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Period 2

3-29-14

Reflection Piece (Scrapbook Project)

The Mayan civilization began in the Yucatan peninsula around 1800 B.C. and lasted to around 900 A.D. The Mayan civilization is important due to its architecture that still stands to its day, and its advances in the fields of astronomy and mathematics. The Mayan empire consisted of city-states, some which were extremely large and hubs for religion and the spread of ideas, such as Tikal and Chichen Itza. The Mayans were polytheistic and believed in hundreds of Gods. They built large temples to worship them, and also practiced human and animal sacrifice in order to appease the Gods. The Mayas were expert farmers, and used many different techniques for raising and irrigating crops. Mayans had social classes, with kings and priests being at the top, warriors and officials making the second class, merchants and craftsmen making the third class, and slaves and farmers making the bottom class. The Mayas had their own math system and used a written language made out of hieroglyphs. They also had a very complicated calendar which was extremely accurate. The Mayans are important in world history because of all these achievements.

For my scrapbook, I focused on five different focal points of Mayan culture for my photos. The first was architecture, a big one for the Mayans. Their buildings and temples still stand today and many tourists flock to them as a result of the carefully constructed monuments. My next focus point for the scrapbook was the inventions the Mayans created. I used three, the Mayan calendar, the Mayan writing system, which was made up of hieroglyphics, and then carefully aligned pillars outside of a warrior temple, which lined up with certain stars and planets. My third point centered around sports, mainly the Mayan ball game. This game was unique to the Mayans at the time and was a new type of entertainment in Mesoamerica. My fourth point focused on my postcards, which I incorporated into my scrapbook. I was proud of them and they displayed key buildings and facts about the Mayans, so I used them. My last point was the Mayan human sacrifice, which was a brutal yet surprisingly interesting part of Mayan life. The whole aspect of sacrificing humans was very important to keeping the Gods happy in the minds of the Mayans. These are the reasons I incorporated these things into my scrapbook.

I do wish I could go back and visit the Mayan empire, and then I don’t. Ever since I started learning about the Mayans, I have gained a better understanding of their interesting and somewhat savage culture. They were an amazing civilization, with skills that exceeded their time period. If I were to go back, I think I would be treated as a God due to my skin color, which could be good, but there would also be a chance of me being sacrificed, which makes me reconsider. I would love to go and visit Tikal, Tulum, and Chichen Itza in its heyday, but I feel it is a little too dangerous and I would have to be extremely careful. My final decision would be yes, I would go. After everything I have learned, visiting the Mayans would be worth the danger.