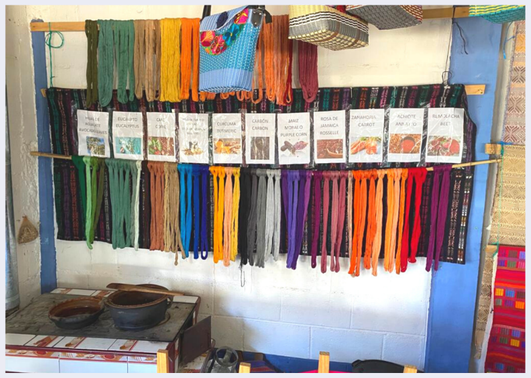


ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

COLORS OF NATURE

K-2 Grade Standard

Standard I: Students will recognize and describe how people within their community, state, and nation are both similar and different.

Objective 1:

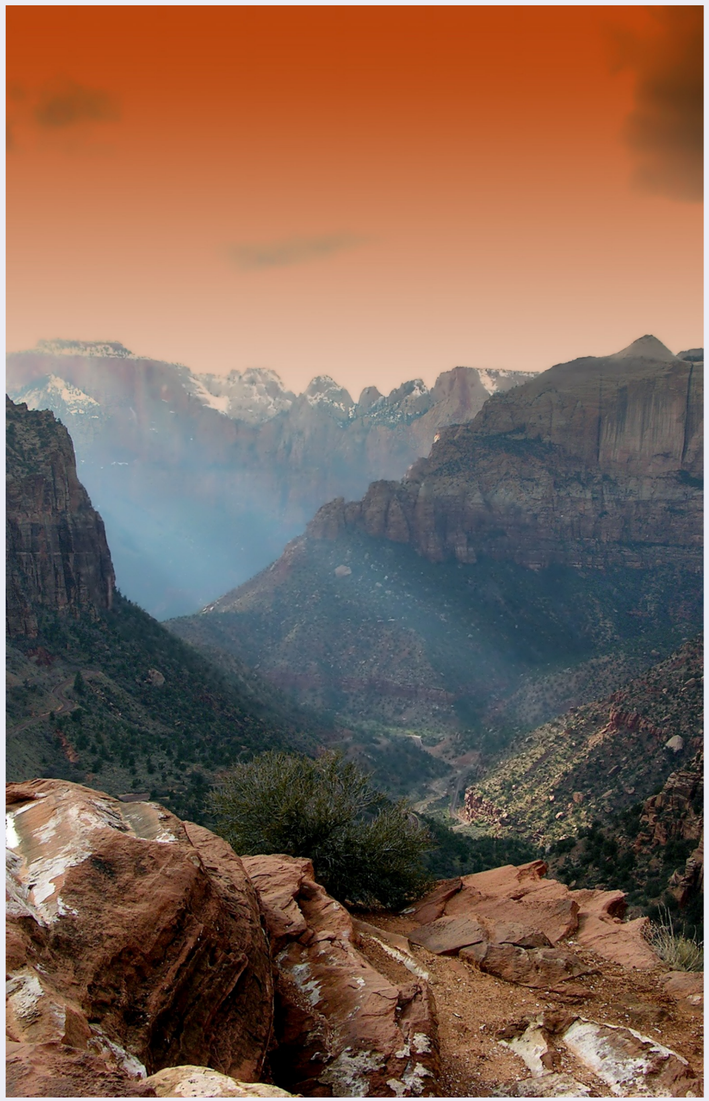
Examine and identify cultural differences within the community.

(B) I can explain ways people respect and pass on their traditions and customs.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Introduction



The Born from Corn series seeks to increase cultural understanding and foster a deeper appreciation of the main agricultural crops, traditions, and indigenous knowledge of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, specifically the Maya, with our entire community. We acknowledge that this land which we now know as the state of Utah, is the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Ancestral Puebloans, the San Juan Southern Paiute, Dine (Navajo) Nation, Ute Mountain Ute-White Mesa Community, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Ute Tribe, Northwestern Band of Shoshone, Skull Valley Band of Goshutes, and the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation. We recognize and respect their relation with this land as the original people of this place. We acknowledge and amplify the true history of the Indigenous peoples of this continent and their resilience against colonizer efforts to eliminate indigenous cultures, languages, traditions and beliefs. Through these lessons we hope to increase cultural understanding and foster a deeper appreciation of the art of weaving, the creation of natural dyes and how these practices are scientific, technological, and mathematical skills. These are traditions and knowledge that original peoples of this continent have been practicing for thousands of years.

Vocabulary

- **Indigenous**

  Indigenous means to be native or occur naturally in a particular place. Indigeneity is then applied to groups of people that lived in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans. >>Watch the video<<

- **Tradition**

  The handing down of information, beliefs, or customs from one generation to another.

  Example: Painting Easter eggs during Easter every year.

Maya vs. Mayan

The term "Mayan" is only used by scholars when referring to the languages spoken by the Maya. There are many Maya languages and many Maya peoples. The term "Maya is used when referring to people, places, and culture, without distinction between singular or plural.

Example: "It was written in a Mayan language." "The Maya harvest corn."

Vocabulary

- **Weaving**

  The craft or action of forming fabric by interlacing threads.

- **Backstrap Loom Weaving**

  A horizontal loom on which one of two beams holding the warp yarn is attached to a strap that passes across the weaver's back.

  A family tradition that has been passed down for generations, usually from the parent to their children.

Textiles

A type of cloth or woven fabric. Maya weavers usually embroider elements of nature and the cosmos as part of their traditional blouses known as a **huipil**.

Cosmovision

A cosmovision, or worldview, is the way we see the world and how nature, and everything around us, like animals, the universe, stars, air, and earth, are connected and related to us, humans.

Natural dyes

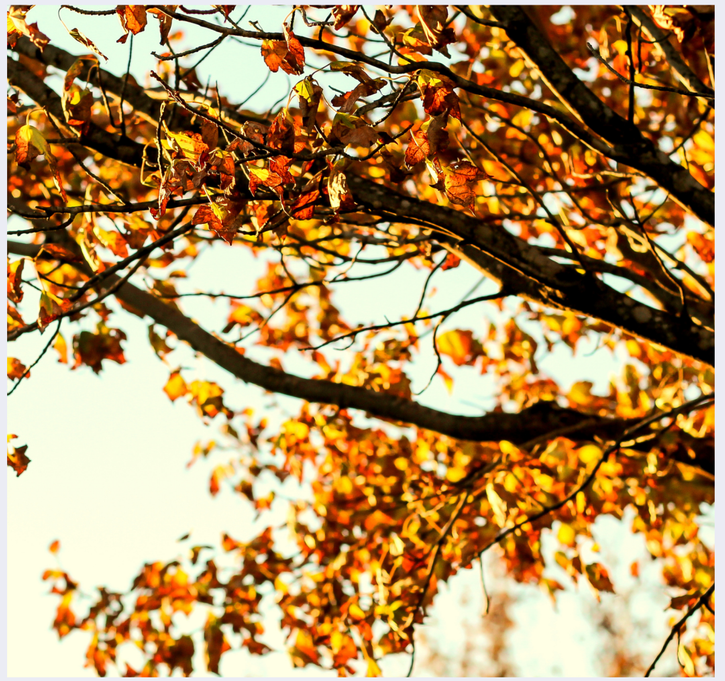
Natural dyes are dyes derived from animal or plant material without any chemical treatment. They are obtained from sources like flowers, leaves, insects, bark roots etc.; however, they are not readily available and involve an extraction process

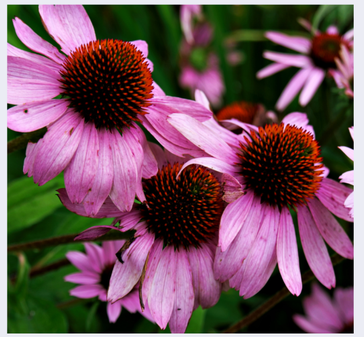
Pigment

Pigments are also natural elements that can be use to paint. Dyes easily dissolve in water and many solvents while pigments do not dissolve in water.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

What colors do you see when you are out in nature?

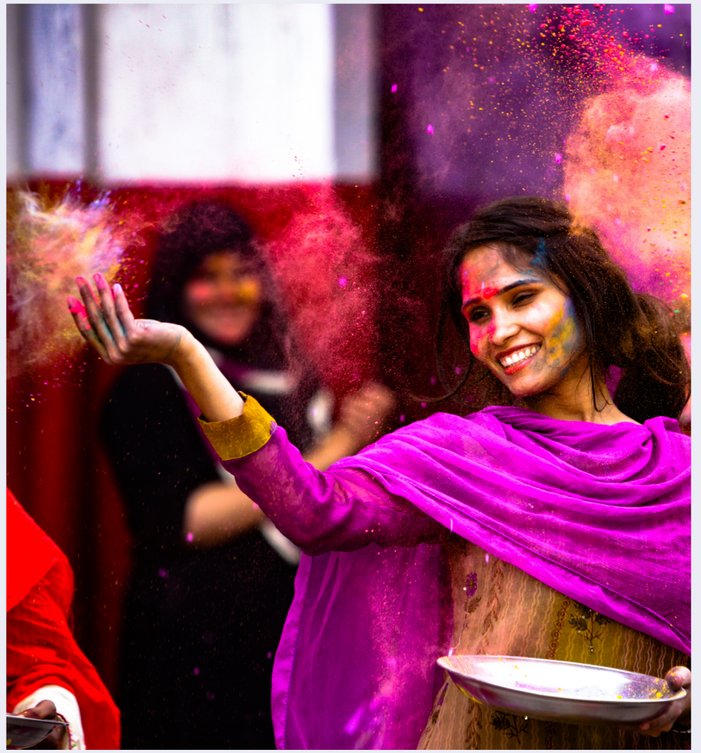




What do colors mean to you?
What colors do you see in your state?
How do they make you feel?
Share with a partner

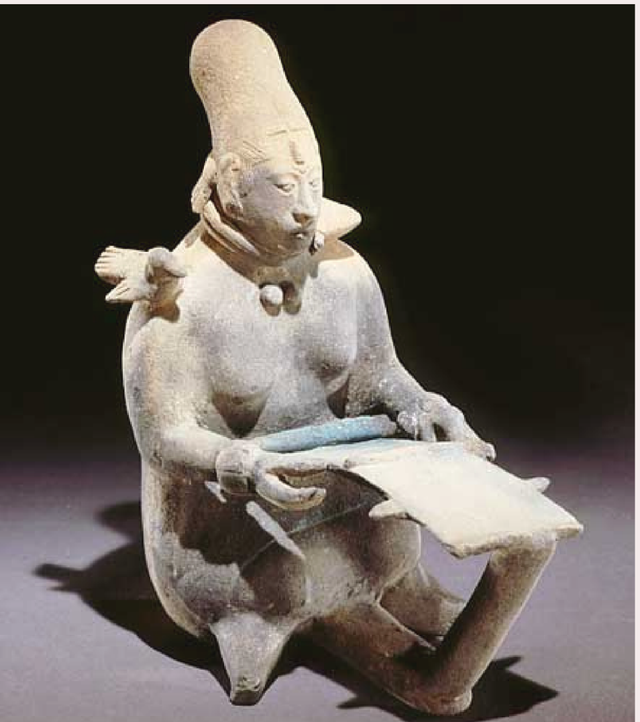
Colors of Culture

When you think of color, do you think about cultural celebrations and holidays?



What do you SEE in these images?

What do you these images make you wonder?



ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Natural Dyes

The Maya have their own process of dyeing yarn and cloths. They have shared it for many generations. Weaving, dyeing yarn and wearing traditional clothing are symbols of survivance, resistance and continuation.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Weaver of Colors

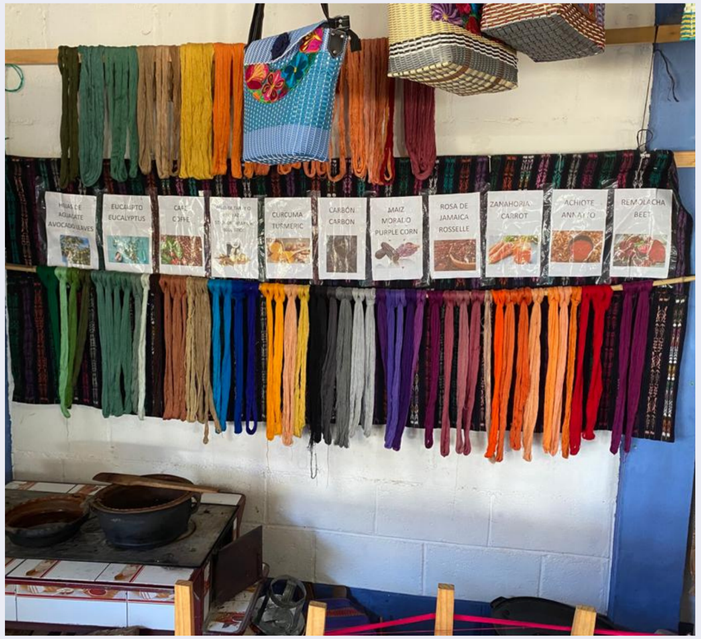
Many Maya use these threads to create beautiful Huipiles (embroidered Maya dress/blouse).

Natural Pigments

If you visit countries like Mexico and Guatemala, you will see vibrant beautiful colors on the buildings and murals.

Many Maya today create colors by using natural dyes and pigments but this practice and knowledge all **started long ago with the ancient people of Mesoamerica.**

*Mesoamerica is a geographical region sometimes also known as "Central America" and includes Mexico. This word is used when talking about peoples and cultures before the Spanish Colonizers.



ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

For the Maya...

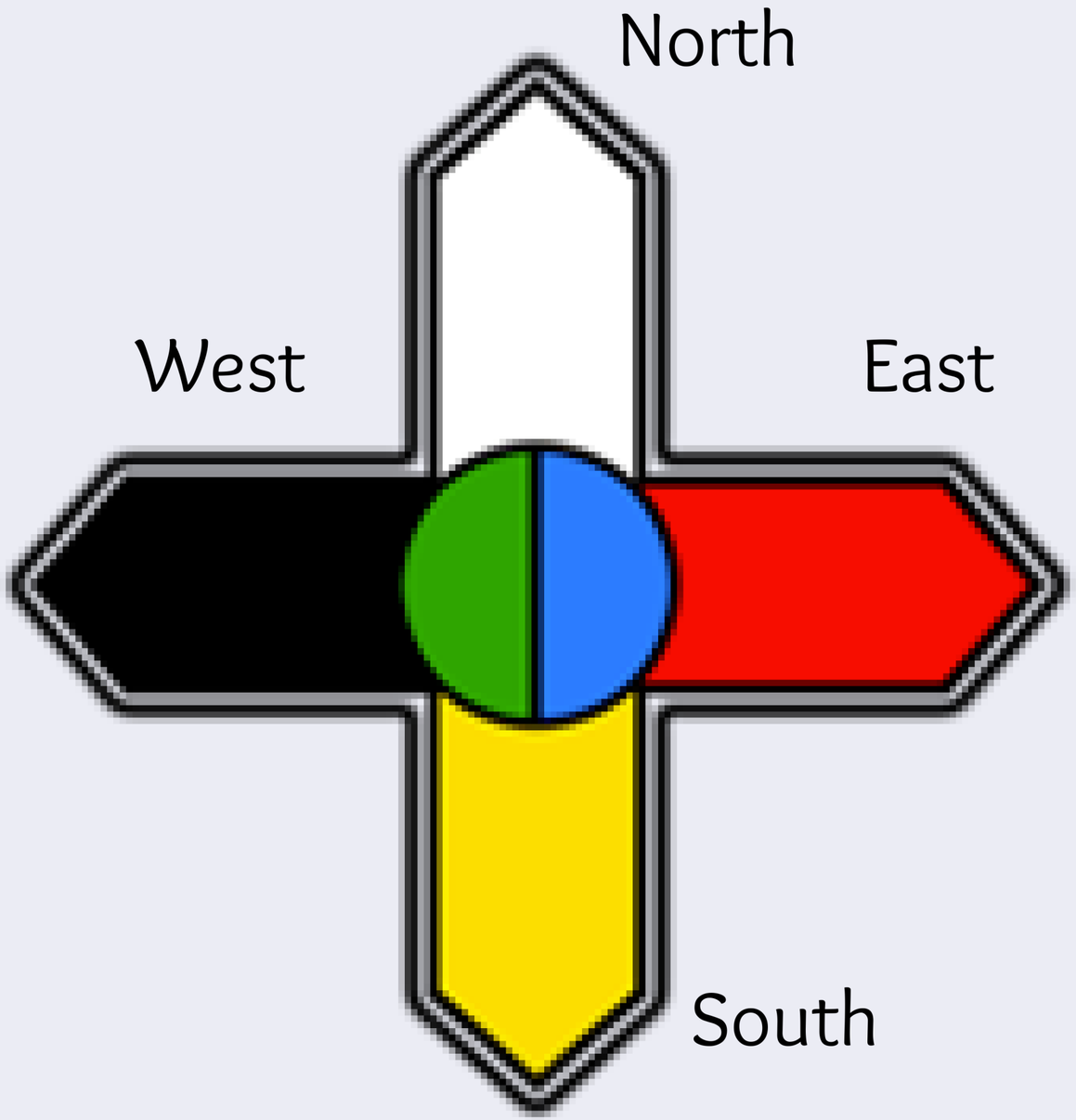
Colors are symbolic, they represent memory, direction and creation.

Color and Creation

In the Popol Vuh (the sacred text of the Maya Quiche), color is associated with the cardinal directions.

The Hero Twins in the story; One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu journey to Xibalba (the Maya underworld). On their journey they reach a crossroad with four directions. Each cardinal direction in the story has a color association and meaning.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH



THE CARDINAL COLORS

In common with other Mesoamerican cultures, the Maya combined the four world directions and the center of the world with colors and various attributes which were believed to be associated with these world directions. There are other cultures that also designate colors to the cardinal points, these color connections vary. The Maya used the following color scheme:

East is associated with ‘red’ sunrise, North with ‘white’ mid-day, West with ‘black’ sunset, and South with ‘yellow’ sun, The fifth color term, ‘blue/green’ is associated with the ‘Center’ earth.

By Artist Vicky K'ulub Lowe

COLORS OF CORN

The colors of these cardinal points are also the colors of corn. We know about the four corn sisters, each one with one color of corn. So we see that the use of these colors were not chosen randomly. Another connection with the colors of corn and Popol Vuh is the fact that the maya people, according to the creation story, were made out of masa from the four different colors of corn.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

MAYA BLUE/GREEN AND BLACK

Blue/Green is called Yaax in Mayan. It is a blue/green color found in many Maya murals, ceramics, writings and it is also the color of corn.

The color Black is connected to the Lords of the Night. Black is found on the Dresden Codex (a folding book with Maya writing), you can see this on the right. The color Black was made of soot.

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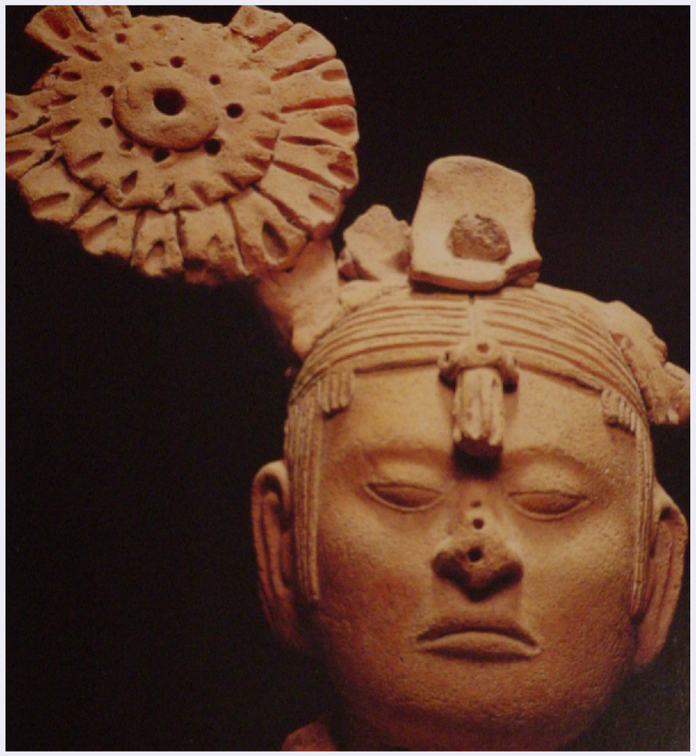
MAYA RED AND YELLOW

Red has been associated with the east where the sun rises. Many Maya temples were painted with the color red. Red is made of conchinilla insects or also minerals such as cinnabar.

Yellow is made from flowers and plants such as cempasuchitl, palo amarillo, and xochpalli. Yellow can also be made from tecozahuitl (yellow ochre). Sunflowers can be seen in ancient Maya art.



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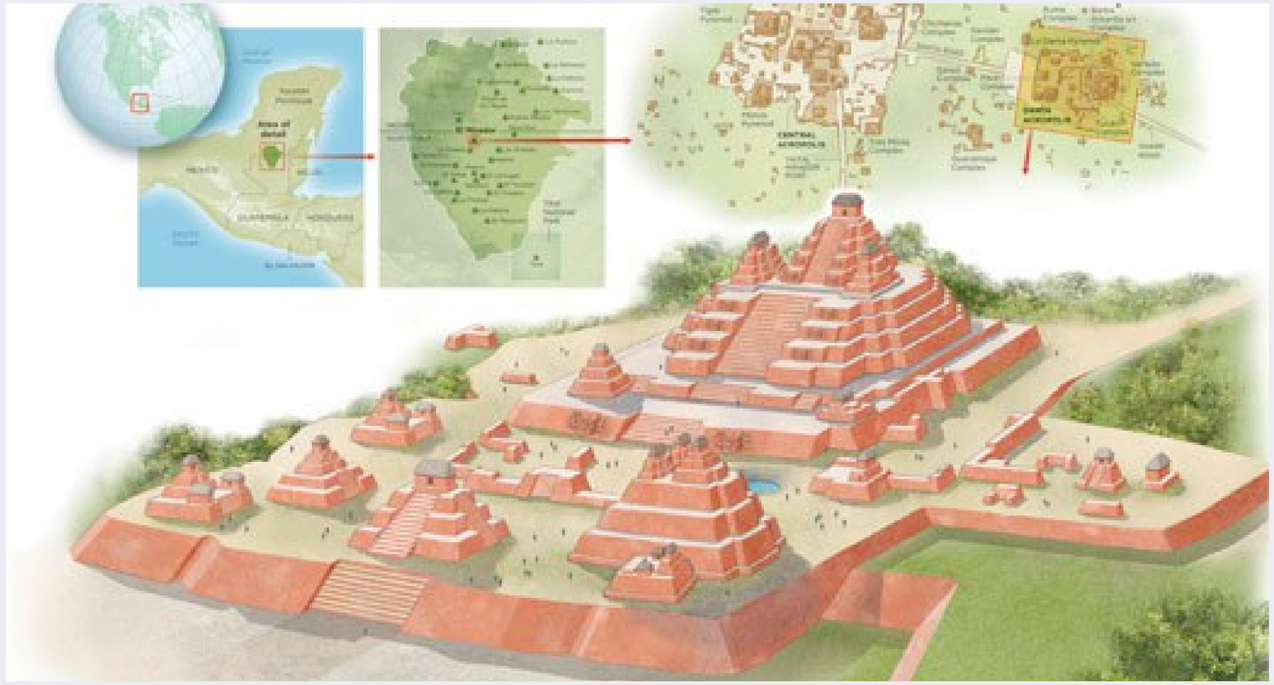
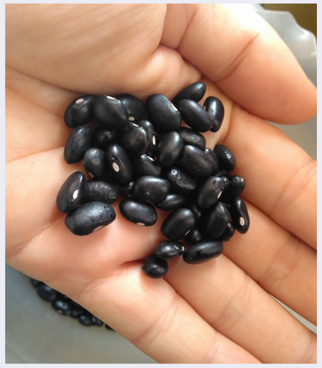
Mesoamerican Cities

The Maya had great city-states, temples and buildings were covered with a beautiful vibrant red that has lasted for atleast two thousand years.



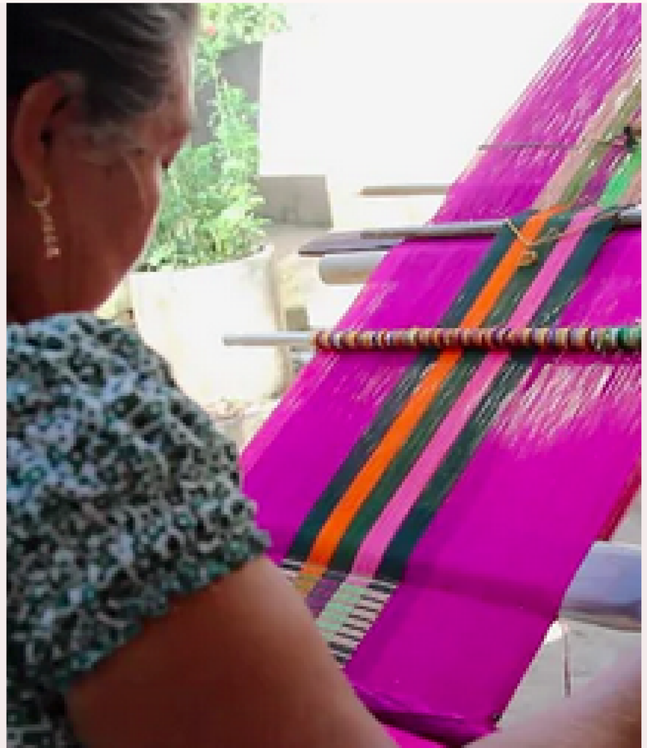


Colors of Nature

The Maya use avocados to create a reddsh-pink color. The indigo plant for a blue-ish colorant. Marine molluscs for a purple color, boiled banana stalks to make a lilac color.

Recall

How do the Maya respect and pass on their traditions and customs?



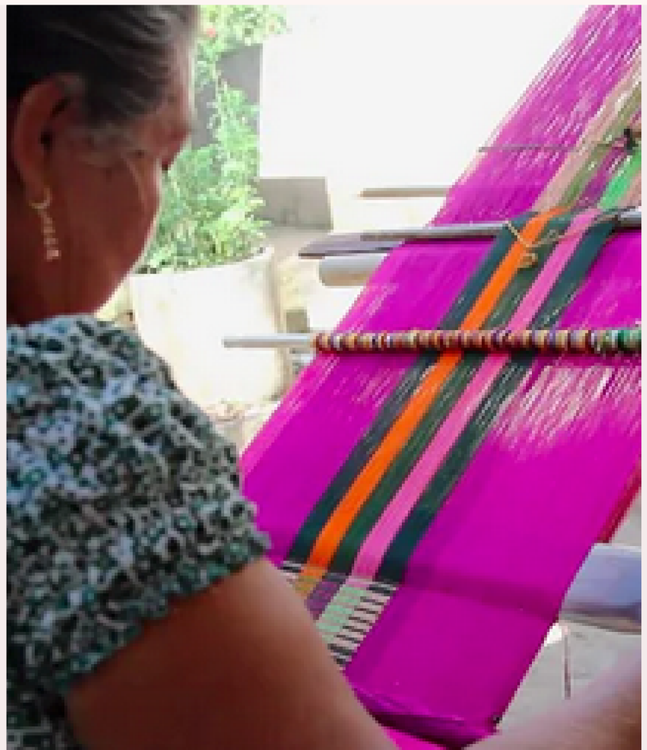
Recall

They pass on their traditions through:

Making pigments and dyes

Teaching little ones

Making textiles



Making art

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Reflect

Why is it important for the Maya to keep their traditions alive?

Activity

Your teacher will give you the Colors of Nature Field Activity to create your own dyes!

COLORS OF NATURE

FIELD ACTIVITY

NAME:

DATE:

Part 1: Predict

Collect plants, flowers, minerals, or any natural elements that you think you can use to create a dye. Make sure you don't touch unsafe plants, go with with an adult and do your research about safe and unsafe plants around you. Some plants Maya weavers use are:

Element	Color it Makes	Action
Palo Brasil - Brazilwood	Dark Pink	(Boil and let soak for a few days)
Red Utah Sand	Light shades or orange	(Let soak for few days)
Purple Onion Skin	Lilac	(boil and let cool off)
Black Breans	Shades of Blue	(soak the beans and use the leftover water)
Yellow Onion Skin	Green, Yellow & Brown	(Boil and let cool off)
Avocado Seed	Light Pink	(Boil and let cool off, this one ccan be toxic, do no reuse containers or spoons)

YOUR TURN! What other natural elements do you think you can use? What colors do you think they can make?

Element	Color you predict it will make

Respect
Educate
Amplify
Listen

CONTRIBUTERS:

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A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

UTAHHUMANITIES
Ideas in Action

“Empowering Utahns to Improve Their Communities Through Active Engagement in the Humanities.”