

## Mayan Civilization

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The Maya people lived and still live in Southern Mexico and Central America. They were very sophisticated builders and artists and they contributed greatly to the fields of mathematics, astronomy and the calendar. They were very religious people and worshipped many different gods. The Maya civilization lived in present-day Central America and Southern Mexico. The warm, humid climate allowed them to become an agricultural civilization, growing goods like maize and cacao.

They are thought to have traded with the Aztecs and indigenous cultures in South America. They lived in cities that had pyramids in their religious centers and also had palaces. The Maya people lived according to class, with royalty and nobles in the city and lower classes farther outside the city. Each city and its surrounding towns were a kingdom, having their own ruler. Religious buildings were at the center of a city. Their religion was polytheistic, based on the nature of time (it is a cycle that repeats itself), the cycles of seasons, and the movement of planets. They worshipped the circle, gods of the sky, and the Maize God, among others. They sacrificed animals, and sometimes humans, to satisfy the gods. Maya kingdoms were constantly at war with each other

### Cultural Achievements

Art: included intricate carvings of stone and jade.

Architecture: stepped stone pyramids dedicated to deities were centers of cities

Writing system: similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics, inscriptions were made on art, buildings, and monuments

Mathematics: used a base 20 number system and developed the concept of zero by 357 A.D.

Astronomy: very accurate charts of the moon and planets without any tools

Calendar: based on a year length of exactly 365 days, similar to Aztec

### What Happened to the Mayans?

Foreign invasion

Peasant revolt, social turmoil

Collapse of trade routes

Epidemic diseases

Drought theory

Ecological collapse

## **Incas**

The Inca Empire was in the Andes Mountains in South America. It thrived from 1000 A.D. to 1500 A.D. They were peaceful farmers and traders. The early civilizations in the Andes Mountains were able to develop varied sources of food because the differing ecological zones of their areas allowed them to engage in different types of farming. The Inca had an agricultural economy, relying on mostly potatoes, tomatoes, maize, peanuts, and similar crops for food. They also raised llamas for meat and wool

### **Inca People**

The Inca government was run by an emperor, who was chosen out of the original Inca tribe descendants. Cuzco was the capital of the Inca Empire. The Inca people had separate chains of command for military and religion. Descendants of the original Inca tribe were similar to nobility, and some even became royalty. Those not in the original Inca tribe had their intelligence tested at a young age to determine if they would learn a trade or would go to school to become administrators, who were included in the nobility.

Inca religion was polytheistic, meaning they worshiped many gods, including Inti, the sun god. The emperor of the Incas was believed to be a descendant of the sun god and therefore had the divine right to rule the empire. They sacrificed llamas to the gods on many important occasions, and they sacrificed humans in times of natural disaster and times of distress. The Inca believed in the afterlife, and they mummified members of the nobility. They believed that people who were good went to the sun after dying, while those who were evil stayed on the Earth.

The Inca expanded their empire by conquering nearby civilizations and peacefully assimilating other cultures into Incan culture.

### **Cultural Achievements**

Inca art included ceramics, wood carvings, and metalwork, especially gold and silver. Architecture was very important in their society. Stone temples were built by stoneworkers. Machu Picchu was one of the Incas most famous and important sites. The city was built in the Andes Mountains as a retreat for the nobility.

The Inca built an extensive network of paved roads and woven fiber bridges throughout the empire. They used trained runners to deliver messages. The Inca used a system of counting knots, called quipu, but had no writing system. The Inca did not have a written history.

The Inca used coca leaves to lessen hunger and pain (still used today), and performed skull surgeries, where holes were cut in the skull to release pressure from head wounds.