



CATEGORY: MEXICO: PRE-COLUMBIAN ERA

CONCEPTS: ART, flora and fauna

ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING PRE-COLUMBIAN STYLIZED FIGURES. The students are provided with examples of art from various pre-Columbian cultures of Mexico. The examples vary from slightly to highly stylized figures. Students attempt to identify the animal, plant or other object depicted.

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to enumerate some of the different animals and plants that were important in pre-Columbian cultures of Mexico. They will also learn how these were incorporated into art forms through stylization.

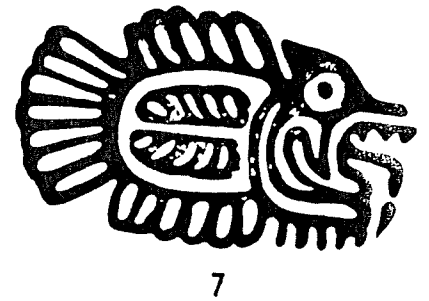
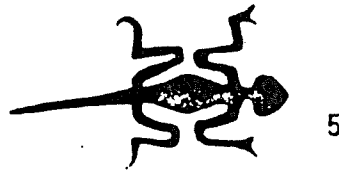
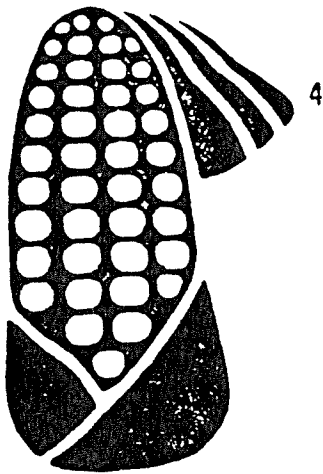
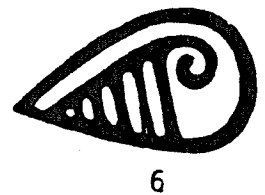
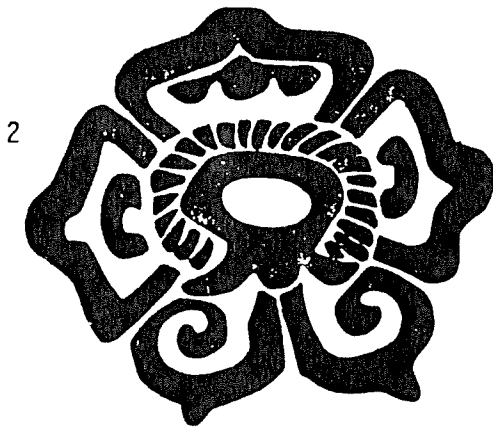
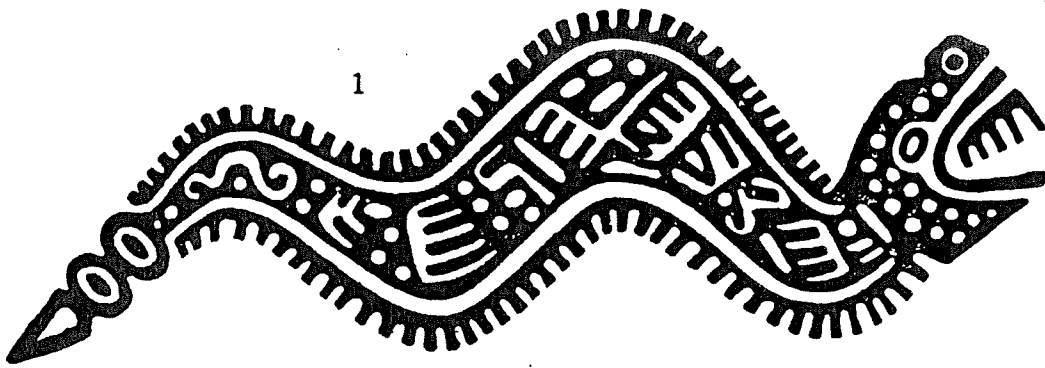
MATERIALS: The examples of stylized figures which follow.

PROCEDURE: Project or reproduce and distribute the examples. Explain that much of pre-Columbian art is based on stylization, i.e., designing or representing an object according to a predominant style rather than according to how it looks in nature. This often involves selecting a few typical characteristics or symbols of the object and stressing them. A stick figure  is a stylized human being. A stick figure with a triangle  is a woman. To stylize a cat you might choose the whiskers and tail. How do we usually stylize the sun? Here are the identities of the figures:

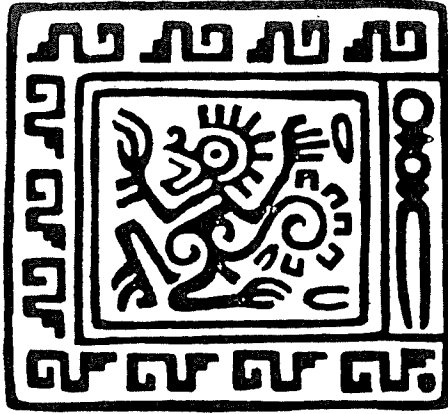
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|-------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| #1 snake | #9 frog | #17 flower | #25 jaguar |
| #2 flower | #10 butterfly | #18 human figure | #26 monkey |
| #3 skunk | #11 monkey | #19 crane | #27 snake |
| #4 corn | #12 sun | #20 snake | #28 flower |
| #5 lizard | #13 spider | #21 duck | #29 crocodile |
| #6 seashell | #14 hummingbird | #22 frogs | #30 crocodile |
| #7 fish | #15 barrel cactus | #23 spider | #31 crocodile |
| #8 owl | #16 jaguar | #24 human figure | |

RESOURCES: George Kubler, The Art and Architecture of Ancient America, 2nd Edition, Baltimore: 1975. G.H.S. Bushnell, Ancient Arts of the Americas, New York: Praeger, 1965.

(NOTE: The examples were taken from Jorge Enciso, Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico, New York: Dover Publications, 1953.)



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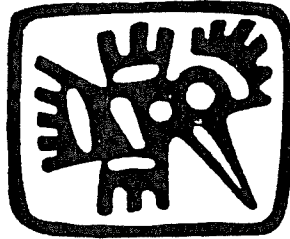


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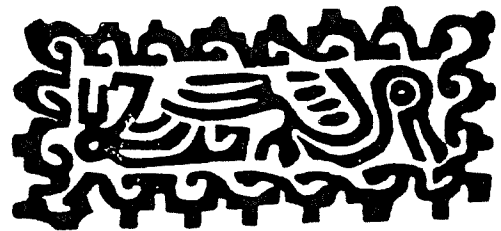
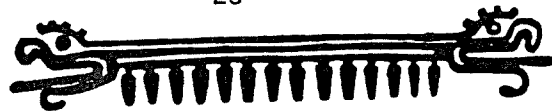


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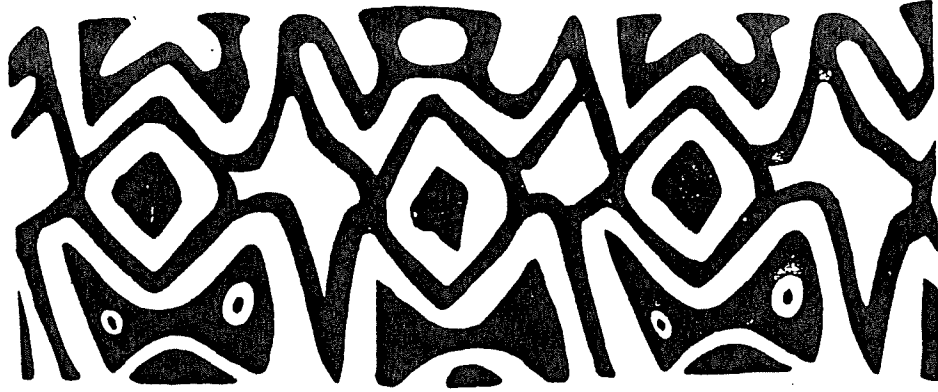
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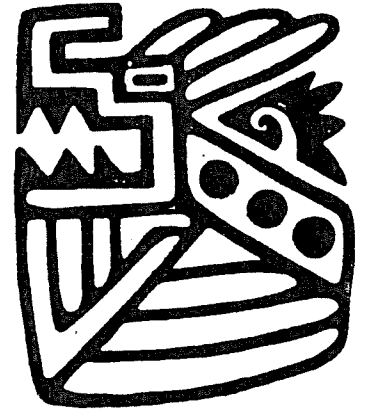
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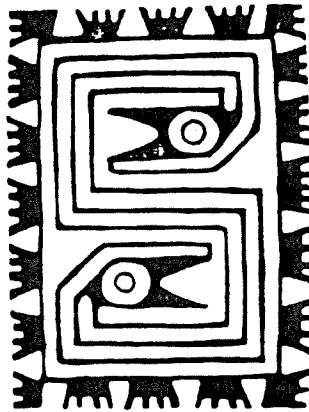
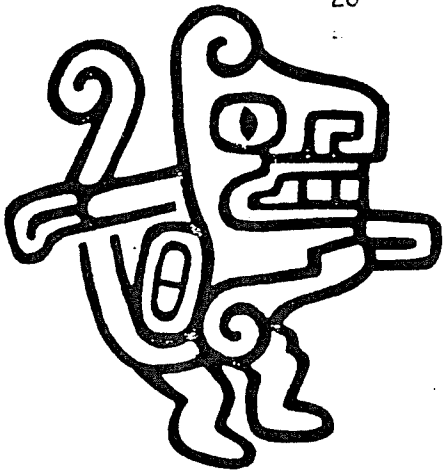


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