

ancestor = member of your family who lived a long time ago
attach = fix, connect
century = one hundred years
conqueror = people who take control of a country by fighting
construction worker = people who build houses, bridges etc..
create = make
crop = food plants that are grown by farmers
descendant = someone who is a relative of a person or a family who lived a long time ago
dynasty = family of kings who have ruled for many years
emperor = a man who rules a country like a king
empire = many countries controlled by one ruler
extract = to take out
found = to start something new for the first time
govern = to rule
handicraft = something that someone makes with their hands and then sells it
harvest feast = meal that people had in a long time ago when they harvested their crops
knife blade = the sharp metal side of a knife
knot = pieces of string and rope that are twisted together
load = weight
located = to be found
melt = to make something very hot so that it becomes thin
mould = to form
movement = to change position from one place to another
network = system
noblemen = a man who is member of the highest social class
ore = rock that has metal in it
peasant = a poor farmer
pottery = objects made of baked clay
provide = give
raise = to look after animals and use them as food
record = to write down information about something
rule = to have control of the country and the people
sacrifice = when you offer something to god as a religious act
scattered = spread over a big area
shape = form
skillful = very talented
society = people in general
squash = a vegetable that looks like a pumpkin
stretch = extend
string = a strong piece of thread that is twisted together
suspension bridge = a bridge that hangs from strong steel ropes fixed to towers
throughout = in all parts
tunic = a long piece of clothing that people wore long ago
weapon = something you use for fighting, like a gun
weaver = a person who makes cloth
weigh = how heavy something is
worship = pray to

The Inca were a South American people who controlled a large **empire** that **stretched** along the Pacific coast from Ecuador to northern Chile. The Inca **dynasty** was **founded** at about 1200 A.D. and lasted until the end of the 16th **century**, when the Spanish **conquerors** came to South America.

The capital city of the Incan **empire** was Cuzco, which was **located** in the Andes mountains in today's Peru. What is left of the Inca civilization is **scattered** over the highlands of the Andes. The **descendants** of the Inca are mostly **peasants** who make up about half of Peru's population.



Society and Culture

There were two classes in Inca **society**: the **ruling** classes and the **peasants**. The **emperor** was called "The Inca" or "Sapa Inca". He ate from gold dishes and never wore the same clothes twice. Like the pharaohs of Egypt, he took his own sister as queen. The **noblemen** came from the capital Cuzco and helped the **emperor govern** the land.

Most people were farmers who produced their own food and clothes. The main **crops** were corn, tomatoes, **squash** and sweet potatoes, which the Inca were first to produce. They also **raised guinea pigs**, ducks and dogs. One of the most important animals was the llama. It **provided** the **peasants** with wool and it could carry heavy **loads** as well.

The Inca spoke the Quechua language. They couldn't write, but they used quipus, which were **strings** with a system of **knots attached** to them. That's how they **recorded** their harvest.

The Inca were very **skillful** in making **handicrafts**. Women were excellent **weavers**. They wove cloth into **tunics**. Men were great metalworkers. They knew how to **extract** metal from **ore** by heating and **melting** it. Then the metals were **moulded** into different **shapes** to make **weapons** and other tools. The Inca also produced **pottery** and made musical instruments such as flutes.



The Inca were great **construction workers** and architects. They built a large **network** of roads **throughout** the empire, as well as tunnels and

suspension bridges that crossed narrow mountain valleys.

In Cuzco the Inca built massive walls made of huge stones. Some were more than 7 metres high and **weighed** many tons. Even today, **centuries** later, the stones fit together so well that you can't even put a **knife blade** between them.

The Inca **worshipped** gods of nature—the sun, the earth or thunder. They **sacrificed** humans and animals. People also **worshipped** their **ancestors** and kept mummies of some of them. The Inca **created** a calendar by looking at the **movements** of the sun and the moon. **Harvest feasts** were celebrated in May, planting rituals were held in August.

although=while

archaeologist = a person who studies old civilisations and looks at the buildings of that time

century = a hundred years

claim = ask for , want

conquer= to take control of a country by fighting

courtyard = an open space that has buildings around it

defeat = to win over

empire = many countries controlled by one ruler

government =the people who rule a country

gown = a long dress

height =high point, climax

improve = make better

loincloth = a piece of cloth that men wear to cover their sexual organs

mattress = the soft part of a bed that you lie on

memory = things you remember about the past

mine = a hole in the ground where people can dig for gold, silver or other rocks

observe = watch

oppress = to treat people very badly

peak = highest point of a mountain

record =to write down information about something

remain = stay

remote = very far away from where people live

retreat = to move back

ruin = a part of building that is left over

rule =to have control of the country and the people

sash = a kind of belt

sea level =the average height of the sea

site = place, location

sleeve =a part of a shirt or coat that covers your arm

storehouse = a building where many things are kept

succeed = to follow , to come after

terrace = flat places on a mountain

thatched roof = roof made of dry grass or leaves

throne = a special chair that a king or queen sits in

waist = the narrow part of your body

Daily life

When the Inca got up in the morning they didn't have to get dressed, because they slept in their clothes. Women wore long **gowns** with a **sash** at the **waist**. Men wore **loincloths** and shirts without **sleeves**. Both men and women wore sandals.

The average house had only one room made out of stone or brick. Normally it had a **thatched roof**. There were no beds or **mattresses**, so the whole family had to sleep on the floor.

The Inca lived in small villages. Even Cuzco, the capital, was not a very large city.

History

The history of the Inca is mainly known from stories that have been passed down and from **records** made after the Spanish **conquered** the **empire**. Starting in the 13th century, the Inca began **conquering** land and the **empire** became bigger and bigger. One hundred years later it was at the **height** of its power.

In the 16th century the Incan **empire** became weaker when a fight broke out between two of the rulers sons. They both **claimed** the **throne** and wanted to **succeed** their father. When the Spanish explorer Francisco Pizarro came he **defeated** the Inca and brought the **empire** under Spanish **rule**.

Memories of the Incan empire still **remain** alive today. **Although** they were **oppressed** in the **centuries** that followed, today's **government** is doing many things to **improve** the life of the Inca and to make their culture more popular. Quechua became an official language and a portrait of a famous Inca king is now on a Peruvian banknote.

The Lost Inca City

Explorers have found **ruins** of a lost city on a **peak** in the Andes mountains of Peru. They think the **site** belonged to the Inca who **ruled** the region more than 500 years ago. The **ruins** are on a mountain called Cerro Victoria in a very **remote** region of Peru. This area was the place where the Inca **retreated** to when the Spanish **conqueror** Pizarro came in the 16th century.

Local people have known Cerro Victoria for a long time, but they didn't know what it was. A British photographer went there with a team of **archaeologists** in 2001. The team had to hike and climb for four days to reach the **site** from the nearest road. Some of the ruins are 4,500 m above **sea level**.

When they got there they found **storehouses**, **courtyards**, roads , **terraces** and many other stone buildings. **Archaeologists** think that the Inca chose the place for two reasons. It was near important silver **mines** and it gave the people a great view of the mountains. The Inca may also have gone there to **observe** the sun and the moon from a perfect spot.

The explorers hope to find out when the lost city was built and how long the Inca lived there.

