

Grade 7
Reading - History Passage

“The Lost City of Machu Picchu”

Machu Picchu, often called the "Lost City of the Incas," is one of the most well-known symbols of the Inca civilization. Nestled in the Andean mountains of modern-day Peru, this mysterious city stands as a testament to the architectural and engineering prowess of the ancient Incas.

The city is believed to have been built in the 15th century by the Inca emperor, Pachacuti, as a royal retreat. However, its existence was largely unknown to the outside world until its discovery by an American historian and explorer named Hiram Bingham in 1911. The discovery was surprising as Machu Picchu had been abandoned for centuries, its stone structures slowly being reclaimed by the thick jungle surrounding it.

Many theories exist regarding the purpose of Machu Picchu. Some historians believe it was a ceremonial center, while others argue that it was an astronomical observatory. A third theory suggests it might have been a place of learning and knowledge, sort of an ancient university.

One of the most iconic features of Machu Picchu is the Intihuatana stone, which translates to "Hitching Post of the Sun." It is a ritual stone associated with astronomy. On certain days, the sun stands almost directly above the stone, casting no shadow at all.

Apart from the beautiful stone structures, terraced fields surround the city. These terraces not only reduced soil erosion but also created a microclimate that allowed crops to grow at an altitude that would normally be too high for cultivation. This innovation is a testament to the Incan understanding of agriculture and the environment.

In the years following its discovery, Machu Picchu has been the focus of many restoration efforts. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site and a popular tourist destination, this ancient city continues to inspire wonder in all who visit.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What is Machu Picchu often referred to as?
 - A) Lost City of the Mayans
 - B) Lost City of the Incas
 - C) Ancient City of the Aztecs
 - D) Deserted City of the Toltecs

2. Who is credited with the discovery of Machu Picchu in the modern era?
 - A) Pachacuti
 - B) Hiram Bingham
 - C) Hernán Cortés
 - D) Christopher Columbus

3. What century is Machu Picchu believed to have been built in?
 - A) 14th
 - B) 15th
 - C) 16th
 - D) 17th

4. Which of the following theories about Machu Picchu is NOT mentioned in the passage?
 - A) Ceremonial center
 - B) Astronomical observatory
 - C) Trading hub

D) Place of learning

5. The Intihuatana stone is associated with what?

- A) Rituals
- B) Astronomy
- C) Agriculture
- D) Architecture

6. Why were terraced fields built around Machu Picchu?

- A) For decorative purposes
- B) To reduce soil erosion and create a suitable environment for crops
- C) To honor the sun god
- D) As a defense mechanism

7. Which organization declared Machu Picchu as a World Heritage site?

- A) The Peruvian Government
- B) The United Nations
- C) UNESCO
- D) The World Archaeological Society

8. What does the Intihuatana stone mean in translation?

- A) Stone of the Sun
- B) Shadow Caster
- C) Hitching Post of the Sun
- D) Incan Altar

9. Why is the discovery of Machu Picchu in 1911 considered surprising?

- A) Because it was hidden under a lake
- B) Because it was in plain sight
- C) Because it had been abandoned and overtaken by the jungle
- D) Because the Incas had mentioned it in their writings

10. Which emperor is believed to have built Machu Picchu?

- A) Atahualpa
- B) Montezuma
- C) Pachacuti
- D) Quetzalcoatl

Answers:

- 1) Answer: B) Lost City of the Incas | *Explanation:* The passage specifically mentions that Machu Picchu is often called the "Lost City of the Incas."
- 2) Answer: B) Hiram Bingham | *Explanation:* The passage mentions that Hiram Bingham discovered Machu Picchu in 1911.
- 3) Answer: B) 15th | *Explanation:* The passage states that Machu Picchu is believed to have been built in the 15th century.
- 4) Answer: C) Trading hub | *Explanation:* The passage mentions three theories but does not list it as a trading hub.
- 5) Answer: B) Astronomy | *Explanation:* The passage states that the Intihuatana stone is a "ritual stone associated with astronomy."
- 6) Answer: B) To reduce soil erosion and create a suitable environment for crops | *Explanation:* The terraces were built to reduce soil erosion and create a microclimate for cultivation.
- 7) Answer: C) UNESCO | *Explanation:* The passage mentions that Machu Picchu is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- 8) Answer: C) Hitching Post of the Sun | *Explanation:* The passage states that the Intihuatana stone translates to "Hitching Post of the Sun."
- 9) Answer: C) Because it had been abandoned and overtaken by the jungle | *Explanation:* The passage mentions that the discovery was surprising as Machu Picchu had been abandoned for centuries and was being reclaimed by the surrounding jungle.
- 10) Answer: C) Pachacuti | *Explanation:* The passage states that Machu Picchu is believed to have been built by the Inca emperor, Pachacuti.