

Incas for Kids: Fact & Project Checklist

Use this guide to structure your Incas for kids unit. Check off facts as you learn them and projects as you complete them!

Core Concepts & Key Facts

- **Who:** The Incan Empire was the largest empire in pre-Columbian America. The ruler was called the **Sapa Inca**.
- **Where:** The Andes Mountains of South America (modern-day Peru, Ecuador, Chile, etc.).
- **Capital City:** **Cusco**, which was considered the "navel of the world."
- **Famous Site:** **Machu Picchu**, a royal estate built high in the mountains.
- **Farming:** They were master farmers who used **terrace farming** on steep mountainsides.
- **Main Crops:** Potatoes (thousands of varieties!), corn (chicha), and quinoa.
- **Animals:** **Llamas** (for transport) and **Alpacas** (for wool).
- **Language:** The spoken language was (and is) **Quechua**.
- **Record Keeping:** They used a **Quipu** (knotted strings) to record numbers and data.
- **Engineering:** Built over 25,000 miles of stone roads (the **Qhapaq Ñan**) and rope suspension bridges.
- **Religion:** Worshipped many gods, but the most important was **Inti**, the Sun God.
- **End of Empire:** Conquered by Spanish conquistador **Francisco Pizarro** in the 1530s.

Essential Vocabulary

Sapa Inca Cusco Inti (Sun God) Quipu (Khipu) Chasqui (Messenger) Ayllu (Family Unit) Ayni (Reciprocity) Qhapaq Ñan (Road System) Terrace Farming

Core Activities & Projects Checklist

Map the Empire: On a blank map of South America, draw the boundaries of the Incan Empire. Label the Andes Mountains, the Pacific Ocean, and the capital city, Cusco.

Build a Quipu: Use a main string and several colorful pendant strings. Tie knots (single, figure-eight, long knots) to "record" data like your family's birthdays or the number of pets on your street.

Design a Terrace Farm: Cut a 2-liter bottle in half lengthwise. Fill it with layers of gravel and soil, building "terraces" with small stones or craft sticks. Plant grass seed on top.

Weave a Textile: Cut slits in a piece of cardboard to create a simple loom. Wrap a "warp" string vertically. Weave colorful "weft" yarn over and under the warp strings to create a pattern.

Virtual Field Trip: Use a computer to take a 360-degree virtual tour of Machu Picchu. Find the Temple of the Sun and the Intihuatana stone.

Write Like a Chasqui: Write a short, secret "message" that a chasqui (runner) would have to memorize and run to the next station. What news is important enough to send?

Incan Art: Sun Mask or Pottery: Make a sun mask from a paper plate, gold paint, and aluminum foil. OR, use air-dry clay to craft a simple "pinch pot" inspired by Incan pottery.