**Native American Museum Exhibit Project**

The **purpose** of this project is for you examine pre‐Columbian cultures and to evaluate the statement below.

**“The Indians, Las Casas says, have no religion, at least no temples...They lack all**

**manner of commerce, neither buying nor selling, and rely exclusively on their natural environment for maintenance.” —*A People’s History of a United States* by Howard Zinn**

In the United States History, indigenous groups are often depicted as victims of European invaders. In writings from Las Casas and Columbus, Indigenous peoples are described as either the “noble savage” or as “natural creatures that dwelt gentle as cows…waiting for Christian instruction.” However, it is important to understand that there was life before Columbus. Columbus did not “discover” America; instead he stumbled into the lives and literally into the homes of families, communities, civilizations and empires. The early inhabitants of the Americas had established varied and diverse cultures and civilizations. Some historians even argue that natives, like the Mayans and Aztec, had civilizations more advanced than the Europeans.

For this project, you will investigate the diverse civilizations that existed in the Americas prior to the conquest. You will be required to make use of both primary and secondary sources for this assessment. Some examples the define civilization are as follows:

* Developed cities and trading system
* Organized government
* Formalized religion
* Specialization of labor
* Social classes
* Record keeping
* Art and education
* Advanced technology

**Directions:** You’ve been hired as a curator of the Milwaukee Public Museum to create a “Life before Columbus” exhibit. Your task is to research your assigned Native American identity group and create a presentation/exhibit that highlights the **SPICER** categories for your tribe. (See SPICER handout). Your presentation should also include paintings, drawing, graphs and other images to enhance your exhibit. Every image should have brief description that highlights the significance in helping us understand that particular group identity. **NOTE: your presentation can be in the form of a PowerPoint, poster presentation or classroom exhibit.**

**SPICER: CATEGORIES USED BY HISTORIANS TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION**

# SOCIAL

This primarily refers to relations between groups within some sort of community (a community can be as small as a neighborhood or as large as a country). This includes the classes or castes to which people belong (the working class, the aristocracy), the ethnicity or racial groups to which people associate themselves or others, and the attitudes people share towards other groups and institutions.

# POLITICAL

Questions of how humans are governed, including such matters as the exercise of power in peace and war, the use of law, the formation of governments, the collection of taxes, and the establishment of public services.

# INTELLECTUAL

This refers to the ideas, theories, and beliefs (**non‐religious**) expressed by people in some organized way about topics thought to be important. This includes such matters as political theories, scientific ideas, social theories, and philosophies of life.

# CULTURAL

This is perhaps the broadest category. This refers to what groups do and to all those things which surround us, both tangible and intangible (e.g., ideas and values). For those tangible things that surround you, think about your senses. It is what you see (architecture, paintings, movies, clothes), taste (food), hear (dialect and music), and smell (food and other aromas). It also encompasses what a society does with its time (e.g., sporting events, museums, etc). Further, it refers to the ideas, values, and expressions human beings hold, the customs people follow (marriage, eating), and the activities people engage in together.

# ECONOMIC

This refers to the production and distribution of goods and services and the developments of new technology which aid the production of goods and services. On the production side, historians usually focus on agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, and finance. On the distribution side, they deal with who gets what and how much of what is produced (i.e., the distribution of wealth in a society).

# RELIGION

This refers to theories, beliefs and practices related to the supernatural or the unknown. This includes such matters as the growth of religious institutions, the formation of beliefs about the relation between human beings and God, and the practice of rituals and festivals.

**RUBRIC**

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| Advanced Level |
| Research thoroughly and accurately. Information includes correct citations. A minimum of five sources are used for this project |
| Your exhibit highlights each of the SPICER categories in an effective manner and examples of each category is specifically explained and illustrated with detail. |
| Paintings, drawings images are used to enhance your exhibit and help to increase the understanding of your tribe. Additionally, data analysis is completed and used to create professional, self-made graphs. |
| Descriptions are included with each image. These descriptions help the audience better understand the tribe and how they prove the tribe is a civilization, based on the SPICER categories. |

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| Proficient Level |
| Research thoroughly and accurately. Information includes correct citations. A minimum of three sources are used for this project |
| Your exhibit highlights each of the SPICER categories in an effective manner. |
| Paintings, drawings, graphs and images are used to enhance your exhibit and help to increase the understanding of your tribe. |
| Descriptions are included with each image. These descriptions help the audience better understand the tribe. |

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| Basic Level |
| Research thoroughly and accurately. Information includes correct citations. A minimum of two sources are used for this project |
| Your exhibit highlights each of the SPICER categories. |
| Appropriate paintings, drawings, graphs, and images are included in your exhibit . |
| Descriptions are included with each image. These descriptions help the audience better understand the tribe. |