

# I-SEARCH INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

## *Ancient America*

1. **PARADOXES:**  
When the Spanish arrived in present-day Mexico and Peru, they found the natives to be savages and sought to “civilize” them. Using evidence from your book and other sources, create a board game showing that the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas were quite advanced and did not need to be “civilized”.
2. **ATTRIBUTES:**  
The people of Mexico are a mix of the natives and the Spanish that arrived later. Create a chart showing where many Mexican attributes come from. For example, Spanish language and Catholicism from the Spanish, dark skin and the eagle on the Mexican flag from the Aztecs.
3. **ANALOGIES:**  
Most people associate pyramids with Egypt. We now know that the people in Central and South America also created pyramids. Create a pop-up book that shows the similarities and differences between the pyramids of America and those of North Africa.
4. **DISCREPANCIES:**  
We know that the Mayans created hundreds of writings about their civilization. Unfortunately, the Spanish burned nearly all of these works. Write a diary from a Mayan man or woman discussing their feelings about the Spanish destroying their writings.
5. **PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS:**  
The Mayan king gave a blood sacrifice to the gods to help save the people. The Catholic Spanish brought a story of Jesus who gave his blood to help save the people. Make a poster showing the similarities between Mayan beliefs and Catholicism.
6. **EXAMPLES OF CHANGE:**  
In the 1500s, Spain was the most powerful country in the world. In 1588, England defeated the Spanish Armada and took their place as the most powerful. Create a 3-D map showing how the world might look today had the English been defeated by the Spanish in 1588.
7. **EXAMPLES OF HABIT:**  
The Inca created mummies, but then went a step further and asked the dead for advice on everything from marriages to war. Dress up as an Inca man or woman and justify this to the class. Explain why you believe that you can trust in the advice given by the dead.
8. **ORGANIZED RANDOM SEARCH:**  
If you had the opportunity to become richer than you could ever imagine, but you knew it would cost millions of lives of men, women, and children, what would you do? Using the Spanish Conquest as an example, write a fable with an appropriate moral. Read it to the class and see if they “get it”.
9. **SKILLS OF SEARCH:**  
Living in Southern California, we have the opportunity to eat lots of Mexican food. Unfortunately, Taco Bell, Del Taco, and the rest are not very representative of real Mexican food. Create a Mexican meal for the class and explain why foods such as corn, beans, tomatoes, etc. play an important role.

## PRODUCTS

A Dance/A Letter/ A Lesson	Oral Defense
Advertisement	Oral Report
Animated Movie	Painting Pamphlet
Annotated Bibliography	Pantomime
Art Gallery	Papier Mache
Block Picture Story	Petition
Bulletin Board	Photo Essay
Bumper Sticker	Pictures
Chart	Picture Story for Children
Choral Reading	Plaster of Paris Model
Clay Sculpture	Play
Code	Poetry
Collage	Political Cartoon
Collection	Pop-Up Book
Comic Strip	Postage Stamp,
Computer Program	Commemoratives
Costumes	Press Conference
Crossword Puzzle	Project Cube
Database	Prototype
Debate	Puppet
Demonstration	Puppet Show
Detailed Illustration	Puzzle
Diorama	Rap
Diary	Radio Program
Display	Rebus Story
Edibles	Recipe
Editorial Essay	Riddle
Etching	Role Play
Experiment	Science Fiction Story
Fact Tile	Sculpture
Fairy Tale	Skit
Family Tree	Slide Show
Fiction Story	Slogan
Film	Soliloquy
Filmstrip	Song
Flip Book	Sound
Game	Story Telling-Tall
Graph	Tales
Hidden Picture	Survey
Illustrated Story	Tapes–Audio–Video
Interview	Television Program
Jingle	Timeline
Joke Book	Transparencies
Journal	Travel Brochure
Labeled Diagram	Venn Diagram
Large Scale	Web Home Page
Drawing	Working Hypothesis
Learning Center	Write a new law
Letter to the Editor	Video Film
Map with Legend	
Mazes	
Mural	
Museum Exhibit	
Musical Instruments	
Needlework	
Newspaper Story	
Non-Fiction	

## PRODUCTS

### 10. TOLERANCE FOR AMBIGUITY:

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish searched for mythical places, such as El Dorado, an entire city made of gold, and the Fountain of Youth. Make a news report showing the fictional discovery of such a place and the Spanish response.

### 11. INTUITIVE EXPRESSION:

Dance is an important part of Mexican and Spanish civilizations. Wearing a traditional costume, teach one of these dances to the class and explain its importance to the culture from which it comes.

### 12. ADJUSTMENT TO DEVELOPMENT:

The history of North and South America is full of stories how the natives were pushed aside in favor of the Europeans, whether the French, the English, or the Spanish. Create a sculpture showing the status of some of these people today, and whether they are in a better position or worse position.

### 13. STUDY CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PROCESS:

Study the life of a famous Mexican or Peruvian person. Write a poem that describes his/her life and influence on present day Mexico or Peru.

### 14. EVALUATE SITUATIONS:

When the Spanish arrived in Mexico in 1519, they had fewer than 1000 men. There were 25 million Aztecs at the time. This would seem to be an overwhelming advantage for the Aztecs, but it was not. Create a mural that shows how the Spanish were able to prevail. Include disease, better weapons, deceit, etc.

### 15. CREATIVE READING SKILL:

Read the story of Don Quixote by Miguel Cervantes. Create a collage showing the story of Don Quixote and explain how men such as Hernando Cortez and Francisco Pizarro were similar to Don Quixote.

### 16. CREATIVE LISTENING SKILL:

Unlike the Maya, the Inca did not leave a rich written account of their history. Instead, they relied on telling their history orally. Research Incan belief in ghosts and tell the class a story as if we were all sitting around a campfire.

### 17. CREATIVE WRITING SKILL:

Research a particular event from the history of Central or South America that interests you. Use your research to write a "Choose Your Way Through History" story that you can read to the class. Include several places in the story where the class must choose what happens next. Create several endings for their choices.

### 18. VISUALIZATION SKILL:

Imagine how ancient Cuzco (Inca), Tenochtitlan (Aztec), or Palenque (Maya) may have looked. Build a model of any one of these cities and explain the significance of the buildings in your model.

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Family Tree  
Fiction Story  
Film  
Filmstrip  
Flip Book  
Game  
Graph  
Hidden Picture  
Illustrated Story  
Interview  
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Puppet Show  
Puzzle  
Rap  
Radio Program  
Rebus Story  
Recipe  
Riddle  
Role Play  
Science Fiction Story  
Sculpture  
Skit  
Slide Show  
Slogan  
Soliloquy  
Song  
Sound  
Story Telling-Tall Tales  
Survey  
Tapes–Audio–Video  
Television Program  
Timeline  
Transparencies  
Travel Brochure  
Venn Diagram  
Web Home Page  
Working Hypothesis  
Write a new law  
Video Film