

**People and Empires in the Americas****Lesson 7****The Inca Create a Mountain Empire****Key Terms and People**

**Pachacuti** ruler under whom the Incan Empire grew quickly

**ayllu** small community or clan whose members worked together for the common good

**mita** requirement for all Incan subjects to work for the state a certain number of days each year

**quipu** arrangement of knotted strings on a cord used by the Inca to record numerical information

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson, you read about the Aztec Empire.

In this lesson, you will learn about the empire of the Inca.

**As You Read**

Use a chart to take notes to answer questions regarding the Incan Empire.

**THE INCA BUILD AN EMPIRE****Who were the Inca?**

The Inca civilization arose in the Andes of South America. It was built on the foundations made by several earlier cultures.

The Inca united much of the Andes under their rule. They first settled in the Valley of Cuzco, in modern Peru. They built a kingdom there by the 1200s. The Inca believed that their ruler was related to the sun god, who would bring wealth and power to them. Only men from one of 11 noble families believed to be descendants of the sun god could serve as king.

In 1438, **Pachacuti** became the ruler of the Inca. He made conquest after conquest. By 1500, the Inca ruled an empire that stretched along the Andes

from modern Ecuador all the way south to Chile and Argentina. It held about 16 million people. The empire did not grow only through military conquest. Often the Inca offered new peoples the chance to join the empire peacefully as long as they swore loyalty to the emperor. Many peoples became part of the empire in this way. Even when force was needed, afterward the Inca tried to win the loyalty of the conquered peoples through friendship rather than fear.

1. What beliefs and practices related to Inca rulers?

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Lesson 7, *continued***INCAN GOVERNMENT CREATES UNITY****How did the government unite the empire?**

The Inca had a highly organized system to govern their empire. Small groups of people known as **ayllu** worked together for the common good. For example, they built irrigation ditches together. The Inca applied this idea to their empire. Families were placed in groups of 10, 100, 1,000, and so on. A chief led each group.

The Inca usually let local rulers stay in place when they conquered a people—as long as the conquered people met any Incan demands. The most important demand was for all adult workers to spend some days each year working for the state. They might work on state farms or build state roads or buildings. This payment of labor was known as **mita**.

The Inca built a complex network of roads. The roads linked all parts of the empire. The Inca also built all government buildings in the same style. This created a common identity for the government throughout the empire. They made all people speak a common language—the Incan tongue, called Quechua.

The Inca controlled the economy. They told people what to grow or make and how it would be distributed. The government also took care of people who needed help, such as the very old or ill.

In spite of all these advances, the Inca never developed a system of writing. All records were kept in peoples' memories. They did have a device for counting. It was a set of knotted strings called a **quipu**. The Inca also had day and night calendars for information about their gods.

2. What was mita, and what forms did it take?

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**RELIGION SUPPORTS THE STATE; DISCORD IN THE EMPIRE****How were religion and government connected?**

The Incan religion played a central role in Inca life. The Inca believed in fewer gods than the peoples of Mexico. The most important of the Incan gods were the creator god and the sun god. Cuzco, the capital, was the most important religious center. It was decorated with gold and other precious objects.

In the early 1500s, the Incan Empire reached the height of its power under the rule of Huayna Capac. However, he died while traveling through the empire. After Huayna Capac's death, civil war broke out between his two sons, Atahualpa and Huascar. Atahualpa eventually won, but the war tore the empire apart. When the Spanish arrived, they took advantage of Incan weakness to divide and conquer the empire.

3. Why did the Incan Empire fall?

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**Lesson 7, *continued***

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As you read this lesson, take notes to answer questions about the Incan Empire.

<b>What role did each of the following play in the building of the Incan Empire?</b>		
1. Ancient cultures	2. Incan traditions and beliefs	3. Pachacuti

<b>How did each of the following help to unify or support the Incan Empire?</b>		
4. System of government	5. Language	6. Cities
7. Road system	8. Economy	9. Religion