

READ N' THINK



The First People: A Mayan Myth

Directions: You will have 3 ¼ minutes to read the selection below and answer all the questions on the back side of this paper. Do not begin reading until your teacher tells you to.

Essential Vocabulary:

- Staple – a main or important part of something.

Once the deities had formed the Earth, they set about creating their worshippers. First, they made the animals, but the only praise they received were squawks and howls. They then attempted to fashion a human from mud. Although it was able to speak, its words made no sense, and it rapidly dissolved back into a shapeless mass. Next the divinities tried to create people out of wood. These wooden beings looked human, possessed human speech, and even began to procreate, but they had no souls, and therefore did not recognize their creators. The deities decided that the wooden people must be destroyed. To achieve this, they produced a variety of dangers including a great flood and attacks by fearsome jaguars. They even turned the domestic animals and cooking utensils against the wooden beings – their pots burned them and their grinding stones ground their faces. Most of the wooden people were eventually eliminated; the few that survived were transformed into monkeys, which inhabit the forests to this day.

The frustrated divinities made one last attempt to create humans. They gathered together some maize kernels (the staple food of the Maya), and an old goddess called Xmucane ground the kernels nine times. She added some water and drops of her own blood and thus, miraculously, she successfully formed the first four people who quickly learned how to worship and make appropriate sacrifices to their creators.

-From *The Maya*, P. 98 by Timothy Laughton



CIRCLE

On your own paper write the letter of the correct answer. Be prepared to explain why you think your answer is correct (where in the reading did you find it?)

- Which of these is used in the passage as a synonym for deities? (Vocabulary)
 - divinities
 - worshippers
 - beings
 - gods
- Why were the Gods not satisfied with the animals they made?
 - They made no sounds.
 - They only squawked and howled.
 - They had no souls.
 - They smelled bad.
- Which of the following statements shows the proper sequence of the types of humans? (Sequence)
 - made of animals, made of mud, made of maize
 - made of wood, made of mud, made of maize
 - made of wood, made of mud, made of skin
 - made of mud, made of wood, made of maize
- What happened to the wooden humans that survived? (Comprehension)
 - They were turned into monkeys.
 - They became the modern Mayan people.
 - They learned to worship the gods.
 - They became the gods.
- Which of these statements best summarizes this passage? (Summation)
 - People made out of wood have no souls.
 - The Mayans told very strange stories.
 - Today's people are made out of maize, water and the blood of gods.
 - The Mayan gods tried many times before successfully creating people.

Number Right	5	4	3-3	0-1
Rating	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor