

Ollantaytambo

On land | Peru | mid-1400s CE | Grades 3-5

Name _____ Date _____

Ollantaytambo is one of the only places where people still live in an original Inca town.

Read the story

In the mid-1400s, the Inca emperor Pachacuti conquered this part of the Sacred Valley and built Ollantaytambo as a royal estate. Workers carved huge stone terraces into the steep mountain for farming and defense.

At the top is the Temple of the Sun, with six giant pink granite blocks fitted together perfectly. The stones were cut at a quarry across the river, then dragged several kilometers and up the slope, a huge feat without wheels or iron tools.

In 1537, the Inca leader Manco Inca fought the Spanish here and won. He flooded the fields and his warriors rained down arrows and stones from the terraces. But the Spanish returned with more soldiers, and Manco retreated deeper into the jungle.

How it ended

Ollantaytambo was never fully abandoned. After the Inca Empire fell to the Spanish, the town kept going, and today people still live in its old Inca streets.

Key words

- terrace: a flat step cut into a hillside for farming
- granite: a very hard type of rock
- estate: a large area of land owned by one person or family

Wow facts

- The six pink granite blocks of the Sun Temple were dragged from a quarry across the river.
- Inca water channels still run through the town today.
- Storehouses were built high on the hills where cool air kept food from spoiling.

Talk about it

1. Why are terraces useful on steep mountains?

2. What would it be like to live in a town that is over 500 years old?

Try this

Draw a map of Ollantaytambo as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. Which Inca emperor built Ollantaytambo?

- A. Pachacuti
- B. Atahualpa
- C. Moctezuma
- D. Pakal

2. Who won the battle here in 1537?

- A. Manco Inca
- B. The Spanish
- C. The Romans
- D. No one

3. What still runs through the town today?

- A. Inca water channels
- B. A subway
- C. A canal for ships
- D. Lava

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/ollantaytambo/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. A. Pachacuti built it as a royal estate.
2. A. Manco Inca defeated the Spanish at Ollantaytambo.
3. A. Stone water channels built by the Inca still flow.