The Incas

By: Melissa Norvitch
Unit Description

• This unit is for sixth grade students.

• This unit contains five lessons that will take approximately 5-7, fifty minute sessions.

• Rationale: This unit introduces the Incan Society to sixth grade students. It is important for students to learn about past cultures and how other people in the world live.

• Standards Covered:

  NCSS strand: Culture
  e. articulate the implications of cultural diversity as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

  State Standards:
  A. Beginnings of Human Society: The student will demonstrate knowledge of selected attributes and historical developments of various ancient societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe.
Overall Goals/Objectives

Overall Unit Goal:
Students will become familiar with the Incan culture and learn about their lives.

Objectives:
Students will:

- Recognize where the Incas lived
- Explore how the Incas lived
- Conceptualize how the Incan tax system/government operated
- Investigate the Incan religion
- Create a presentation based on their learning.
Unit sub questions

How did the Incas live?

What was the Incan culture like?

Where did the Incas come from?

What did the Incas believe in?
Resources

Websites:
http://www.princeton01.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/incas.htm

Books:
Eyewitness books; Aztec, Inca, and Maya

Mayas, Aztecs, Incas-Cooperative Learning Activities by: Mary Strohl
and Susan Schneck

Prentice Hall World Explorer; Latin America

Mayan, Incan, and Aztec Civilizations by: Michael Kramme
Assessment

The culminating activity in lesson five has students presenting their Incan god that they created. During the presentations students are required to share information that they have learned throughout the unit.

This unit contains a rubric for the final presentation and a checklist/rubric for group presentations.
Presentation Checklist/Rubric

_____ Each student has a part in the presentation.

_____ Presentation is at least three minutes long

_____ At LEAST five facts are mentioned during the presentation.

_____ Poster is neat and readable

_____ The group works to involve their classmates during the presentation.

_____ Group members speak clearly during the presentation

6 points possible: Group__________ received ____ out of 6
# Incan God Presentation

Name: ________________________  Teacher: 
Date Submitted: ____________  Title of Work: ___________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Language</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movements seemed fluid and helped the audience visualize.</td>
<td>Made movements or gestures that enhanced articulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye Contact</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact.</td>
<td>Consistent use of direct eye contact with audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and Closure</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student delivers open and closing remarks that capture the attention of the audience and set the mood.</td>
<td>Student displays clear introductory or closing remarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pacing</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good use of drama and student meets apportioned time interval.</td>
<td>Delivery is patterned, but does not meet apportioned time interval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poise</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student displays relaxed, self-confident nature about self, with no mistakes.</td>
<td>Makes minor mistakes, but quickly recovers from them; displays little or no tension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of fluid speech and inflection maintains the interest of the audience.</td>
<td>Satisfactory use of inflection, but does not consistently use fluid speech.</td>
</tr>
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**Total---->** ___
**Teacher Comments:** Presentation should be three to five minutes long.
Who are the Incas?

Lesson 1

Grade: 6

Objective: Today we will explore where the Incas lived

Materials: Blackboard or Overhead, Incas information page, South America map, and Incan pictures.

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Begin the class by asking the question, “Who are the Incas?” Explain to the class that for the next week we will be learning about the Incas and their lives. Talk about the rules for the classroom: 1. When the teacher is talking, students are listening

2. Respect each other and their property

3. Participation is required

4. In order to get the classes attention during activities, when I say “Peace” the class should say “Quiet” and all attention should be on the teacher.

**Process (30-35 minutes):** On the board/overhead create a KWL chart. Ask the students what they “Know” about the Incas, what they “Want” to know, and eventually at the end of each lesson discuss what they have “Learned”. Create a discussion with the students about the things that we think we know about the Incas.

Then take pictures of Incan cities and ruins and pass them around the classroom. Hold each picture up before you pass it around and talk about the features of the cities.
After the discussion of the pictures begin reading the Incan information page to the students. Ask for students to participate in the readings. Make sure to review vocabulary terms with the students during or after the reading. Especially terms such as aquifer and quipo that will be unfamiliar to the students. If there is any other terms during the reading that the students do not understand make sure to explain them. Pass out the maps of South America. Students should identify where the Incas live and label it on the map. Create a discussion about what the climate may be like in this region, and compare its location on the map to where we live.

**Conclusion (10 minutes):** Go to the learning part on the KWL Chart and talk about what the students learned today. Write down all of their answers. Let them know that tomorrow the students will have the chance to teach the class.
Who are the Incas?

Lesson 2

**Grade:** 6

**Objective:** Explore how the Incas lived

   Students will teach their fellow classmates about how they lived

**Materials (5-10):** Five large sheets of white paper, 6-7 copies of each topic sheet; religion, agriculture, arts/crafts, roads and bridges, cities of the Incas. A large marker for each group, and a rubric for their presentation. Five pieces of paper with a number 1-5 on it. A sheet for students to take notes about each groups’ presentation.

**Introduction (5-10 minutes):** Review the KWL chart with the class. Explain today the students will be working in groups and will have the opportunity to teach the class. Review with the students the rules of the classroom and pass out the rubric for the presentation. Go over the rubric with the students and explain they will be graded on their presentation through the following standards. Explain that each group will get a topic to teach us.

**Procedure (30-35 minutes):** Number off the students one through five. Tell students to go to their number. Once everyone is in their place pass out their large sheets of paper and their topic sheets. Give Students approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to work on their mini lesson to the class. Once the class is done, have students present their lessons to the class. All students should be taking notes on the other groups’ lessons.

**Conclusion (5 minutes):** At the end of the lesson take out the KWL chart and add on to what the students have learned about. Inform the students that tomorrow we will be learning about the Incan government.
Who are the Incas?

Lesson 3

**Grade:** 6

**Objective:** Students will attain an understanding of how the Incan government system works.

**Materials:** Sandwich bags (1 per student), 20 m&m’s per students (in the sandwich bag), index cards, and KWL chart.

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Explain to the students that we will be learning about the Incan government. On the overhead or black board make a pyramid of how the school is organized; students, teachers, and principals. Compare this to an Incan pyramid.; commoners, leaders of household, local rulers, governors, and Sapa Inca.

**Procedure: (30 minutes)** Pass out name cards to students; 1 Sapa Inca, 2 Governors, 3 local rulers, 5 leaders of households, 10 commoners. (These numbers will vary depending on the class size). As students receive their names assign them an area of the classroom to meet with their groups.

Then pass out the pre-counted bags of m&ms. Then explain to the class that it is time for the Mita to be paid. They will not know that “Mita” is part of the Incan tax system. At this point the teacher should explain that this is the Incan tax system and the people have no choice when it comes to paying their taxes. They need to do what they are told without question. There was one tax collector for every 100 people or so in each
social class who would eventually be sent to the Emperor in Cuzco. Laws and orders were passed down through the leaders to the ordinary people.

• Tell the commoners to pay half of their M&M’s to the leaders of the household.

• Tell the leaders of the household to pay half of their M&M’s to the local rulers.

• Tell the local rulers to pay half of their M&M’s to the Governors.

• Tell the Governors to pay half of their M&M’s to the Sapa Inca.

• As a class each individual should count how many M&M’s they have left.

Discuss with students which level they would like to be in the Incan Society. Discuss how this is similar to a school system. Ask students if they are able to think of another example similar to the Incan tax system.

**Conclusion (5 minutes):** Take out the KWL chart that has been created over the last two days. Discuss with students what other information they have learned about the Incas. Inform the students that tomorrow we will be discussing more of the Incan religion.
Who are the Incas?

Lesson 4

**Grade: 6**

**Objective:** Today students will investigate the Incan religion, and will be able to explain their Gods and what their purposes were.

**Materials:** KWL chart, a 12 inch by 12 inch piece of aluminum foil for each student, a pen for each student, and a piece of notebook paper for each student. A description sheet for each student’s Incan God, and a teachers example of an Incan God mask.

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Take out the KWL chart and discuss any of the topics that the students learned about religion. Explain to the students that today we are going to talk about the Incan religion again. Review the Incan Gods and what their purposes were.

**Procedure:** Explain to the students that they will be making their own Incan God mask. They will need to make a design of their Incan on a sheet of notebook paper. Tell the students to be creative and to include a lot of patterns and shapes. Then students will need to place their design on top of their aluminum paper, by pressing hard. After they have traced their mask they can cut it out. Show students they can make some of the shapes protrude, or they can add little pieces of foil on top for a design.

After the students have created their masks they will need to fill out the information sheet on their Incan. Explain to students that they will need to give their god a name and be very complete with the information about their Inca. Let students know that they will be doing a presentation on their Inca tomorrow, and it is important they do a good job.
Conclusion (5 minutes): Remind students that tomorrow will be the presentations. Pass out the rubric for the presentation at the end of the class period. Explain the rubric’s details and what will be expected of each student.
Who are the Incas?

Lesson 5

**Grade:** 6

**Objective:** Students will present their Incan God’s to the class

**Materials:** Completed information sheet, Incan God, KWL sheet, and rubric.

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Take out the KWL sheet and review with the students all of the things they have learned so far. Then explain to students it is important that they are good listeners during the presentations.

**Procedure (30-35 minutes):** Call up one student at a time to give their presentation. The teacher should have a copy of the rubric for each student in order to evaluate the students on their performance. Have each student give their presentation and allow for questions at the end of a presentation. The teacher should also be observing the audience to make sure that they are being respectful.

**Conclusion (5 minutes):** At the end of the presentations take out the KWL chart and finish writing down the things that students have learned. Conclude the lesson by reviewing everything that the students have learned through the whole unit according to the KWL chart.
Presentation Notes

Religion

1.

2.

3.

Agriculture

1.

2.

3.

Arts/Crafts

1.

2.
3.

Roads and Bridges

1.

2.

3.

Cities of the Incas

1.

2.

3.
“My Incan god”

What is your god’s name? ____________

Now write two paragraphs containing the following information: Where does your god live and what is it like there? How old is your god? Where does it work? What is its house like? What does your god believe in? Anything else you would like to add?
South America: Where the Incas lived
Machupicchu
Incan Cities
Temple to worship the Incan Sun God
Teaching my social studies unit was the first teaching that I had done all semester. My Social Studies Unit was not taught in the original classroom I was placed in. It was taught in one of the cooperating teachers’ rooms within the sixth grade. I had to go to this room because the students rotated subjects so my teacher did not teach Social Studies. I was a little nervous at first because I did not know how the teacher observing me would react. In fact, it turned out that the first couple of days she was sick and had a substitute teacher. This was nice because I felt as though there was less pressure for some reason. It was also nice for the substitute because she did not have to do anything.

Once I got into teaching my Social Studies unit I found it very fun. I came to realize that the first day of starting a new unit seems the hardest for me. It takes time trying to test the waters and to see how things go. The students were very excited that I was teaching and behaved very well for the most part. They also knew that we would be doing activities different than what they normally did in their classroom.

At the beginning of the unit I decided to give the students a set of rules that I wanted them to abide by when I was teaching. I made it clear that all other classroom rules applied, but I really wanted them to focus on my rules. For example, my first rule was “no talking when I am talking”. Anytime a student was talking when I was trying to give instructions I had the power to pull out the list of rules and remind them what rule number one was. Students seemed to abide by these rules very well. My intention of making rules was to show the students that just because I was teaching did not mean that
they could act any different than normal. They were still required to be on their best behavior.

During my unit I did some very fun activities with the students. The activity that stands out most in my mind was the Incan tax collecting activity. Students were each given a position in Incan Society and a bag of ten M&M’s. There was many students at the bottom of the system who were commoners, than came the leaders of household, local rulers, governors, and Sapa Inca. There was only one student chosen as Sapa Inca, two students who were governors, and three who were local rulers. The game started with the commoners paying half of their M&M’s to the leaders of household. Then the leaders of household would pay the local rulers. This would go on until the governors had to pay the Sapa Inca. Of course the Sapa Inca received a lot of M&M’s. Many of the students whined and got slightly upset. At the end the class had a good discussion. We talked about what they disliked about the activity. We then discussed how this could possibly be related to real life. I explained this is very similar to life today. Just like money, not everyone has the same amount. It is not split amongst us evenly. I then asked the students if they could be happy with fewer M&M’s and a smaller amount of money. Many of the students said “yes”. This really surprised me.

The Incan tax lesson was one of my most favorite lessons I have ever taught because of the good discussion we had. If I had to do it over again, I would have spent more time on this lesson. I think that more topics could have been covered out of this lesson. Unfortunately that was not an option for me.
In conclusion, I had a lot of fun teaching this unit to the students. They were excited to learn about the Incas everyday. I would say this has been one of the most fun teaching experiences that I have ever had.