

Online Book Club

The Mystery at the Maya Ruins

Bring It To Life!

1. The Maya had many legends. For example, in the mystery, the legend of Kukulkan as a young boy explained why earthquakes happen in July. Make up your own Maya legend and share it with the class.
2. At the Chichen Itza ruins, the kids learn about the Maya ball games. Izzy tells the kids that there is no written record of the rules for the game. Using what you learned in the mystery and your own ideas, write the rules of the game. Be creative!
3. Design a new book cover for The Mystery at the Maya Ruins. You can draw the cover design yourself, or use computer software to create it. Be sure to make up your own icons to run down the right side of the cover.
4. In the mystery, Grant teaches Christina what he learned about the Maya numbering system. Now, it's your turn to write them. Remember, the shell is 0, the dot is 1, and the bar is 5. Use the following rules to write numbers. Can your partner guess your numbers? Remember to keep a space between the first, second, and third positions when writing numbers larger than 19.

			Examples			
3rd Position	For numbers > 399	shell = 0 x 20 x 20 dot = 1 x 20 x 20 line = 5 x 20 x 20				—
2nd Position	For numbers 20-399	shell = 0 x 20 dot = 1 x 20 line = 5 x 20		•••	•• —	☉
1st Position	For numbers 0-19	shell = 0 x 1 dot = 1 x 1 line = 5 x 1	•••• —	☉	—	•••• —
			19	60 + 0 — 60	240 + 10 — 250	2000 0 + 14 — 2014



Online Quiz

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Fact or Fiction?

- _____ 1. Iguanas bob their heads up and down to communicate.
- _____ 2. An ichthyologist is a person who studies dinosaurs.
- _____ 3. The Maya numbering system consisted of numbers and letters.
- _____ 4. The pyramid at Chichen Itza was dedicated to the Maya feathered serpent god.
- _____ 5. Tourists are allowed to climb the Temple of Kukulcan.
- _____ 6. The Maya built the Caracol Observatory to track astronomical events, like eclipses.
- _____ 7. The kids played a game of basketball on the Great Ball Court.
- _____ 8. The Great Jaguar Throne was painted yellow with black jade spots inlaid in its body.
- _____ 9. Professor Z was Mimi's friend and Izzy's aunt.
- _____ 10. All of the kids, except Christina, got temporary, red-feathered serpent tattoos to show their membership in the Feathered Serpent Club.



Online Information

The Mystery at the Maya Ruins

Fascinating Facts

1. The four main structures in a Maya temple complex are a pyramid, an observatory, sacrificial altars, and a ball court.
2. The Maya used brushes made with animal hair and quills as writing tools.
3. The Maya calendar included 18 months of 20 days each, plus 1 month of 5 days.
4. Balls used in Maya ballgames were made of rubber and weighed about 8 pounds. They could cause severe injury to players!
5. The Maya loved jewelry, especially items of jade and gold. Jade was one of the most common items traded by the Maya.
6. Maya temples were decorated with brightly colored carvings of jaguars, snakes, birds, and turtles.
7. The Maya numbering system is based on the numbers 0 through 20.
8. Maya children were named according to the day they were born. Every day had a specific name assigned to it for both boys and girls.
9. A Maya myth: the Maya priests could create goblins called *aluxob*. These goblins would help the farmer grow corn by protecting his field and summoning the rain gods—but only if the goblin was well cared for.
10. Maya medicine men used advanced techniques. They sewed up wounds with human hair, healed fractures, made fake teeth using jade and turquoise, and used iron to fill cavities.



Know your SAT Words!

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SAT Words



1. chasm
2. contortion
3. meander
4. tenacious
5. translucent

Write a sensational sentence using all five SAT Words from this mystery.



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Talk About It!

1. The actions of a character in a story can change the story completely. For example, by running off at the beginning of the story, Grant caused the family to miss their cruise ship. Discuss other actions by characters in the story that affected what happened next.
2. Grant does and says a lot of funny things in tense or scary situations. Talk about specific events like this in the story.
3. Numbers play an important role in the mystery. Discuss your favorite number, or set of numbers, and explain why you liked it.
4. The ball in the story is important in several ways. Discuss the various ways Grant uses the ball and how his actions move the story along.
5. Discuss the choice Grant and Christina made in the pyramid when they noticed Izzy had changed. Talk about what the kids did and what Grant said to Izzy to explain his actions. Do you think you would have made the same choice?
6. What did the kids do with the jade stone pieces at the end of the mystery? Discuss whether they made the right decision and why.
7. Izzy inducts the kids into the Feathered Serpent Club. Discuss whether you think they earned the right to be in the club.
8. The kids had the opportunity to swim with Oliver, the whale shark. Is that something you would like to do? Why or why not?
9. Would you like to visit Chichen Itza? If so, what would you most like to see during your visit?

