

Kingdoms of the World: Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century 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.

The city of Cuzco became an important center in the late 1400s when the Incans had their first great ruler Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui. This is when the Incans started massive expansion of their empire through the conquest of neighboring villages and tribes.

Activity

1. Identify the area of the Incan Empire.
2. 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 Incan kingdom. He first conquered the Chanca in 1438. The Incans then began to move south to find more resources. Eventually, they started expanding in all directions. Under Yupanqui, the Incans conquered many neighboring villages and tribes.

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.

The Incans had a complex system of government structured to try and meet the demands and needs of the vast area they controlled. Their ruler headed the entire government and had ten groups of nobles below him. The nobles below the ruler had ten more groups below them. This continued down to a group of administrators who oversaw small population units. The last group controlled the day-to-day lives of the Incan people.

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.

1. Empire
2. Conquered
3. Region
4. Nobles
5. Governors
6. Administration

SAMPLE

Lesson 5: Quiz

True or False?

1. Viracocha was the Incan sun god.
2. Inti made the Aztecs the chosen people.
3. The Incans only learned to farm on the plains.
4. Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui was the first Incan ruler to expand the Incan kingdom.
5. Topa Inca took over the empire in 1471.
6. The Incans were not interested in expansion.
7. The Incans did not try and assimilate people into their practices.
8. The Incans called their empire Tahuantinsuyu.
9. *Tahuantinsuyu* means the “Land of Four Quarters.”
10. The Incans placed no importance on their ancestors.

Going Deeper

Video

Machu Picchu 101 | National Geographic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnMa-Sm9H4k>

Top 5 Facts about Incas (This video says the Inca grew potatoes in 8,000 BC, and there are a few seconds of a country song that states, “Beer is Good.”)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNQ8rmlGC8Q>

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>

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