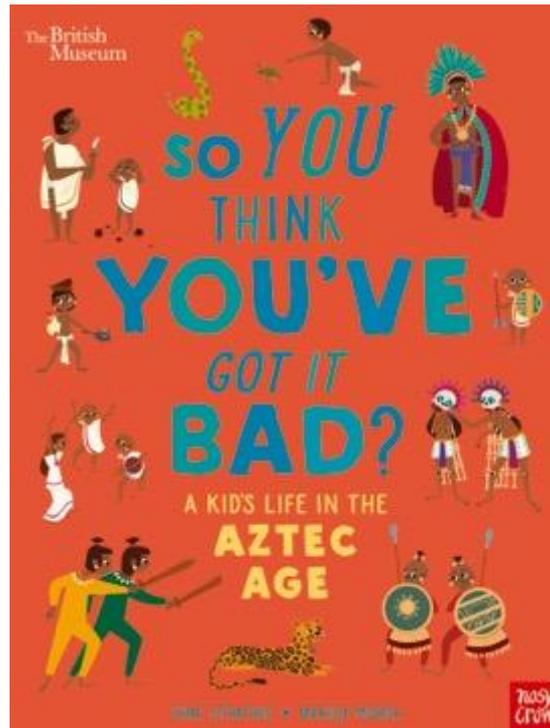


Discover a Kid's Life in the Aztec Age with Chae Strathie

Step into the past with *So You Think You've Got it Bad:
A Kid's Life in the Aztec Age!*



Level:
(P4-6) – KS2

Explore themes of:
√ The Aztecs √ Chronology √ Comparing past and present √ Non-fiction √ Humorous writing

Subject Checklist:
√ Expressive Arts √ English Language √ Social Studies √ Creative Writing

At a Glance

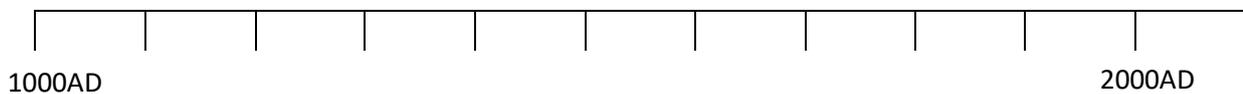
Before watching the event or reading the extracts!

1. What genre do you think this book fits into? What do you think it is about?
2. Why do you think the author has included the question 'So you think you've got it bad?' in the title? What do these words suggest?
3. What do you like about the front cover? Does it make you want to read the book?

Book Cover Activity: Who were the Aztecs?

The Aztecs settled in the region that is now Mexico around the year 1300AD. They built a capital city called Tenochtitlán and ruled over a large empire until they were eventually defeated by the Spanish in 1521AD.

- Have a look at a map of the world and see if you can find Mexico. What do you know about Mexico? Has anyone in your class visited this part of the world?
- Imagine you were planning a trip to Mexico. How would you travel? What countries do you think you would travel through or over to get there? How long do you think the journey would take?
- Now that you have an idea of *where* the Aztecs lived, it's time to think about *when* they lived. Draw a timeline similar to the one below. Can you add the present year and the year the Aztecs settled in Mexico to your timeline?



- Use your timeline to work out how many years ago the Aztec civilization began and how long it lasted.
- How long has it been since the Aztec age? How many of your lifetimes is that?
- Can you place any other historical periods you have learnt about at school on the timeline? What was happening in your home country at the time of the Aztecs?

Read the Extract

Taken from the Contents Pages and pages 6–7, 12–13 of 'So You Think You've Got it Bad: A Kid's Life in the Aztec Age'.

Discussion Questions

1. Have a look at the contents page. Which section of the book do you think looks the most interesting?
2. Which section do you think would be the best place to look for information about:
 - *Aztec schools*
 - *An Aztec emperor's palace*
 - *Aztec musical instruments*
3. What are your thoughts about the style of the illustrations? Which illustration do you find the most intriguing?

4. Have a read of the section on clothes and hairstyles. If you lived in the Aztec age, what kind of hairstyle would you have?

5. How do you think the climate in South America compares to the climate where you live?

6. Chae Strathie writes in a funny style combining historical facts with amusing observations and jokes. Do you enjoy this style? Does it remind you of any other books you've read?

7. Can you pick out these features in the text:
 - *Heading*
 - *Questions to the reader*
 - *Humour*
 - *Illustrations with speech bubbles*
 - *Information boxes*
 - *Capital letters*Why do you think Chae Strathie has chosen to use each of these features?

8. Read the text on page 12 out loud. Think about your intonation as you read. How does the punctuation help you with your reading?

9. Why did the Aztecs compare their children to precious jade and quetzal bird feathers?

10. What do you find most surprising about the Aztecs?



Get to Know the Author and the Books!

Activity 1: Time travel!

Imagine you could travel back time to meet the Aztecs. What it would be like? Think of all the stories you could tell when you returned!

- Design your own time travel machine to transport you back to the Aztec age. What does your time travel machine look like? How does it work?
- Imagine using your time machine. What might you see out of the window as you whizz back in time? Think about different time periods you would travel back through. Would you stop off in a different time period on the way? Perhaps you could pay a visit to Queen Victoria's palace or grab a snack from a Tudor banquet?
- What will you do when you arrive in the Aztec kingdom? Do you have any questions you would like to ask the Aztec people you meet? What do you think *they* will make of *you*?
- Draw a picture of yourself meeting some Aztec people. You could add some speech bubbles just like the illustrations in the book. What would you say to each other?
- If you could bring one object from the Aztec age back with you to the present, what would it be?

Activity 2: A day in the life

What would it be like to live in the time of the Aztecs?

- On page 15 of the book, we learn that typical Aztec names include 'Speaking Eagle' and 'Angry Turkey'. If you lived in the Aztec age, what would your name be?
- Create your own Aztec character! Using information in the book, decide on the following details for your character:
 - Age
 - Status
 - Home

- Family
- Favourite foods
- Work or school
- Hobbies

- Put yourself in the shoes of your character and imagine a day in your life. What happened in your day? What did you do and how did you feel? Use information from the book to give you ideas. Perhaps in the morning you jumped up from your mat on the floor and put on your *maxtatlatl* ready to start the day... or maybe you accidentally overslept and got jabbed by a cactus spike? Maybe you enjoyed a lunch of maggot soup or some delicious crispy fried slugs? Did you have time after school or housework for a game of *tlachtli* or *patolli*? (Let's hope you avoided being stretched or made to spend a night alone in the desert!)
 - Make your own codex diary! (A codex was an Aztec book.) Take a strip of paper and fold it into a concertina with four sections. Label the sections morning, lunch time, afternoon and evening. On each section, draw a picture to show what you did at this point in your day.
 - Show your codex diary to a partner and talk them through the different bits of your day.
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Your Turn: Get creative!

Activity 1: Tasty tortillas!

Poorer Aztecs often ate insects as they were cheap and abundant. Thankfully, worms, caterpillars and fly eggs are no longer on the menu today. However, some Aztec foods are still consumed in the modern world. For example, the Aztec staple of tortillas are still widely enjoyed around the world. Tortillas are flat, round wraps made from sweetcorn flour. They are usually filled with delicious vegetables or meat in a tomato sauce. Have you ever tried one?

- Invent your own tortilla filling! What would you like to put in your tortilla? What ingredients could you add for flavour, colour and texture? Will you add sauce and seasonings?
- Draw your tortilla filling and write a menu description. Can you think of a mouth-watering name for your new dish?
- Create a class restaurant displaying everybody's tortilla dishes. What would you each order? Which tortilla filling is the most popular?
- You could even write a recipe for your tortilla filling, gather the ingredients and have a go at making it! How does it taste?
- Just for fun, why not use your imagination to design an Aztec-style filling too? What about grilled worms in an algae sauce topped with crispy fried flies? Yum!

Activity 2: A kid's life in the 2000s

What would the Aztecs think if they could see how much life has changed since their time?

- Do you ever wonder what children from the past would think if they could see how you live now? What do you think an Aztec child would make of your hobbies, clothes and school? What aspects of your life do you think they would find the most mind-boggling and strange?
 - Imagine you could write a book about the life of kids in the 2000s for Aztec children to read. What would you like to tell them about? Choose one of these categories and write a description of life for kids in the 2000s:
 - *Fun and games*
 - *Education*
 - *Food and drink*
 - *Clothes and hairstyles*
 - *Homes*
 - You might like to use some of the text features that Chae Strathie uses in the book such as questions to the reader and illustrations. Remember, your life today would probably seem as weird and different to the Aztecs as their life does to you!
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Reflection and Further Questions

Reflection Activity

Think over all that you have learned today. What do you know about the Aztecs now that you didn't know before? What is your favourite fact about the Aztecs?

Write some true/false questions based on what you have learned from the book. When you've written your questions, give them to your classmates to complete.

You've been learning all about kids who lived 500 years ago. What do you think life might be like in another 500 years' time? Maybe kids in the future will be reading books all about you!

Lastly, do you have any final questions you would like to ask Chae if you got the chance? Try to think of at least two and make a note of them.

Keep your eye out for more awesome books from Chae Strathie, as well as the other authors from the Edinburgh International Book Festival!