



San Diego Museum of Man

Magic of the Maya

Pre- and Post-Visit Activities



Terminology

The Museum of Man is a museum of anthropology. Some useful vocabulary includes:

Anthropology – the study of humankind in all times and places.

Archaeology – the study of material remains from the past to describe and explain human behavior.

Physical Anthropology – the study of the way the human body is formed and how it works.

Physical anthropologists study people through time, including the most ancient remains of human bones.

Stelae – large rectangular monuments of stone depicting a Maya ruler.

Zoomorphs – large oval monuments of stone depicting creation stories of the ruler.

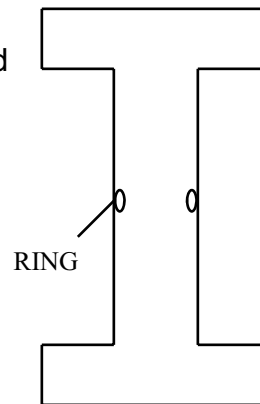
The Museum of Man's exhibit, *Maya: Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth*, is unique in that it is the only place in the world that has all five life-size plaster casts of stelae and zoomorphs from Quiriguá, Guatemala, from the Classic Period (AD 250 – AD 900). The exhibit focuses on the interpretation of glyphs, as well as Maya conceptions of the cosmos and religion, art and architecture, the ballgame, kingship, pageantry, and history.

Pre-visit Activity: Signs of Beauty

The ancient Maya practiced physically-altering techniques that made them into beautiful members of society. Some examples include earrings for men, sloped and elongated foreheads (by bounding their skulls), and crossed-eyes. Have students research and examine other cultural conceptions and ideals of beauty. Are there similarities with their own culture? Differences? Remember, things that some cultures find attractive, others may view differently!

Pre- or Post-visit Activity: The Ballgame (Ulama)

The sacred ballgame *Ulama* possibly dates back to the Pre-Classic Period (1800 B.C.) and symbolizes the cosmic battle between light and dark. Ballcourts were shaped like a capital "I" with walls up to 27 feet high. Players had to throw a solid rubber ball through rings on each side of the court only using their hips. One version of this game was similar to modern-day handball. Have students play in pairs on racquetball courts (or against a wall) with a handball, while only using their hips to bounce it back and forth. The first person to miss the ball loses a point. Only the Nobles were allowed to play this game, and some scholars think that the losers were sacrificed!



Post-visit Activity: Maya Hieroglyphs

Get your math standards! Reproduce the worksheet on the back and instruct students to decipher Maya number glyphs.

Suggested Reading for Teachers:

Coe, Michael D. *The Maya, 5th ed.* New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

Martin, Simon, and Nikolai Grube. *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens.* Thames and Hudson, 2000.

Schele, Linda, and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings.* Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1990.

Sharer, Robert J. *Daily Life in Maya Civilization.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Answers to Maya Bar-and-Dot Number Identification: 1) 8 2) 10 3) 3 4) 13 5) 9 6) 8 7) 5 8) 18
9) 13 10) 9 11) 18 12) 7 13) 13 14) 13 15) 3 16) 4 17) 8 18) 10 19) 9 20) 14



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Maya Bar-and-Dot Number Identification



Name _____ Date _____

Identify the numbers associated with each glyph. the number one was one dot.
The number five was a bar. The number eight was three dots and a bar. Two bars were used to identify ten.



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



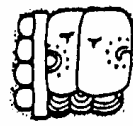
7. _____



8. _____



9. _____



10. _____



11. _____



12. _____



13. _____



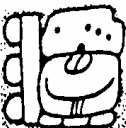
14. _____



15. _____



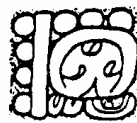
16. _____



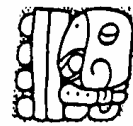
17. _____



18. _____



19. _____



20. _____