

Aztec Religion.



Reading for Meaning and Sequencing Activity

Aztec Religion.

Developed in the 1990s by Judith Evans, Steve Ridgewell and Steve Cooke to support Leicester schools.

Webaddress: www.collaborativelearning.org/aztecreligion.pdf

Last updated 9th November 2012

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

17, Barford Street, Islington, London N1 0QB UK Phone: 0044 (0)20 7226 8885

Website: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org>

BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

Aztec Religion.

Teachers' Notes.

1. Reading + Sequencing Activity.

Sheet 1 (double sided) is a text about the festival of Toxcatl.

Sheet 2 is the set of sequencing cards.

Sheet 3 is the baseboard for placing the sequencing cards in the cycle. This sheet needs to be enlarged to A3 size.

In groups of 3 or 4, the pupils use the text as a reference for helping them to put the sequencing cards in the correct order. There are 12 sequencing cards, but only 11 spaces on the baseboard. This is to emphasise that the end of the cycle is also the beginning of a new cycle. The 12th card can therefore be placed on top of, or next to, the 1st card.

We used this activity as the basis for enabling the pupils to design and produce their own poster depicting the events of the festival cycle.

2. Statement Sorting Activity.

Sheets 4 and 5 are the statement cards. They need to be photocopied onto card. The individual statement cards need to be cut and mixed up.

The pupils in their groups of 3/4 have to sort out which statements would have been made by the Spanish and which statements would have made by the Aztecs. Afterwards the pupils should be able to summarise the main differences between the Spanish and the Aztec view of life, death and religion.

The Festival of Toxcatl

In the fifth month of the Aztec year, a young man was chosen to pretend to be the god Tezcatlipoca for the next year. The young man was chosen from among the many prisoners that the Aztecs captured from the neighbouring nations. The young man had to be handsome, slim and neither too short nor too tall.

The young man was taught how to play the flute. He was dressed in the most splendid and expensive clothes. He had to wear gold bracelets on his arms and gold bells on his ankles. He also had to wear a crown of flowers. He had fifteen servants to do everything for him and give him everything he wanted.

The young man spent most of the year living in luxury. He had the finest and most expensive clothes, jewellery, food and drink. Everywhere he went people threw themselves on the ground, filled their mouths with dust and prayed to him because they treated him as if he were a real god. The young man was followed everywhere by eight guards whose job it was to make sure that he did not run away.

Twenty-eight days before the festival the young man changed the kind of clothes that he wore so that he was dressed like a warrior chief. Then he was married to four young women who pretended to be goddesses. They were the 'goddess of the flowers', 'the goddess of the maize', 'the goddess of the water' and 'the goddess of the salt'

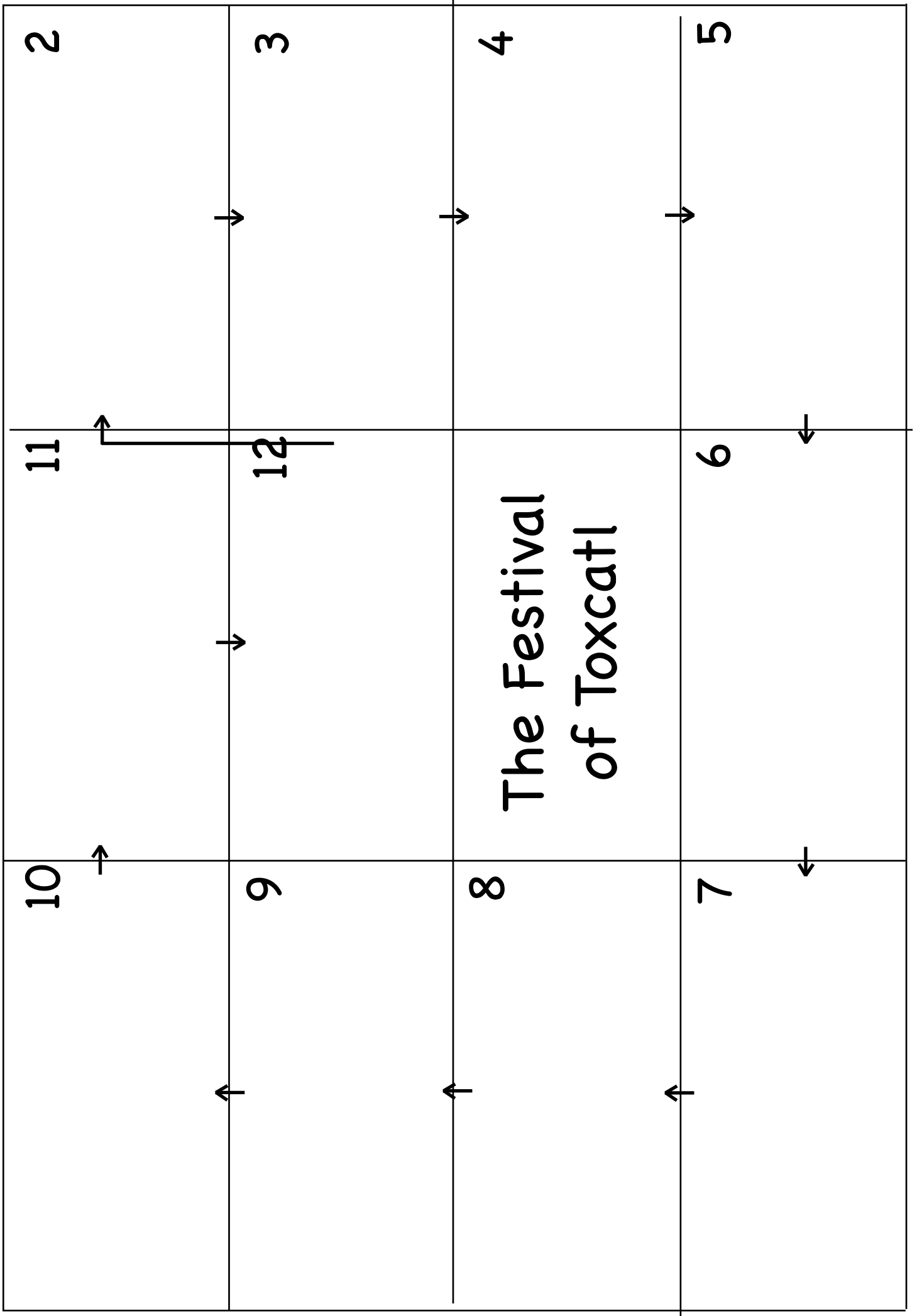
Six days before the festival, the people started five days of feasting, dancing and celebrating. The young man had to attend special banquets with all the rich and noble people.

On the day of the festival, the young man was taken in a large canoe with his wives and servants to a small hill on the edge of the lake. The hill was called the 'Hill of Parting' and it was here that he said a last farewell to his wives.

With his servants the young man left the Hill of Parting and was taken to a small pyramid shaped temple. As the young man went up the steps of the pyramid temple, he had to break the flutes which he had played during the year.

When he reached the top of the temple steps he was laid on a large stone slab. Four men held his arms and legs so that he could not move. A priest then killed the young man with a knife. In this way the young man was sacrificed to the sun god. The young man's blood was offered to the sun god.

On the same day as the sacrifice another young prisoner was chosen to be 'Tezcatlipoca' for the next year. He would live a life of luxury, but at the end of the year he too would die at the pyramid temple.



A young man was chosen to pretend to be the god Tezcatlipoca for the next year.

He was taught to play the flute and was given gold bracelets, gold bells and a crown of flowers to wear.

He had fifteen servants to give him whatever he wanted. He had the finest clothes, jewellery and food.

Whenever people saw him they threw themselves on the ground, filled their mouths with dust and prayed to him as if he were a real god.

The people began five days of feasting, dancing and celebration.

His clothes were changed and he was dressed as a warrior chieftain. He was married to four young women who pretended to be four goddesses.

The young man, his wives and his servants were taken in a large canoe to the 'Hill of Parting', where the young man said goodbye to his wives.

The servants took the young man to a small pyramid shaped temple.

As he walked up the steps of the temple, the young man broke each of the flutes he had played during the year.

A young man was chosen to pretend to be the god Tezcatlipoca for the next year.

The priest then sacrificed the young man and offered the blood to the god of the sun.

As soon as the young man was dead, another young man was chosen to become Tezcatlipoca for the next year.

'We believe that sacrificing humans is necessary in order to keep the sun moving across the sky.'

'We think that people feel that it is a great honour to be chosen to be as a sacrifice to the gods.'

'If we did not keep the gods happy then they would not send the rain or make the crops grow.'

'We believe that there are many gods and that it is important to respect and obey them.'

'Our people understand the importance of having discipline and doing what is expected of them, even if this means giving up their own children to the gods.'

'We believe that human life is sacred which is why people must be prepared to die for the gods.'

'We do not understand their religion. Their god is not like our gods. They do not fear their god in the way that we respect and fear our gods.'

**What the
Aztecs said:**

'We believe that killing people in the name of religion is completely wrong.'

'We believe that our religion is the one true religion and that their religion is just a myth and superstition.'

'In our religion we only pretend to eat the body and drink the blood of the son of god by eating special bread and drinking special wine.'

'We believe that it is wrong to kill other human beings. It is only right to do this in war or to punish people for sins and crimes.'

'We believe that there is only one god and that he is all powerful.'

'Our god is a god of love and does not need human blood to make him send the rain or keep the land fertile.'

'We think that their religion is barbaric. These people are not much better than animals'

**What the
Spanish said:**