

# Bell Work

1. Share the interesting facts you gathered and listed yesterday with your group.
2. On page 147, write one interesting fact from each of your group members.



# LIFE OF THE INCAS

## LESSON MAIN IDEAS

Class Structure

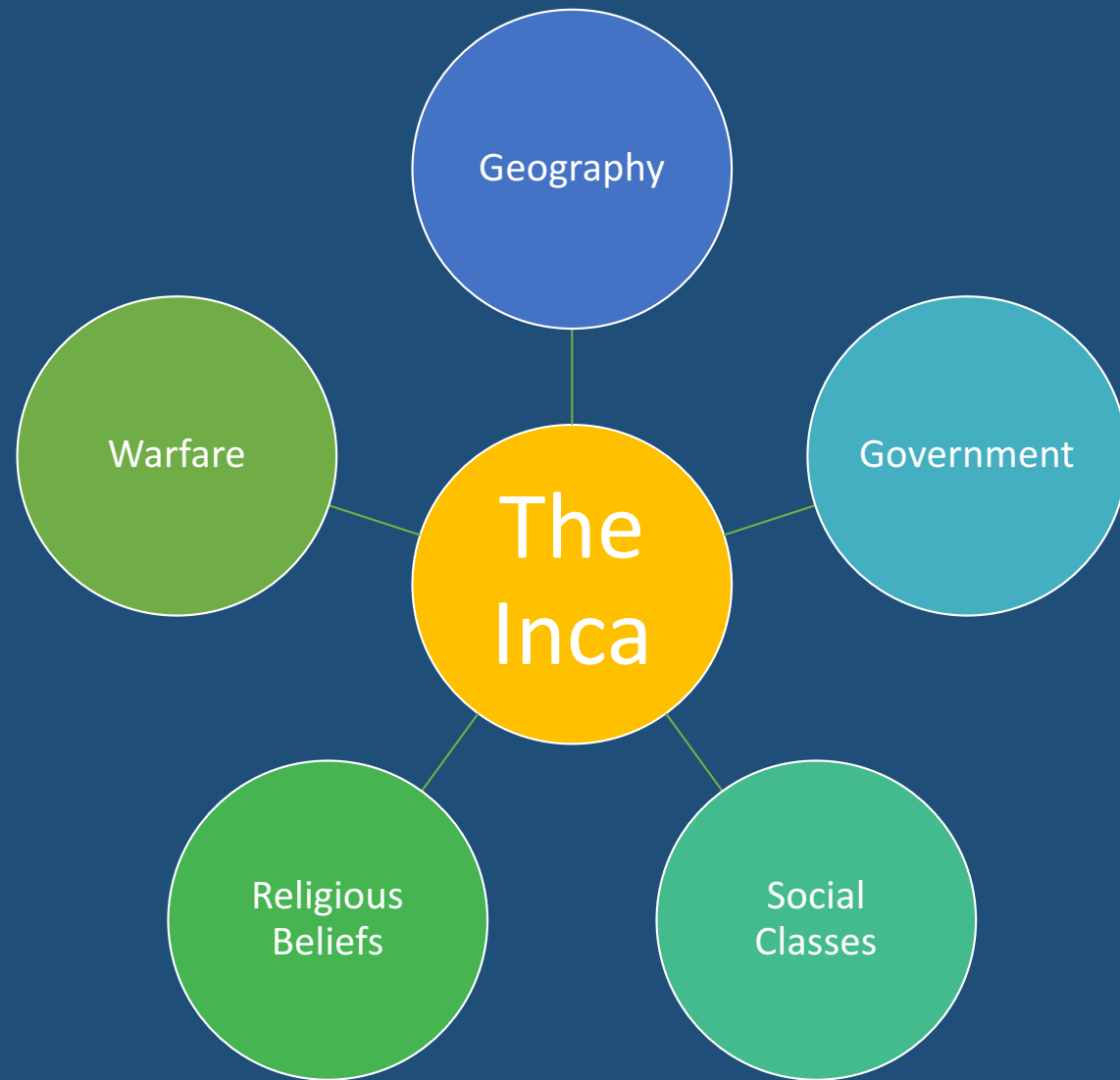
Family Life

Warfare

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Slavery







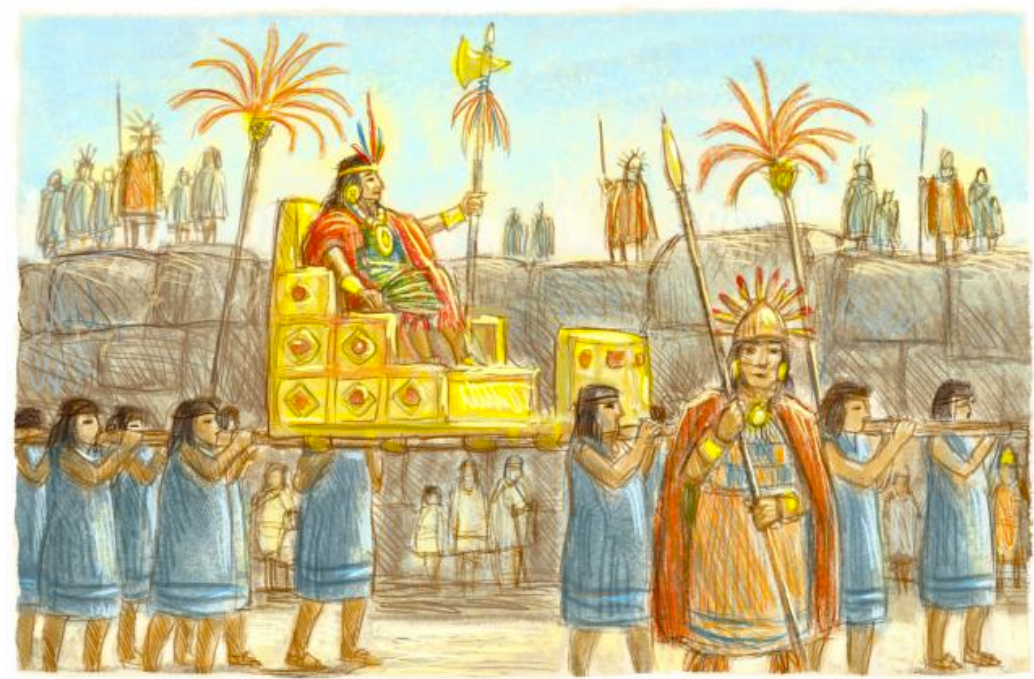
## Geography of a Mountain Empire

The Inca learned to live in the high and rugged terrain of the Andes Mountains in what is now Peru. They also conquered a huge territory to create one of the largest empires in the Americas.

Sometime before 1200, the Inca settled in a fertile mountain valley more than 11,000 feet above sea level. There they founded their capital city, Cuzco (KOOZ-koh). In the wide, green Cuzco valley, the Inca created a small kingdom.

## Governing the Empire

Unlike the Valley of Mexico, the Andes did not have suitable sites for large cities or enough farmland to support urban societies. The rough terrain and different people groups also made governing the empire difficult. But the Inca were talented organizers and administrators. They took several steps to unify the lands and peoples under their rule. They divided their subjects into family groups for easier control. Subjects also had to learn to speak the Quechua language and worship the Incan gods.





## Incan Class Structure

Incan society had two main groups - nobles and commoners. Nobles ran the government, controlled the army, and enjoyed a rich lifestyle. Most commoners were farmers. Commoners did all of the basic work including growing crops for themselves and all of the nobles. Most people stayed in the class they were born in for life.



The government tightly controlled nearly every aspect of life for the Inca. Chiefs decided who would farm, who would trade goods, who would be soldiers, and even who could marry.

## Religious Beliefs and Practices

For the most part, the Incan people accepted the control of their emperor. They believed that he was divine, the son of their most important God, the god of the sun. Incan society was based on agriculture, and the sun was seen as the source of life.

The Inca built many temples to worship their gods. The priests in the temples played a central role in Incan life. They performed daily prayers and rituals and made animal sacrifices for a good harvest. Human sacrifice was rare in Incan religious practice.



This gold knife from about 1100 to 1300 was probably used by an Incan priest in a sacrifice during a ceremony.



## Warfare and the Mighty Incan Army

The Incan army was the most powerful force in the Andes Mountains. Nearly 200,000 strong, it was so frightening that the emperor often had only to ask neighboring peoples to join the empire. A chief would accept the emperor's invitation just to avoid battle he knew he would lose.

Most soldiers were commoners. They were mainly Incan farmers who were performing their required government service. But some were people from conquered territories. The officers were always Incan nobles. The soldiers drilled regularly and were well-equipped with bone-tipped spears and arrows, lances, clubs, and slings.





# CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the geography of the Incan empire like?
2. How did the Inca keep order of their large empire?
3. What were the two main social classes of the Inca?
4. Were the Inca polytheistic or monotheistic in their religious beliefs? What were some of their religious practices?
5. What role did war play in the Inca civilization?