



Grades 1-4

# Exploring Mesoamerica

Learning Lapbook with Study Guide



A Journey Through Learning  
[www.ajourneythroughlearning.com](http://www.ajourneythroughlearning.com)

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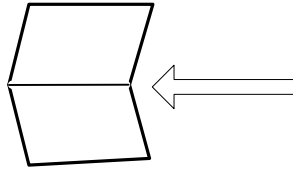
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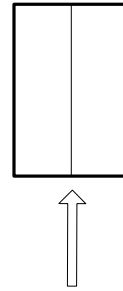
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# Things to Know

**Hamburger Fold**-Fold horizontally



**Hotdog Fold**-Fold vertically



**Dotted Lines**-These are the cutting lines.

**Accordion Fold**-This fold is like making a paper fan. Fold on the first line so that title is on top. Turn over and fold on next line so that title is on top again. Turn over again and fold again on the next line so that title is on top. Continue until all folds are done.

**Cover Labels**-Most of the booklets that are folded look nicer with a label on top instead of just a blank space. They will be referred to as "cover label."

## How Long Does it Take to Complete the Lapbook?

Doing a study guide page and mini-booklet a day, a 3-folder lapbook takes about one month to complete. However, you can expand the study portion and make it last as long as you like! That's the beauty of homeschooling! Do it YOUR way!

## Lapbook Assembly Choices

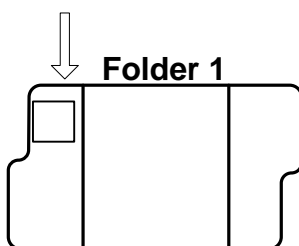
(see photos on how to fold and glue your folders together)

**We recommend using Zip Dry Glue or Elmer's Extreme.**

Choice #1 -Do not glue your folders together until you have completely finished all three folders. It is easier to work with one folder instead of two or three glued together.

Choice #2 -Glue all of your folders together before beginning. Some children like to see the entire project as they work on it. It helps with keeping up with which folder you are supposed to be working in. The choices are completely up to you and your child!

## How do I know where to place each template in the folder?

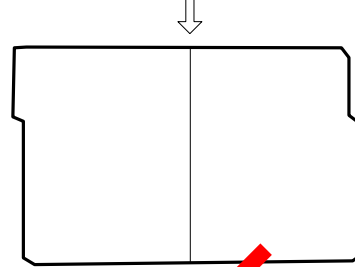


This placement key tells you the template goes in the first folder at the top of the left flap.

# Folding a Lapbook Base

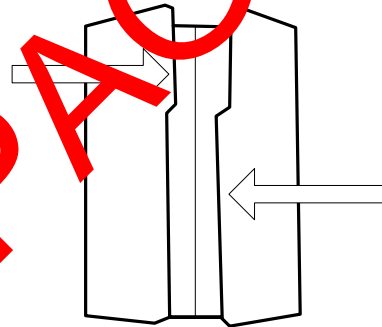
Gather the number of folders required for the project. Fold them flat as seen here.

Original fold line



For each folder, fold the left and right sides inward toward the original line to create two flaps. Crease so that the highest part of each flap is touching the original line. It is important not to let the two flaps overlap. *You may want to take a ruler and run it down each crease to make it sharper.*

Highest part of flap.



Glue your folders together by putting glue (or you may staple) on the inside of the flap. Then press the newly glued flaps together with your hands until they get a good strong hold to each other. Follow this step to add as many folders as you need for your project. Most of our lapbooks have either 2 or 3 folders.

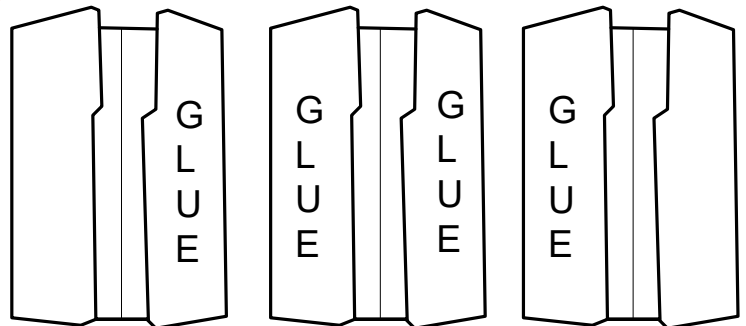
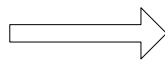
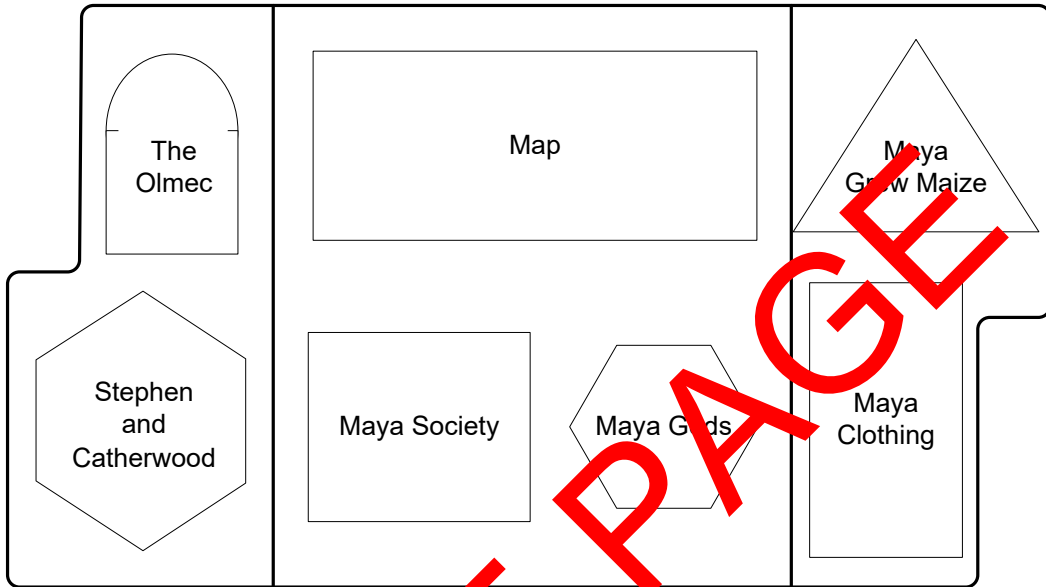


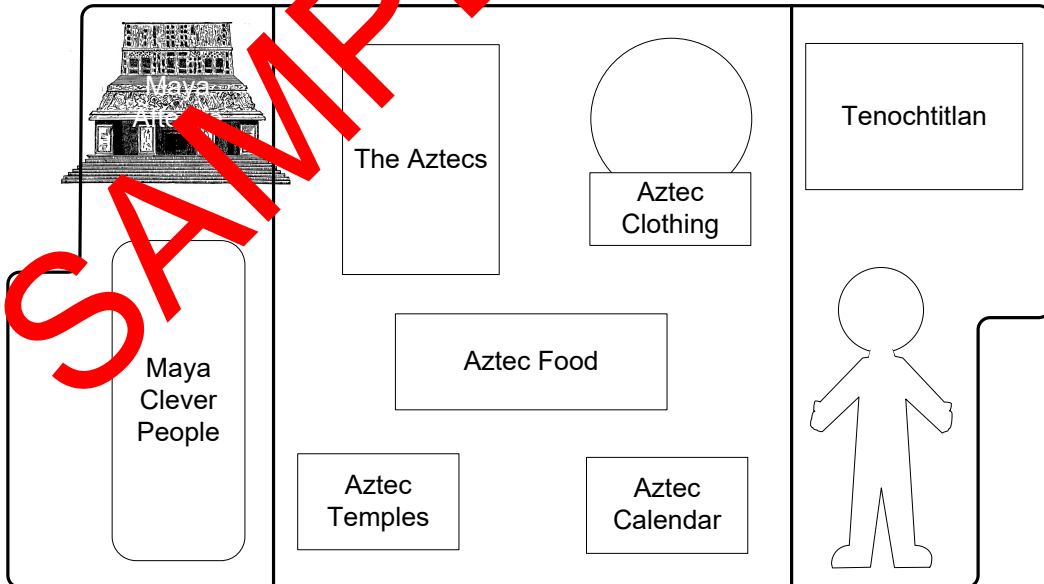
Photo of a completed lapbook base



## Folder 1



## Folder 2



Cut out the page around the dotted lines. Glue to the front of your closed lapbook.  
Color the Aztec art with bright colors!

# Exploring Mesoamerica



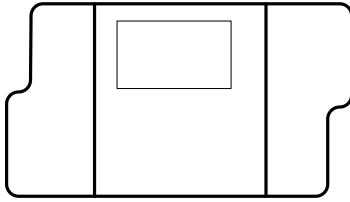
# Mesoamerica

The part of the American continent between the land of central Mexico down to parts of Honduras is known as Mesoamerica. “Meso” is a word that means middle. The land of Mesoamerica is in the middle of the American continent.

In this land, a series of civilizations flourished in ancient times. Around 1500 BC the people who populated this area started to abandon the wandering life and began to settle down in permanent settlements or villages. These people discovered how to farm. Their main crops consisted of corn, chili peppers, squash, beans and cotton. They learned to weave cloth and make pottery. Their villages were small and seemed to have kept to themselves without much contact between villages. Around the year 1200 BC a big change seem to have taken place. Around this time, pyramid-like structures were built and villages became more like towns with buildings and a large concentration of people. This seems to indicate the presence of a more complex society. This civilization, which lived and ruled in this period, is known as the Olmec.

After the Olmec civilization crumbled, the Maya arose. The Maya had much in common with the Olmecs but were more advanced in their intellectual endeavors. They developed a writing system, a complex calendar, and were very good at mathematics. At the time the Spanish conquistadors arrived, the ruling people were the Aztecs. The Aztecs managed to build an impressive empire.

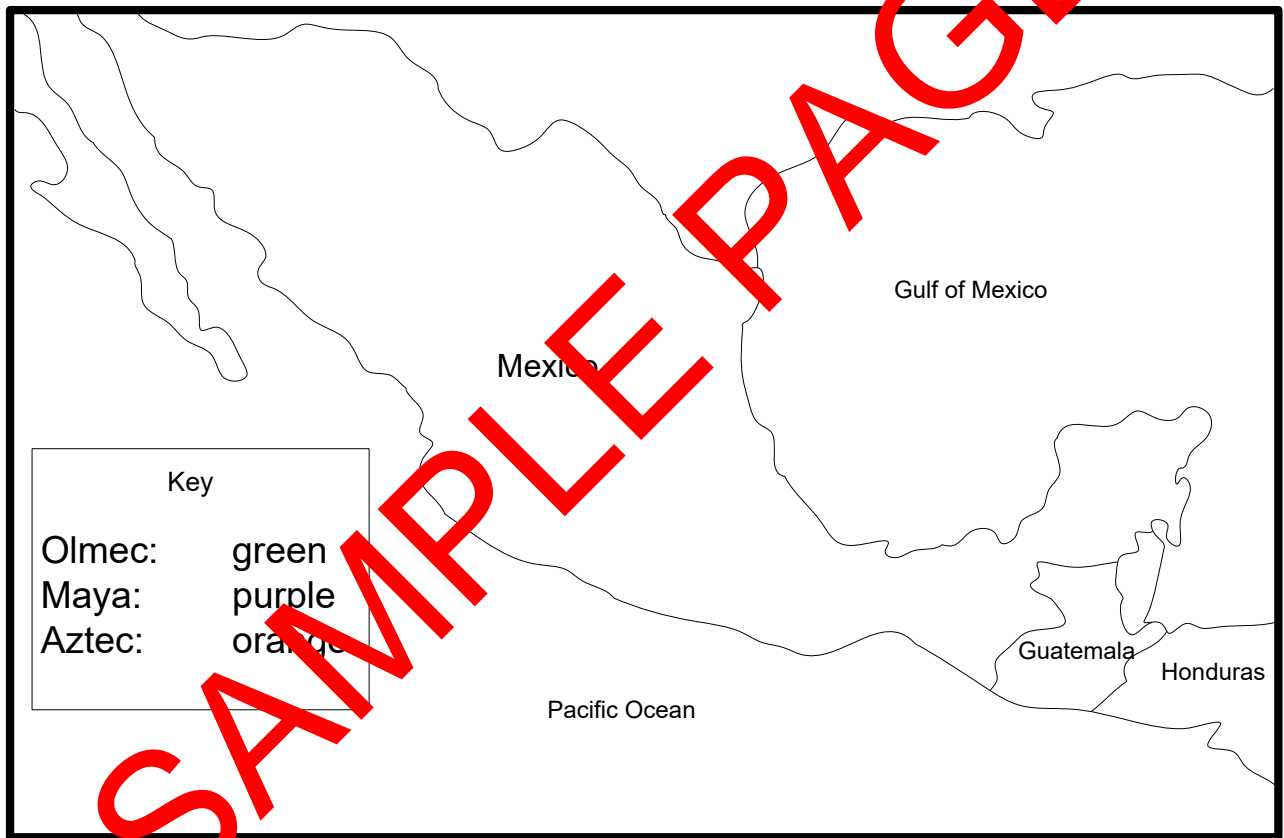
### Folder 1



### Read Mesoamerica.

Cut out the booklet. Glue into lapbook.

**Directions:** Throughout the lapbook, you will be instructed to shade in the location of different tribes of people.





## The Olmec

The Olmec people were the first to create a civilization in Mesoamerica. Not much is known about them. Many scientists think the Olmec came from Asia a long, long time ago. Their ancestors were hunters and gatherers who, around the year 1500 BC, settled down in the area that is now Mexico and parts of Central America.

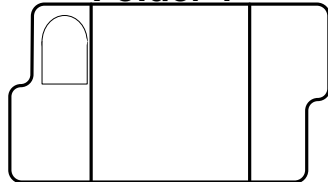
Archeologists have excavated several sites of Olmec settlements. The main sites are La Venta and San Lorenzo. Here they have come across large earthen pyramids, enormous platforms, and colossal heads carved out of stone. These huge heads are impressive! Nobody knows for sure what these huge heads represented. It is believed that they are images of the Olmec's powerful rulers.

The Olmec seem to have created an elaborate system of trade. Evidence seems to indicate that the Olmec traded with other people from regions as far as what is nowadays Costa Rica. They imported or brought in basalt (a volcanic rock), obsidian (another rock), and iron ore (a mineral). They traded in jade (a stone in a beautiful shade of green). They carved jade into religious objects, masks, rings, and necklaces.

The Olmec have been called the Mother Culture of Mesoamerica because, it is believed, they had a great influence to the rest of the important civilizations that follow. The Maya and the Aztecs, as well of other cultures of the area, owe a lot to the Olmec people

On the map in folder 1, shade in the area that was home to the Olmec in green.

### Folder 1



#### Read The Olmec.

Cut out each piece. Fasten together at the top with a brad (or staple). Glue into lapbook.

**Directions:** Inside of the booklet, write or draw what you have learned.

