Name: _____ Date: _____

The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

Circle group

The Inca people lived long ago in the high mountains of South America. They ran a huge land with many towns. Someone had to keep track of it all. They did not write with letters. They used knots.

A set of knotted strings is called a quipu. It had one thick main cord. Many thin cords hung down from it. Each thin cord had knots.

The knots stood for numbers. The place of a knot mattered. Knots near the bottom stood for ones. Knots higher up stood for tens. Higher still were hundreds. A quipu could count corn, cloth, or the people in a village.

The cords had different colors. The colors may have had meaning too. Keepers made and read the quipus. They carried them along the roads.

Questions

1. Where did the Inca people live?

_____

_____

2. What is a set of knotted strings called?

_____

_____

3. What did the knots stand for?

_____

_____

4. What could a quipu count?

_____

_____

5. Why did the Inca need a way to keep records?

_____

_____

6. Why did the place of a knot matter?

_____

_____

Words to know

Inca: the people who built a great empire in the Andes mountains
quipu: a set of knotted cords used to keep records
cord: a thin rope or thick string
keepers: people who take care of something

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

Triangle group

The Inca people lived long ago in the high mountains of South America. They ran a huge land with many towns and roads. Someone had to keep track of it all. They did not write with letters as we do. They used knots.

A knotted set of strings is called a quipu. It had one thick main cord. Many thinner cords hung down from it like a fringe. Each hanging cord had knots tied in it.

The knots stood for numbers. The place of a knot on the cord mattered. Knots near the bottom stood for ones. Knots higher up stood for tens, and higher still for hundreds. A quipu could count things like corn, cloth, or the people in a village.

The cords came in different colors, and the colors may have had meaning too. Special keepers made and read the quipus. They carried them along the roads, so that news and counts could travel across the land.

Questions

1. Where did the Inca people live?

_____

_____

2. What is a knotted set of strings called?

_____

_____

3. What did the knots stand for?

_____

_____

4. What could a quipu be used to count?

_____

_____

5. Why did the Inca need a way to keep records?

_____

_____

6. Why did the place of a knot on a cord matter?

_____

_____

Words to know

Inca: the people who built a great empire in the Andes mountains
quipu: a set of knotted cords used to keep records
cord: a thin rope or thick string
fringe: a edge of hanging threads
keepers: people who take care of something

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

Square group

The Inca people lived long ago in the high mountains of South America, where they governed an enormous land of many towns and roads. Someone had to keep track of everything within it. They did not write with letters as we do, but they kept their records with knots.

A set of knotted strings is called a quipu. It consisted of one thick main cord, with many thinner cords hanging down from it like a fringe. Every one of the hanging cords had knots tied along its length.

The knots represented numbers, and the position of each knot was important. Knots near the bottom of a cord stood for ones, knots higher up stood for tens, and those higher still stood for hundreds. A quipu could be used to count items such as corn, cloth, or the people living in a village.

The cords came in a variety of colors, and the colors may have carried meaning as well. Special keepers made and read the quipus, and they carried them along the roads, so that news and counts could travel across the land.

Questions

1. Where did the Inca people live?

_____

_____

2. What is a set of knotted strings called?

_____

_____

3. What did the knots represent?

_____

_____

4. What could a quipu be used to count?

_____

_____

5. Why did the Inca need a way to keep records?

_____

_____

6. Why was the position of each knot important?

_____

_____

Words to know

Inca: the people who built a great empire in the Andes mountains
quipu: a set of knotted cords used to keep records
cord: a thin rope or thick string
fringe: a edge of hanging threads
keepers: people who take care of something

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

Easier · 129 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.9

1. In the high mountains of South America.
2. A quipu.
3. Numbers.
4. Corn, cloth, or the people in a village.
5. They ran a huge land with many towns, so someone had to keep track of it all.
6. Knots in different places stood for ones, tens, or hundreds.

Triangle: The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

This passage · 159 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.8

1. In the high mountains of South America.
2. A quipu.
3. Numbers.
4. Things like corn, cloth, or the people in a village.
5. They ran a huge land with many towns, so someone had to keep track of it all.
6. Knots in different places stood for ones, tens, or hundreds.

Square: The Inca Cords That Held Numbers

Harder · 183 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.8

1. In the high mountains of South America.
2. A quipu.
3. Numbers.
4. Items such as corn, cloth, or the people living in a village.
5. They governed an enormous land with many towns, so someone had to keep track of everything.
6. Knots in different positions stood for ones, tens, or hundreds.