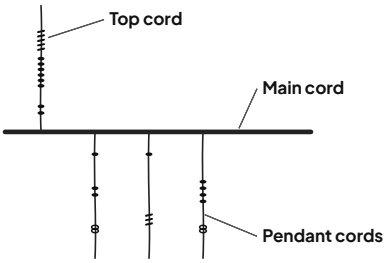
HOW TO READ A QUIPU

Quipus (also spelled khipus) were knotted cords that kept Inca records. Experts called quipucamayoc made and read them. Scholars can read the numbers; whether quipus also recorded words is still studied. These cords are practice examples tied by the real rules.

THE PARTS OF A QUIPU



Main cord The thick top cord. All the other cords hang from it like a fringe.

Pendant cords Cords hanging down from the main cord. Each one records one number.

Top cord A cord rising above the main cord. It adds up a group of pendant cords.

THREE KINDS OF KNOTS



Single knot

One knot for each 1 in the tens, hundreds or thousands place.



Long knot

A knot with 2 to 9 turns, used in the ones place. Count the dark turns wound round the cord.

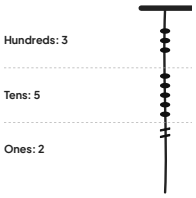


Figure-eight knot

A knot shaped like an 8, used for 1 in the ones place.

Places, like our numbers

Read a cord from the top down. The place nearest the main cord is the biggest, and each place is worth ten times the place below it. The ones are at the bottom. An empty space where a place should be means zero. Quipus count in base 10, like our numbers.



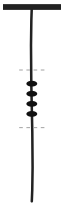
Example

hundreds: 3 single knots (300); tens: 5 single knots (50); ones: a long knot of 2 turns (2) = 352

MORE EXAMPLES



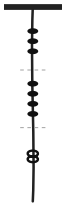
7
ones: a long knot of 7 turns (7) = 7



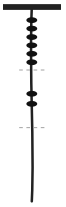
40
tens: 4 single knots (40); ones: a space (0) = 40



105
hundreds: 1 single knot (100); tens: a space (0); ones: a long knot of 5 turns (5) = 105



341
hundreds: 3 single knots (300); tens: 4 single knots (40); ones: a figure-eight knot (1) = 341



620
hundreds: 6 single knots (600); tens: 2 single knots (20); ones: a space (0) = 620

TRY IT: DRAW THE KNOTS FOR THESE NUMBERS

8



31



250



406



902

