

## **Key Terms for Early African and Meso-American Societies Unit**

### **Bantu**

Sub-Sahara - geographical area of Africa below the Sahara Desert.

Oasis- area in deserts that are abundant in water and plants.

Semiarid- area such as the Sahara Desert that gets very little annual rainfall.

Desertification- the process of an area "becoming" a desert.

Savanna- a plain area covered with grasses and ponds.

Swahili- an African language traced back to the Bantu peoples

Dhow- Arab sailing vessel on the East coast of Africa

Lineage- one's family line

Matrilineal- clans where the mother and the mother's family is dominant

Diviner- an African tribal priest who talked to the spirit world

Griot - African Tribal record keepers.

Bantu- early African tribes that migrated and settled the African continent.

### **Olmeccs and Mayans**

Calendar - major achievement of the Mayans.

Central America - geographic area between North and South America.

civilization - a culture that has developed a form of government, religion, and learning

cultural diffusion - the spread of culture through trade

culture- a social groups habits, customs, and traditions

jaguar - highly visible in Olmec art. Often drawn as the rain god.

The Olmeccs- earliest American culture in Mexico. Thrived around 1500BC.

number system- developed by Olmeccs to keep record of traded items.

### **Incas and Aztecs**

Calpulli -Groups of Aztec families each with their own temple and school.

Chinampas - Highly fertile gardens created by the Aztecs in the shallow lakes around their settlements.

Cortes - Leader of the Spanish army that conquered the Aztecs

Jaguars - Aztec's finest warriors

Moctezuma - One of the great Aztec rulers.

Sacrifice - Killing an animal or person as an offering to the gods.

Tenochtitlan - The capital of the Aztecs founded in 1325 and built on an island in Lake Texcoco.

Tribute - A form of tax paid to the Aztec ruler by the people living in the towns throughout the Aztec Empire.

Cuzco - capital city of the Incan Empire.

Andes - mountain chain in South America that was home to the Incas.

Machu Pichu - a major Incan city full of temples.

Pizarro- Spanish conqueror of the Incas.