from the perspective of 'their' person.
5. A collected class book could be produced from all these entries. There could also be two books – one from the Spanish perspective, one from the Aztec perspective.

#### **Activity 5 – An Aztec book of letters**

Each student contributes a letter written from the perspective of someone in Aztec culture, or someone who was part of the Spanish culture at the time of colonisation.

Each student could:

- choose an object of Aztec or Spanish culture that fires their imagination. It should be an object that they have an image of – students could look back at photographs taken at the Museum, or look at images sourced from elsewhere. Students should record the known details of this object – e.g. location found, age, type of object.
- adopt a persona that is connected to that object (e.g. warrior, farmer, emperor, artisan etc.), and do some research to help them to understand the life that that person would have had. As part of this research, they may wish to gather images of other objects that may have been related to 'their' person's life.
- write a letter from 'their' person, conveying the news of an ordinary day, or of an extraordinary day (e.g. arrival of Spanish conquistadors) The letter should mention the object of original inspiration in some way, even if only briefly.
- address the letter to a specific person.

Compile the letters into a book. There could be 2 books: one Aztec and one Spanish. It may be useful to give students a word or space limit.

#### **Activity 6 - Written and archaeological sources**

Students individually prepare an extended response explaining how the written sources and archaeological evidence present either a complementary or conflicting interpretation of Aztec culture on the topics of:

- i) Foundations and development
- ii) Impact and influence at the time
- iii) Legacy
- iv) Spanish conquest

### **Activity 7 – Aztec maths**

In our modern times, we use a base 10 number system. The Aztecs used a base 20 number system.

Students could:

1. research what this means and how the Aztecs would write numbers, using certain symbols.
2. write some numbers using symbols like an Aztec would.
3. write some simple mathematics statements in Aztec e.g.  $8 \times 9 = 72$
4. draw up receipt for a trade that they imagine may have happened e.g. a pig may have been traded for 5 bags of maize flour, a slave may have been traded for four goats.

Some useful sites:

<http://www.lawrencehallofscience.org/pass/passv11/PASSv11cAztec-MayanMath.pdf>

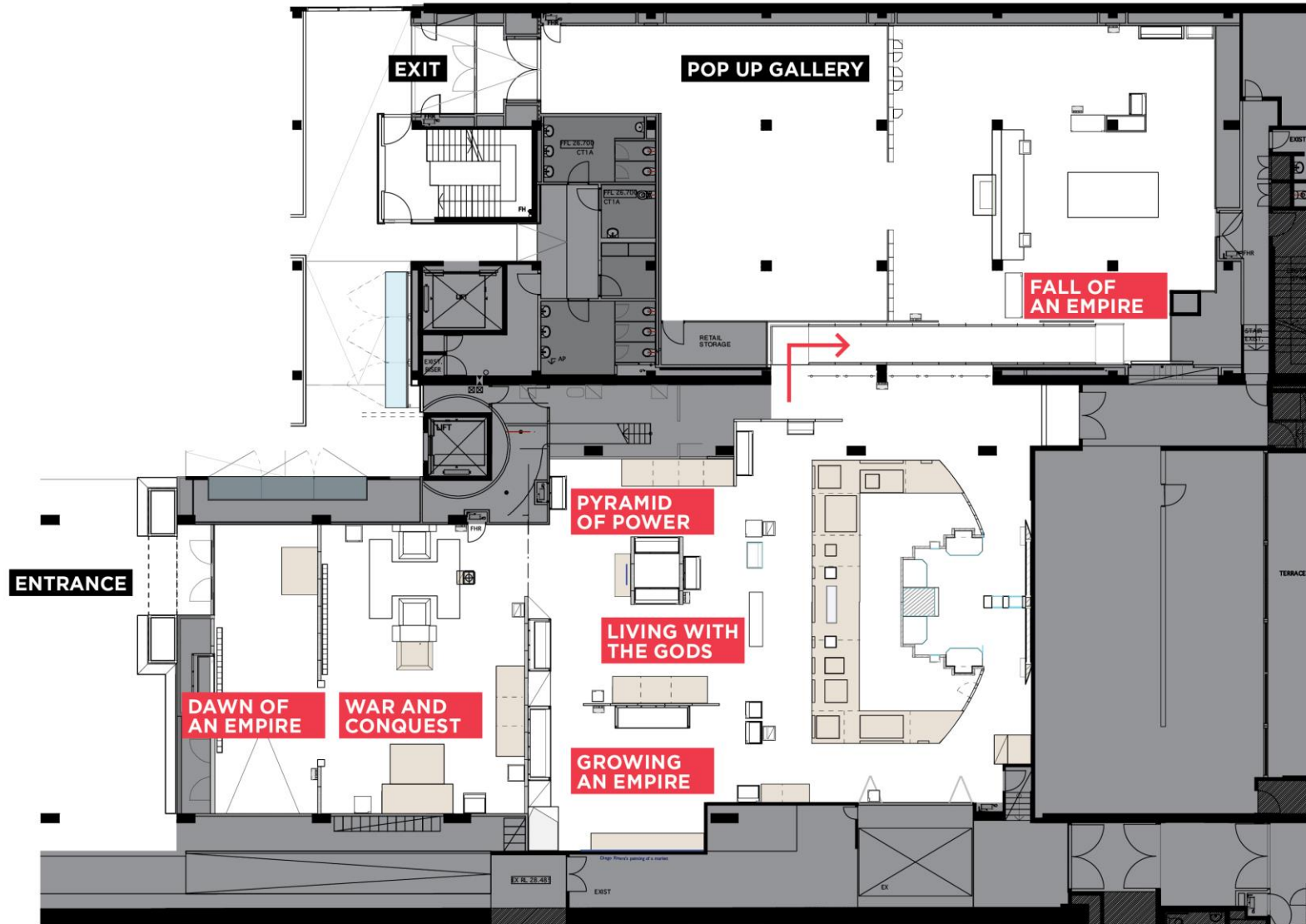
### **Activity 8 - Culture and the environment**

Students create a piece of reflective writing on culture and the environment. Have the students think about:

- how the Aztecs used the materials of their natural environment to make items such as buildings, tools, clothing etc.
- the ways in which the particular materials available in their local environment shaped their culture
- how we know about the Aztecs through archaeological evidence
- what materials survive after a long period of time and how that may affect what we know about the Aztecs
- how the Aztecs shaped the natural environment around them by making canals, making farmlands that expanded the island etc.

### **Activity 9 - Aspects of Aztec culture**

Divide the class into groups. Each group could do a presentation about the aspect of Aztec culture they investigated during the onsite activity at the Museum. Stipulate that each presentation must include some images of actual objects. Students should discuss what the objects tell us about the Aztec culture.



**AZTECS**

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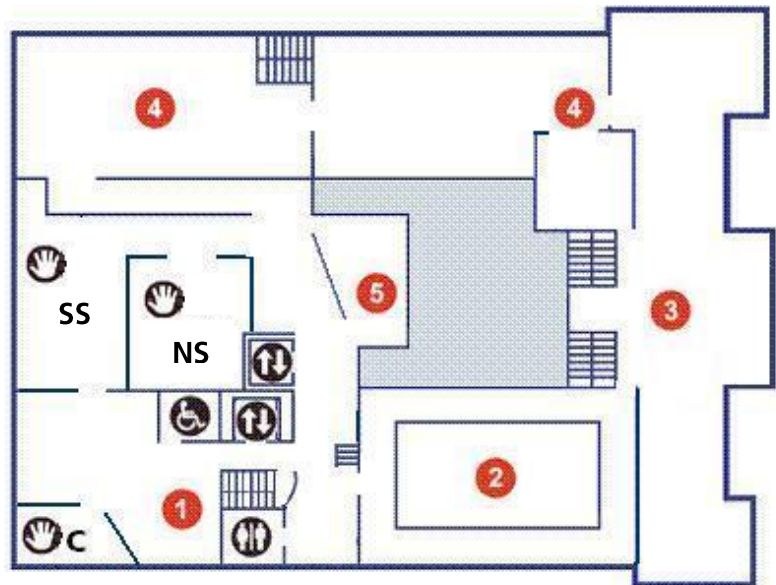
Aztecs was developed by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in partnership with Mexico's National Council for Culture and the Arts and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (CONACULTA-INAH), along with the Australian Museum and Museum Victoria.

# Australian Museum Guide Map





Updated May 2014

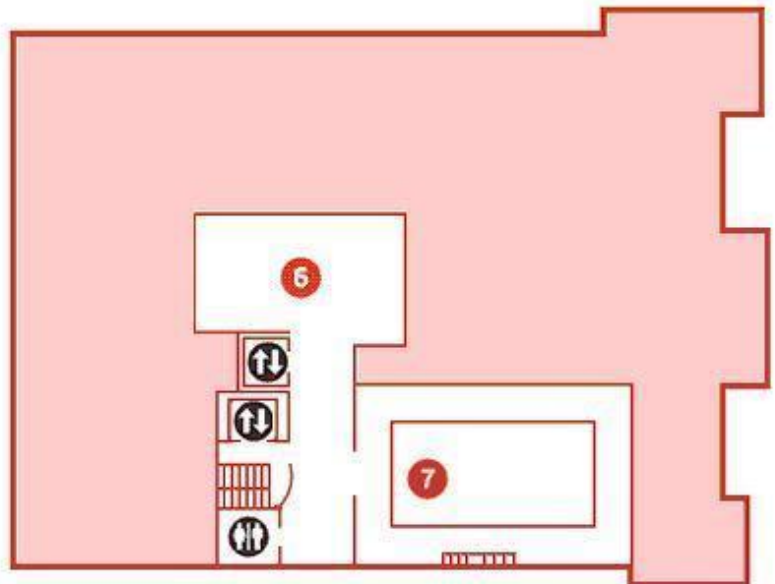
## Level 2

-  **SS** Science Studio (booked educ groups)
-  **NS** Nature Space (booked educ groups)
-  **C** Culture Space (booked educ groups)
-  **1** Search & Discover
-  **2** Birds & Insects exhibition
-  **3** Dinosaurs exhibition
-  **4** Surviving Australia exhibition
-  **5** Kidspace (for under 5s)
-  Lift (educ groups please use stairs)
-  Accessible toilet / Toilets



## Level 1

-  **6** Albert Chapman Mineral Collection exhibition
-  **7** Planet of Minerals exhibition
-  Lift (educ groups please use stairs)
-  Toilets



## Level G (Ground floor)

-  **8** Indigenous Australians exhibition
-  **9** Skeletons exhibition
-  **Aztecs exhibition**
- Main Entrance (College Street)
-  Atrium – information and cloaking
-  Toilets
-  Café
-  Museum Shop
-  Theatrette
-  Lift (educ groups please use stairs)

