

Name: _____
Date: _____
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The Incas

Directions: Number each paragraph. On the line above the paragraph provide the Main Idea or Heading. As you read each paragraph highlight or underline 5 key words to support your Heading. Answer the questions at the bottom once you have completed the reading.

The Incan Empire began around 1400 AD high in the Andes Mountains of South America. Much like the Mayans, the Incas had a very complex society. Their engineers built incredible structures



using stone that was built into the mountainside. They also farmed throughout the mountains using a system of terracing, or building levels into the mountains so that food could be grown on flat shelves instead of at an angle.

The social structure of the Incas was very inflexible. The leader of the empire was a man called the 'Inca'. The Inca is thought to be a direct descent of god and had absolute power in society. At the very bottom of the social ladder were the common people. These common people were forced to build an extensive system of roads and terraced farmlands throughout the Andes.

Agriculture was tough business in the Andes. The Incas actively set about carving up mountains into terraced farmlands—so successful were they in turning steep mountainsides into terraced farms, that in 1500 there was more land in cultivation in the Andean highlands than there is today. The Incas grew corn and potatoes, and raised llama and alpaca for food and for labor.

The Incas has brilliant engineers who designed giant fortresses and temples in the Andes. The Inca built massive forts with stone slabs so perfectly cut that they didn't require mortar—and they're still standing today in near-perfect condition. They built roads through the mountains from Ecuador to Chile with tunnels and bridges. They also built aqueducts to their cities as the Romans had.



At its height, the Incan civilization was invaded by Spanish conquerors from the new world. A man named Francisco Pizarro, seeking the gold and riches of the Incan empire kidnapper and killed Atahualpa, the ruler of the Incas. Without the leadership of their king, the Incans quickly fell to Pizarro's forces. The Spanish empire would claim control of Incan territory in 1560 AD under the leadership of its conqueror Francisco Pizarro.

1. Where did the Incan empire begin? _____
2. What was the leader of the Incans called? _____
3. How were the Incans able to farm high in the mountains?

4. What animals and products did they grow and raise? _____
5. Describe one engineering feat of the Incans? _____
6. Who conquered the Incans? _____
7. During what year did the Incan empire end? _____

In the space below, explain how the Incans were able to build and farm high in the Andes Mountains...
