
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO’s): The purpose of the Maíz worksheet aims to allow students a comprehensive overview of the domestication of maíz and its importance among people of the America’s, past and present. After completing the Maíz worksheet you should be able to 1) describe where maíz was domesticated, 2) describe the material culture associated with maíz use, 3) explain what maíz symbolized from a ritual and ceremonial standpoint, and 4) explain how maíz serves as a model for revitalizing ancestral ways of being.

WORD SEARCH

SEPIGRAPHPHYVNMRCNLLPSU
UTFORMATIVEPERIODODYJPR
BFARCHAELOGYUMEVLMBH
SIMHCHOMALXBPALTSLR
IGDEAMAVESETTELMTTL
SUOULUBHSETVMENTSEAD
TRGBCUEDORVZXDHUGHJNG
ECUCURBITASPERSODORAD
NNECLVCKVMSBBQOXYLEN
CERROCKSHELTERECABFMAF
EFRCSQUBZRLVCVLIMACOA
DGBSVZIDAWAUEEVOLCM
UTRMANOANCMEAGTSSRAEZ
EPOQLWBFAAILYRKMAYIZE
LBIVHCSIBITKUIUCUATOV
MANOANDMETATECTHMIOPN
ASLIAADDDBOBFWAABFTYA
NABTEOSINTEDOLMECEMHN
ARLXVBAUEIKIWATWIKLIAE
TENUGILANAQUITZCABET
CENTRALBALASSRIVERIHPS
XIHUATOXLASHELTERCIFU
FLOODPLAINRESOURCESYSTS

DIRECTIONS Search for the following terms in the above word bank, than proceed to define each using your classroom lecture notes, and the mandated readings (Arnold 2009; Ranere et al. 2009; Taube 1989 [see page 4 of this handout]).

Mesoamerica –
Teosinte –
Maíz (corn) –
Mano and Metate –
Basalt –
Cucurbita spp. –
Guila Naquitz Cave –
Subsistence –
Central Balas Rivers –
Tamale –
Rock Shelter –
Xihuatoxtla Shelter –
La Joya –
Olmec –
Archaeology –
Formative Period –
Agriculture
Floodplain resources –
Settlement –
Complex society –
Comal –
Epigraphy –
Sustenance –
Maíz (corn) along with beans and squash make up the “three sister crops” of the Americas. The three provide a well-balanced nutritional intake of sustenance (food) that could be prepared and served in a number of arrays. Moreover, maíz served a number of ritual purposes, and was often manifested in the epigraphy, art, and architecture of Mesoamerican peoples. Unlike beans and squash though, maíz was a product of domestication by humans. Define the following terms in their relation to one another:

**Domestication:**

**Teosinte:**

**Maíz:**

**Mano and Metate:**

The origin of maíz and its age is often debated among researchers, yet despite disagreements science and research has shed some light on places where it has been found and its age. To answer the questions below please read Ranere et al. 2009.

1. According to Ranere et al. 2009, domesticated maíz in Mexico dates to what period in calendrical years? ____________ ____________ ____________

2. According to Ranere et al. 2009, the wild ancestor of maíz was ________________ and was native to ________________, ________________ of Mexico.

3. Once maíz was domesticated in Mexico, it spread to what parts of the Americas, and during what time? ________________ ________________ ________________ ________________

4. What types of stones found at Xihuatoxtla Shelter indicate that maíz was being processed? ________________

5. According to Ranere et al. 2009, maíz was planted in what environmental context? And why? ________________

Tamale is just one of the many foods that can be made from maíz. How many more food products can you list below, made from maíz:

1. 2.
3. 4.
5. 6.
7. 8.
9. 10.
How masa for tamales is made

The Maíz Tamale among the Classic Maya

Read Karl A. Taube’s (1998) *The Maíz Tamale in Classic Maya Diet, Epigraphy, and Art* and answer the following questions:

1. What’s a tamale? How do you say tamale in Classic Maya language? Why was it important? ____________________________________________________________

2. What evidences does Karl A. Taube (1998) examine to better understand the tamale in Classic Maya society? ____________________________________________________________

3. Describe the maíz symbol? What’s it look like? Draw it here! ____________________________________________________________

4. What other meanings does the Maya word for maíz have? Describe at least three: ____________________________________________________________

5. In addition to serving as food, what other uses did the tamale have? What was it identified with? ____________________________________________________________

Three staple crops of the Americas

Maíz / Beans / Squash

What is the nutritional value of each staple food? Describe the morphology of each plant, and how it grows.

Maíz: ____________________________________________________________

Beans: ____________________________________________________________

Squash: ____________________________________________________________
A corn or a fish diet among the Olmec? Read Phillip J. Arnolds’s (2009) *Settlement and subsistence among the Early Formative Gulf Olmec*, than answer the following questions:

1. According to recent research and Phillip J. Arnold, the primary diet of Early Formative (1500–900 B.C.) groups (including the Olmec) was: ______________________________________________________________.

2. Phillip Arnold cites the work of Wing (1978). According to Wing (1978), the Olmec at San Lorenzo ate lots of ______________ for protein.

3. Define the term “agricentrism,” it implies what? ______________________________________________________________.

4. What kind of data/evidence are archaeologists examining to better understand the diet of Early and Middle Formative people in Mesoamerica: ______________________________________________________________

5. List at least ten types of flora and fauna (plants and animals) eaten by the La Joya Olmec: ____________________________

6. When did the consumption of maíz become an important part of the Olmec diet? During what period? How did this impact daily Olmec life? ______________________________________________________________.

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**Required Maíz Readings**

Arnold, Phillip J.  

Ranere, Anthony J., Dolores R. Piperno, Irene Holst, Ruth Dickau, and José Iriarte  

Taube, Karl A.  

Rodriquez, Roberto Cintli.  
2014 Our Sacred Mother is our Maiz
In Lak’ech translates to Tu Eres Mi Otro Yo or You Are My Other Self. It teaches students to see themselves in each other. Thus, it would be difficult to truly hate others because to do so would be to hate oneself. This concept is closely related to the Golden Rule found in virtually every religion. This rule has many variations, including the Christian creed: “Do unto others as you would have done unto you.”

In Lak’ech actually differs slightly from the Golden Rule in that it is not exclusively about human relations but about relations with all living beings, including the earth and the universe itself.

Panche Be is Búsqueda de la Raíz de la Verdad or To Seek the Root of the Truth (or To Find the Truth in the Root[s]). This concept is not simply about the search for the truth, or even about teaching students to be critical thinkers, but about the pursuit of peace, dignity, and justice.

As I close this book, I would like to leave the reader with five additional maíz-based concepts that I teach in my classes at the University of Arizona, for a total of seven. They are Hunab Ku, Men, Kochil, Et P’iz, and Yaxche-Baache. They come primarily from the work of Martínez Parédez, but also from many of the elders mentioned throughout this book (see also appendix 1). As presented here, perhaps they are unrecognizable to the Maya, yet this is how we have interpreted them in Arizona, not just in our battles to save a program but in our efforts to become better human beings.

Hunab Ku: the name the Maya gave to the equivalent of the Supreme Being or the Grand Architect of the Universe or “The Great Mystery” (Martínez Parédez 1970). This is a simple acknowledgment that all peoples everywhere in the history of humanity have given a name to how they perceive and understand (the function of) the universe, and that, contrary to the teachings that were brought by European colonizers five hundred years ago, no one understanding is superior to any other understanding.

Men has three components: creer, crear y hacer—to imagine or believe, to create, and to do or carry out. Translated: to imagine and believe in the creation of our own reality. Men is a power within our psyche, part of our will (Martínez Parédez 1970: 68–69). It is the idea that if we believe we will lose, we will, and conversely, we win if we believe we will win. We construct our own reality and follow up.

Kochil: education with a true sense of responsibility (Martínez Parédez 1977: 17). From this came the idea that the objective was not simply to save ethnic studies but to spread it nationwide, and that this was not an option but a responsibility. One is born with and dies with this responsibility. Nothing or no one can shirk it. We cannot forget that our conscience is just and prudent. From this, the expression: “By the ruler with which we measure, we too will be measured.”