



Name _____ Date _____

The Maya were a large group of Indians who lived mainly in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. It is believed that these people came across the Bering Strait with the other Native Americans, but quickly migrated south. About 5000 B.C., the Maya people had formed small fishing villages, settling on the coast lands. By 2000 B.C., the Maya had moved inland and began to raise maize and beans. These vegetables became their main source of food, as they are today. During the next 2000 years the Maya developed into highly civilized people. They settled in many areas of Mesoamerica and became prosperous. They developed the art of making pottery and introduced the first known American systems of irrigation, or methods for watering crops. A form of writing emerged, and the Maya began the first recorded history.

About the year 1000, a heavy drought hit Mesoamerica. The Mayan crops failed, causing famine and death for many Maya in the mountain areas. Maya in the lowlands fared a little better and cities such as Uxmal and Chichen Itza in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico became the center of Mayan government, art, and architecture. The Spanish explorers of the 13th and 14th centuries brought new diseases that the Maya could not cope with. Disease and Spanish conquerors finally caused the Mayan empires to cave in. The last Mayan kingdom surrendered to the Spanish in 1697.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. The Maya developed irrigation.
- B. The Mayan Indians have a rich history that is at least 6000 years old.
- C. Many Mayan continue to live as their ancestors did.
- D. The Spanish conquered the Maya

2. The Maya first moved inland into Mesoamerica in:

- A. 2000 B.C.
- B. 5000 B.C.
- C. 1000 B.C.
- D. 2000 A.D.

3. What brought about the collapse of the Mayan kingdoms?

- A. Lack of irrigation systems
- B. Their crops were poisoned
- C. A heavy drought
- D. Disease and Spanish conquerors