

The Mayan Creation Story – ANSWERS

Section A:

1. What did the god Gucumatz look like according to the text? **The god Gucumatz was a feathered spirit with sparkling green and blue feathers.**
2. How many levels of the Mayan underworld are mentioned in the story? **There are nine levels of the underworld mentioned in the story.**
3. What does the term 'worship' mean in this context? **The term 'worship' means believing in and praying to a god.**
4. Why were the gods unhappy with the second race of men? **The gods were unhappy with the second race of men because they had no minds of their own and their words were empty and meaningless.**
5. Can you think of another possible title for this text? **A suitable title**

Section B:

6. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word 'void' in this context. **The word 'void' means a completely empty space.**
7. Summarise the content of the first three paragraphs of the text. **The Mayan gods, Tepeuand and Gucumatz, created the earth from nothing by simply 'thinking' it into being.**
8. How did the gods destroy the second race of men? **The gods destroyed the second race of men by sending a great flood.**
9. Why were the gods immediately pleased with the corn men? **The gods were immediately pleased with the corn men because they were strong enough to last and their minds were full of thoughts and feelings. They began to worship the gods straight away.**
10. Do you think the gods were right to remove some of the first corn men's vision? Explain your answer. **Own answer with an explanation of why.**
11. What is the meaning of the word 'companions' from the text? **A companion is someone who a person spends a lot of time with.**

Section C:

12. What do you think the writer means by 'before the world had a true form'? **I think the writer meant a time before the Earth was created and the way it looks now; a time when there was nothing there at all.**

13. Why do you think the gods were 'disappointed with their creations' after making the animals? I think the gods were disappointed with their creations because they could not speak and worship the gods.
14. Why do you think the gods gave corn men women to be their companions? The gods gave the men women as their companions so they could reproduce and create the next generation.
15. What is the meaning of the word 'ancestors'? An ancestor is a person's descendants.
16. Maize and corn was especially precious to the Mayan people. How can we tell this from reading this creation story? We can tell that maize and corn was precious to the Mayan people because the only type of man that was successful was created from maize.

Section D:

17. The word 'race' has several meanings. What does it mean in the context of this story? In the context of this story, race means a group of people sharing the same history and culture.
18. According to the story, the second race of men escaped and became monkeys. How does this relate to the theory of evolution? The theory of evolution suggests that all men originated from apes and monkeys which is similar to the way men and apes are related in this story.
19. Why do you think the gods altered the vision of the corn men? I think the gods altered (changed) the vision of the corn men because they felt threatened by the corn men, as they were almost too perfect.
20. The gods were proud creatures. What evidence is there within the text to support this? They wanted all beings to worship them, they were disappointed when they created the corn men because they could see just as far as the gods themselves.
21. This story is a myth. What features of a myth are present in this text? The features of a myth that are included in this story are: the presence of gods, creation, magic.
22. Do you know any other examples of creation stories? How are they similar? The creation story in the Bible, other creation stories – such as the Aboriginal Dreamtime story, and stories from other religions/cultures.

Challenge Activity – ANSWERS

Section A: Which character(s) did the following:

Action	Character
crumbled when they tried to speak	men made from wet clay
came together to create the world	Tepeu and Gucumatz
created a deafening noise that disappointed the gods	all the creatures on earth
had no memory of their creation and spoke empty and meaningless words	men made from wood
became monkeys	a few survivors who escaped the flood
had perfect vision with minds full of thoughts and feelings	men made from corn

Section B: Find an example from the text of the gods experiencing each of these emotions:

Emotion	Event
Frustration	The second race of men were unable to praise the gods, so they sent a flood to destroy them all.
Jealousy	The men made from corn had better vision than the gods, so they removed some of it.
Loneliness	The gods saw that everything around them was dark, so they created the Earth and all the creatures on it.
Disappointment	The clay men crumbled when they tried to praise the gods.
Satisfaction	The men made from corn could worship their creators, so the gods made companions for them.

Section C: Determine the motive or reason behind each event from the text:

Event	Motive (Why?)
Tepeu and Gucumatz sent a flood to destroy the second race of men.	They were unable to praise the gods because their words were empty.
The gods were jealous and took away some vision from the men made from corn.	The men were too perfect and could see and understand more than the gods could.
The gods demanded the animals be silent.	Their attempts to praise the gods were deafening.
The gods let some survivors live after escaping the flood.	They were to be left as monkeys as an example to the future race of men.
Tepeu and Gucumatz created four female companions for the men made from corn.	They were pleased with how the men worshiped and praised them as intended.

Section D: Imagine a missing paragraph from the myth where the gods use a different material to create men. What substance could they use? What sort of men would it create?

Using the original story as a guide, the paragraph should include details of the new substance/material and explain what sort of men this would create.