

250 Years of Exploration, Settlement, and Reformation: World History

By Melissa Bontadelli

Week One: Americas – The Incan Empire

Objective: to learn the history of the Incas

Lesson 1: Incan Beginning



Manco Capac, Incan King

The Incas were a unique empire of people that lived in South America. Their empire spanned from the early 1400s until the mid-1500s. During this time, they conquered many people and made a vast empire. As a people, the Incas had a variety of strong beliefs on life, death, and creation. There are two different versions of the Incas creation story that exist.

The first Incan creation story says that a creator god Viracocha came out of the ocean and created the sun and all ethnic groups. The first people were buried by Viracocha and later came out of rocks and springs and back into the world. The Incas themselves were brought into existence by the sun god Inti. This made them the chosen people.

The second Incan creation story revolves around humans. The first humans were Manco Capac and his wife Mama Oqllu. They lived inside caves south of Cuzco. Soon, three more brothers and wives were born, and they all set off to establish their civilization. They defeated their enemies with the use of stone warriors they called *pururauca*s. They finally settled in the valley

of Cuzco when Manco Capac threw his golden rod into the ground and founded the capital city of Cuzco.

Archaeologists have found that there were settlements in the valley of Cuzco in 4500 BC when hunter-gatherer tribes occupied the area. The city only became an important center in the late 1400s when the Incans had their first great ruler Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui.

Activity

1. Identify the Cusco area where the Incan people first lived.
2. Identify the final area of the Incan Empire.
3. Identify each of the four regions of the Incan Empire.
4. Identify the location of the cities of Cusco and Machu Picchu.



Lesson 2: Incan Overview

The Incan Empire has over one hundred years of history. They were the largest empire ever seen in the Americas and at that time the largest in the world. The Incan people are unique in that their territory covered many different environments. They learned to live and farm in tropical jungles, desert, mountains, and plains. They also gave us unique artwork and building styles.

Activity

Read this World Book article on the Inca.

<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar273760/inca>

Read this World Book article on Cusco.

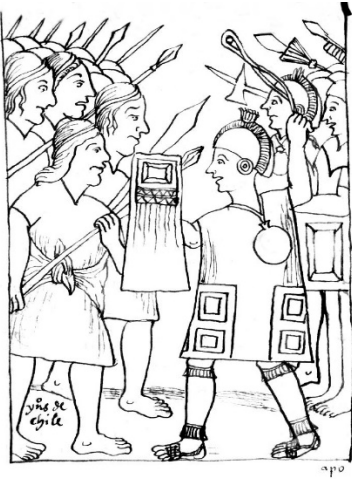
<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar144560/inca>

Read this World Book article on Machu Picchu.

<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar336400/inca>

In your journal, write down what you believe to be the five most relevant facts from these articles.

Lesson 3: Incan Conquests



The Battle of Maule

Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui was the first Incan ruler to expand the kingdom in a significant way. He first conquered the Chanca in 1438. The Incans then began to move south to find more resources. Eventually, they expanded in all directions. Under Yupanqui, the Incans conquered the Lupaka, Colla, Chimor, and Wanka civilizations.

The ruler who followed the first Yupanqui was Thupa Inca Yupanqui; he was also called Topa Inca. He took over the empire in 1471. Topa Inca is credited with expanding the empire by 2,500 miles. The Incans called their empire Tahuantinsuyu, which means the “Land of Four Quarters.” They considered Cuzco the center of the four quarters, and everything radiated out from there. The Incans governed ten million people who spoke over thirty different languages.

In order to rule over such a vast area, the Incans had a very structured government. Their ruler was at the head of the organization. Below the ruler were ten groups of nobles called *panaqa*. The *panaqa* were related to the ruler. Under the *panaqa*, were ten more groups more distantly related to the king. After this group was a group of nobles who were not Incan by blood, but by special privilege. The last group, that comes after the nobles, was a group of administrators who oversaw the smallest unit of populations. They controlled day to day living in the communities.

The local ruler reported to regional-level rulers. There were eighty regional-level rulers who reported to one of the four governors. The governors reported to the king. To ensure the loyalty of these regional rulers, their heirs were kept prisoner in Cuzco. They were treated very well as prisoners, but they were there to keep the local rulers loyal.

Unlike many neighboring empires, the Incas integrated the conquered people into their way of life. They imposed their religion and administration on the conquered people and charged them money. In return, the conquered people found work and received military assistance, food distribution, and other benefits brought by large empires.

Activity

Define the following terms in your journal.

1. Empire
2. Creation Story
3. *Pururaucas*
4. Hunter-gatherer Tribes
5. Conquered
6. Region
7. Nobles
8. Governors
9. Administration
10. Heirs

Lesson 4: Incan Religion

The Incans religion focused a great deal on controlling the natural environment. Worshipping and sacrificing to gods who could stop droughts, famine, earthquakes, and other naturally occurring phenomena. The Incans also placed a lot of importance on their ancestors, which can be seen through their practices of mummification and religious ceremonies involving the dead.

Activity

Research the Incan religious practices. Write a paper between 300 and 500 words on what Incans worshipped and the important aspects of their religion. What differences exist between Christianity and the Incan religious practices?

Lesson 5: Quiz

1. Who was the creator god in the Incan creation story?
2. What valley was settled in the second creation story by Manco Capac?
3. When did the Incan empire start?
4. When did the Incan empire end?
5. Name the four types of environments that existed within the Incan empire?
6. The Incans called their empire Tahuantinsuyu. What does this mean?
7. Which ruler expanded the empire by 2,500 miles?
8. How many people were in the Incan empire?
9. How many languages were spoken within the Incan empire?
10. How many governors were there in the Incan empire?

Going Deeper

Video

Rise of the Incan Empire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfDdeNmZJY4>

Peak of the Incan Empire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aYeUOVgbck>

Readings

Inca Civilization - Ancient History Encyclopedia

https://www.ancient.eu/Inca_Civilization/

The Inca Empire - Live Science

<https://www.livescience.com/41346-the-incas-history-of-andean-empire.html>

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children's use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full-screen setting in order to minimize your students' exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.