

Communication and Cultural Awareness



Social Studies

Have you heard of the term Pachamama? Do you know what it means?



Machu Picchu Ruins

The *Pachamama* is usually translated into English as “Mother Earth”, although the more literal translation would be “World Mother”. She is an Andean indigenous goddess. She is worshipped in the region of Tawantinsuyu, the former Incan Empire, which now includes the Andean regions of Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and northern Argentina.

In Incan mythology, she presides over planting and harvesting crops and can cause earthquakes. She is also the goddess of fertility. In the Quechua cosmovision, the four principles – Water, Earth, Sun, and Moon – come from her. She is the mother of the Sun god Inti, and the Moon goddess Mama Killa. She is offered many sacrifices, especially animals like llamas and alpacas. Rituals to honor her are celebrated all year, but especially in August, which is the coldest month of the year in the southern Andes.

With the arrival of the Spaniards, in some regions of the Andes, the *Pachamama* was replaced by the Virgin Mary. But those who believe in the *Pachamama* can maintain a balanced, reciprocal relationship with her. It is said that if people treat the *Pachamama* well and offer her the best sacrifices, then she in return will give them a good harvest.

Adapted from: <https://bit.ly/2yCMvS7>

Answer the following questions in complete sentences based on the reading.

1. What is the most common translation for Pachamama in English?

2. What powers does the Pachamama have?

3. What do people offer to the Pachamama?

4. How do people maintain a good relationship with the Pachamama?

From the description of the Pachamama given in the text, draw what you think she would look like in the box. Be prepared to describe your drawing out loud to the class.



Vocabulary

- goddess**, female god
- worshipped**, venerated, revered
- harvesting**, collecting fruits and vegetables to be eaten when they are ready
- reciprocal**, works in both directions, for each other