Holding an Empire Together

How the Inca governed and fed communities across the Andes

6.C.3.5.E "Explain how the Inca were able to control an expansive empire in the Andes, developing a strong central government and innovations in agriculture."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways Inca officials kept control of distant places, circle two ways people made farming possible, and put a star by a sentence that shows how stored food helped the empire.

Across the Andes

1. Imagine trying to govern towns scattered across steep Andean mountains. The Inca ruled a large empire from their capital, Cusco. The emperor made major decisions, while officials carried out his orders in different regions. Local leaders helped organize their communities, but they answered to Inca officials. The government counted people and recorded goods using knotted cords called quipus. These records helped officials assign work and track supplies. Instead of leaving each town to govern itself, the Inca linked many communities to one central authority.

2. Distance was another problem. Inca workers built a network of roads and bridges across mountains and valleys. Trained runners carried messages along these routes, passing them from runner to runner. Officials could send orders from Cusco and learn what was happening far away. The roads also helped move armies and supplies where they were needed. Without these connections, leaders in distant places would have had more freedom to ignore the emperor's orders. Roads turned travel and communication into tools of government.

3. Feeding people in the Andes took careful planning. On steep slopes, Inca farmers built terraces, wide steps of level ground that held soil and made farming possible. Canals brought water to some fields. The government also organized labor as a tax: people worked on roads, farms, or other public projects. Workers filled storehouses with food and other goods. When a harvest failed or an army needed food, officials could send stored supplies. Farming methods helped produce food, while government planning helped move it across the empire.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did local leaders and quipu records help officials govern many communities from Cusco?

2. How did roads and runners help the emperor keep control of distant places?

3. Why were both terraces and canals useful for growing food in the Andes?

4. How did organized labor and storehouses help officials respond when a harvest failed?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A community on a steep slope has joined the Inca Empire, far from Cusco. Write four sentences proposing a plan that uses at least one farming method and two government tools from the passage, and explain how they would work together to help the Inca govern the community.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 6 · 6.C.3.5.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways Inca officials kept control of distant places, circle two ways people made farming possible, and put a star by a sentence that shows how stored food helped the empire. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did local leaders and quipu records help officials govern many communities from Cusco?	**Local leaders organized communities under Inca officials. Quipu records helped officials count people, assign work, and track supplies.**
2	How did roads and runners help the emperor keep control of distant places?	**Roads and runners let officials send orders from Cusco and receive news from far away.**
3	Why were both terraces and canals useful for growing food in the Andes?	**Terraces held soil on steep slopes and made farming possible. Canals brought water to some fields.**
4	How did organized labor and storehouses help officials respond when a harvest failed?	**The government assigned people work, including filling storehouses. Officials could send stored food to places where a harvest had failed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The community could build terraces to grow food on its steep slope. Its local leader could organize workers and report to an Inca official. Roads and runners could carry the official's orders to the community. Together, these steps would help the community produce food while staying connected to the government in Cusco.

Accept plans that use an accurate farming method and two government tools from the passage. Students should explain how the tools work together to support Inca control, not just list them.