

Maya Creation Story

Before the world had a true form, there were two gods. These gods were Tepeu, the Maker and Q'uc'umatz, the Feathered Spirit. While the world around them was dark, the two gods glittered with brilliant blue and green feathers. They came together to create the world.

Whatever they thought came into being. When they thought "Earth", land formed in the darkness. They thought of mountains and valleys, pine trees and sky. All of these things appeared the instant they thought them, and so the Earth was formed.

Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz decided that they needed beings there to look after their creation and to praise them as the creators of Earth. So they created deer and birds and panthers and serpents, all the creatures that roam the Earth today.

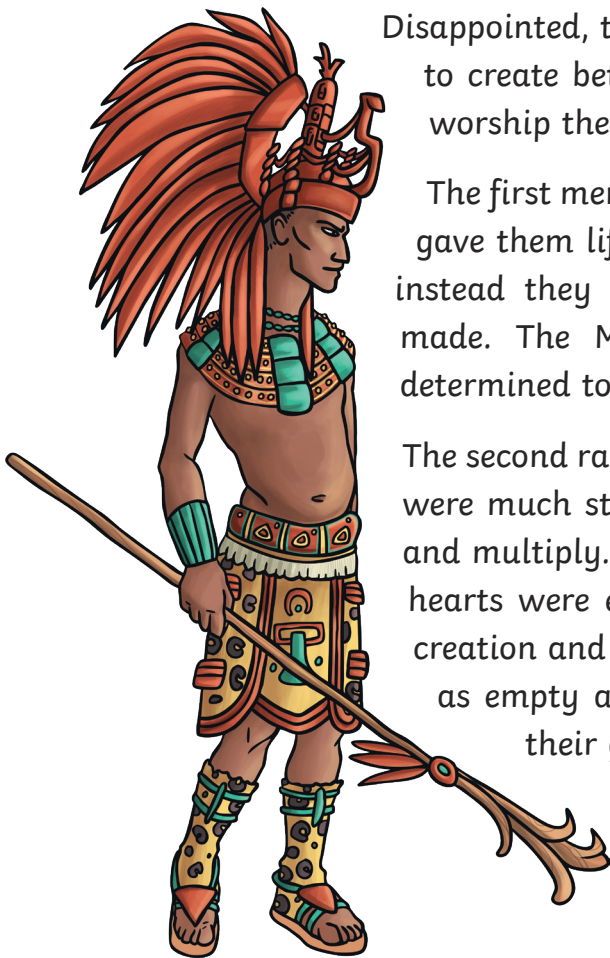
"Now praise us! Say our names!" commanded the creators.

But the animals could only roar or howl, bleat, bark, twitter or moan. They tried as hard as they could to speak, but they could not.

Disappointed, the makers agreed that they would have to create better beings, ones who would be able to worship them properly.

The first men were made from wet clay. The creators gave them life, and the first men tried to speak; but instead they crumbled apart soon after they were made. The Maker and the Feathered Spirit were determined to create a sturdier race of men.

The second race of men were carved from wood. These were much stronger and were able to walk and talk and multiply. But these men had no minds and their hearts were empty. They had no memories of their creation and when they spoke, their words were just as empty and meaningless. They could not praise their gods.



Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz sent a great flood down to destroy them. The few who managed to escape fled to the woods and became monkeys. The creators left them there as an example to the next race of men.

The Maker and the Feathered Spirit thought for a long time about how they should make the race of men they wanted. There seemed to be no perfect material to build them. Finally, some animals brought the Gods a stack of white corn which grew on the far side of the Earth. Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz ground this into a paste and from this, formed four individual men.

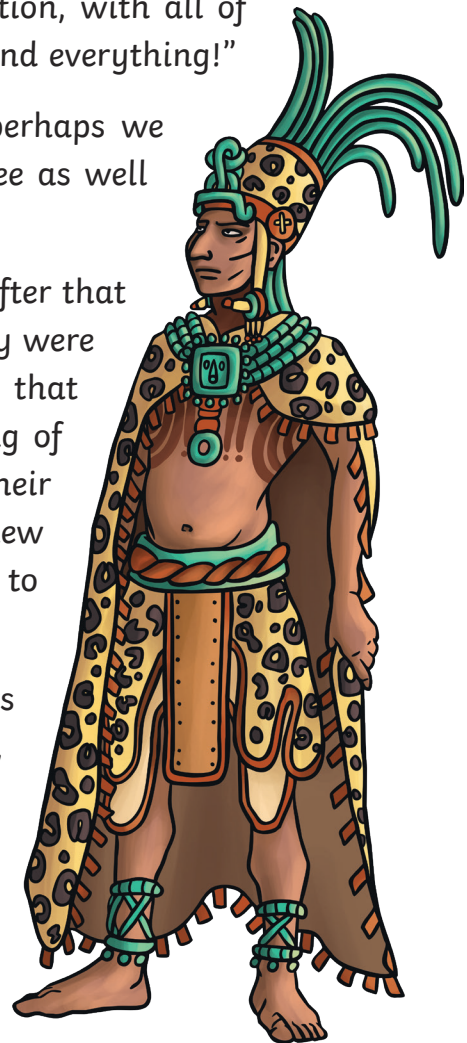
The new beings seemed perfect. They were sturdy enough to last and their minds were full of thoughts and feelings. They immediately began to worship Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz, thanking them for their lives. Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz were pleased. "What do you see?" they asked the corn men.

"We can see forever, through rocks and trees and mountains to the edges of the Earth. We can see your entire creation, with all of its animals and plants. We can see and understand everything!"

Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz looked at each other, "perhaps we made these beings too well... they should not see as well as WE do!"

The makers removed some of the men's vision. After that they could only see things close to them and they were no longer able to see through or above things that they should not. As a result, their understanding of the world was weakened. But the men still sang their creators' praises and settled down to live on the new land. Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz made four women to be their mates.

These eight men and women were the ancestors of all K'iche' men and women today. Even today, their sight and understanding of the world is not perfect.



Questions

1. What are the two gods called?

2. Why did the gods want beings on Earth? Tick **two**.

- to praise them
- to do jobs for them
- to look after Earth
- because they were bored

3. Look at the **paragraph that begins 'The first men...'**.

Find and **copy** one word which means **stronger**.

4. Draw lines to match the different creations and the materials they were made from.

The first men ●

● corn paste

The second men ●

● wood

The third men ●

● clay

5. Why do you think the creators made the second men out of wood?

6. What special power did the gods have that allowed them to create the Earth and the beings?

7. Would you like to have this power? Why or why not?

8. 'The Gods were kind and generous.'

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

Answers

What are the two gods called?

Accept any of the following:

- **Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz**
- **The Maker and the Feathered Spirit**
- **The creators**

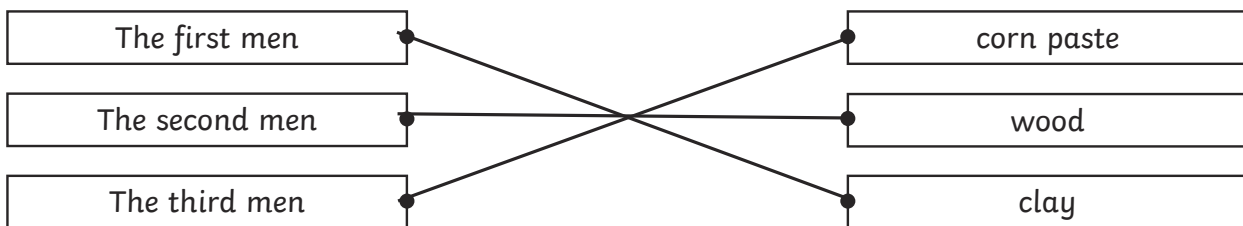
1. Why did the gods want beings on Earth? Tick **two**.

- to praise them**
- to do jobs for them
- to look after Earth**
- because they were bored

2. Look at the **paragraph that begins 'The first men...'**.

Find and copy one word which means **stronger**.
sturdier

3. Draw lines to match the different creations and the materials they were made from.



4. Why do you think the creators made the second men out of wood?

Pupil's own response, such as: I think the creators made the second men out of wood because they knew they needed to use something stronger than clay because they didn't want the men to crumble like the clay men.

5. What special power did the gods have that allowed them to create the Earth and the beings?

They had the power to create things - anything they thought of came into being.

6. Would you like to have this power? Why or why not?

Pupil's own response.

7. 'The gods were kind and generous.'

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

Pupil's own response, such as:

No, I do not think that the gods were generous because even though they created the Earth and all of the animals, they only did it so they could be praised. They were also cruel as they destroyed the second set of men and also took back some of the third men's vision as they wanted to be more powerful than them.

Or

Yes, I do think the gods were kind and generous because they created the Earth and all of the animals and beings, giving them life. All they asked for in return was to be recognised for creating their world. They also gave the four men mates so they would have company.

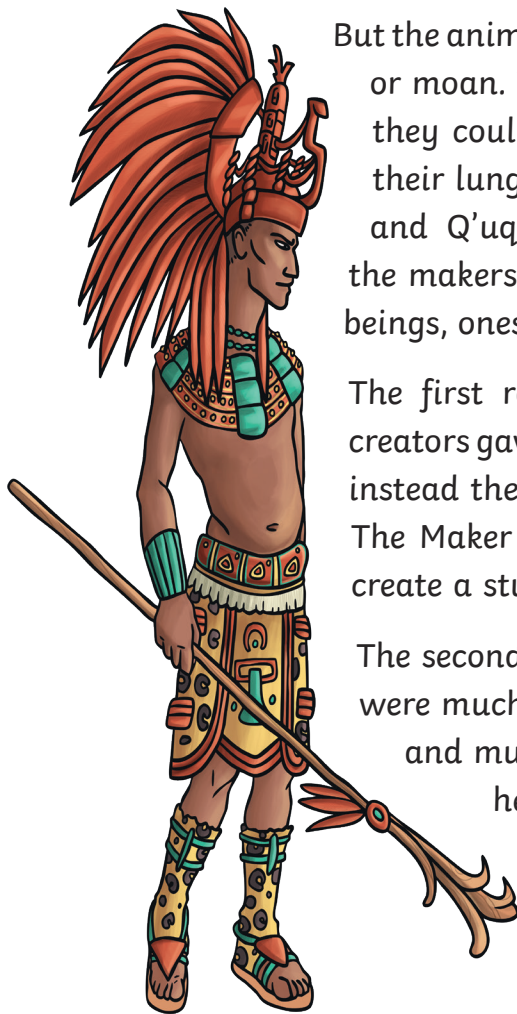
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Whatever they thought came into being. When they thought "Earth", land formed in the darkness. They thought of mountains and valleys, pine trees and sky. All of these things appeared the instant they thought them, and thus the Earth was formed.

Tepeu and Q'ujumatz decided that they needed beings there to look after their vast creation, and to praise their names as the creators. So they created deer and birds and panthers and serpents, all the creatures that roam the Earth today.

"Now praise us! Say our names!" commanded the creators.



But the animals could only roar or howl, bleat, bark, twitter or moan. They tried as hard as they could to speak, but they could not. They chirped and mewed at the top of their lungs until the noise was so deafening, that Tepeu and Q'ujumatz ordered them to stop. Disappointed, the makers agreed that they would have to create better beings, ones who would be able to worship them properly.

The first race of men were made from wet clay. The creators gave them life, and the first men tried to speak; but instead they crumbled apart soon after they were made. The Maker and the Feathered Spirit were determined to create a sturdier race of men.

The second race of men were carved from wood. These were much stronger and were able to walk and talk and multiply. But these men had no minds and their hearts were empty. They had no memories of their creation and when they spoke, their words were just as empty and meaningless. They could not praise their gods.

Tepeu and Q'ujumatz sent a great flood down to destroy them. They commanded the animals to attack the survivors and tear them to pieces. The few who managed to escape fled to the woods and became monkeys. The creators left them there as an example to the next race of men.

The Maker and the Feathered Spirit thought for a long time about how they should make the race of men they wanted. There seemed to be no perfect material to build them. Finally, some animals brought the gods a stack of white corn which grew on the far side of the Earth. Tepeu and Q'ujumatz ground this into a paste and from this formed four individual men.

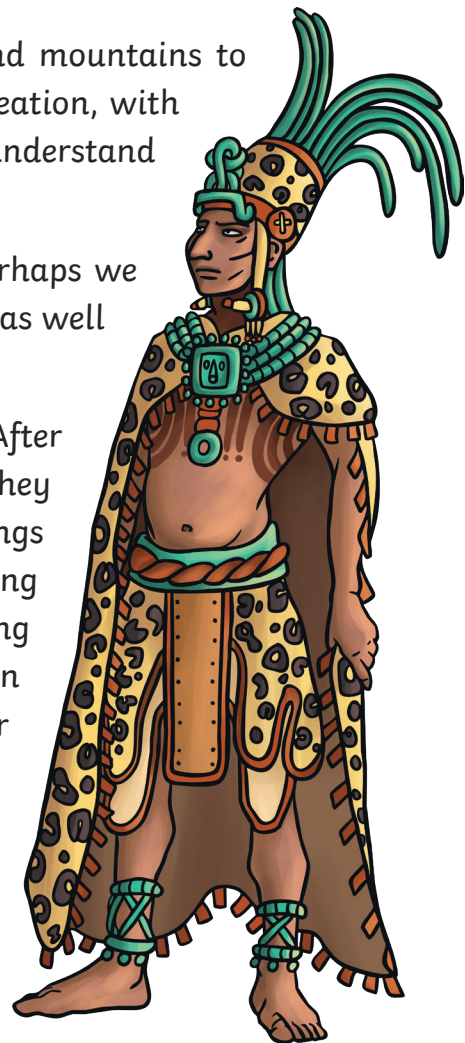
The new beings seemed perfect. They were sturdy enough to last and their minds were rich with thoughts and feelings. Their first act after their creation was to immediately worship Tepeu and Q'ujumatz, and thank them for their lives. Tepeu and Q'ujumatz were pleased. "What do you see?" they asked the corn men.

"We can see forever, through rocks and trees and mountains to the edges of the Earth. We can see your entire creation, with all of its animals and plants. We can see and understand everything!"

Tepeu and Q'ujumatz looked at each other, "Perhaps we made these beings too well... they should not see as well as WE do!"

The makers removed some of the men's vision. After that they could only see things close to them and they were no longer able to see through or above things that they should not. As such, their understanding of the world was weakened. But the men still sang their creators' praises and settled down to live on the new land. Tepeu and Q'ujumatz made four women to be their mates.

These eight men and women were the ancestors of all K'iche' men and women today. Even today their sight and understanding of the world is not perfect.



Questions

1. What are Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz also known as?

2. How did they make Earth? Tick **two**.

- They moulded it from clay
- They made it out of wood
- They thought of it and it appeared
- They made it out of corn paste

3. Draw lines to match the different creations and their features.

The first men	had minds full of thoughts.
The second men	had hearts that were empty.
The third men	crumbled apart.
The animals	could not speak.

4. Explain in your own words how the first and second set of men were similar or different.

5. How were monkeys created?

6. What did the two gods remove from the third set of men?

7. Why do you think they did this?

8. Who are the eight men and women said to be ancestors of?

9. Do you think the gods were kind? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

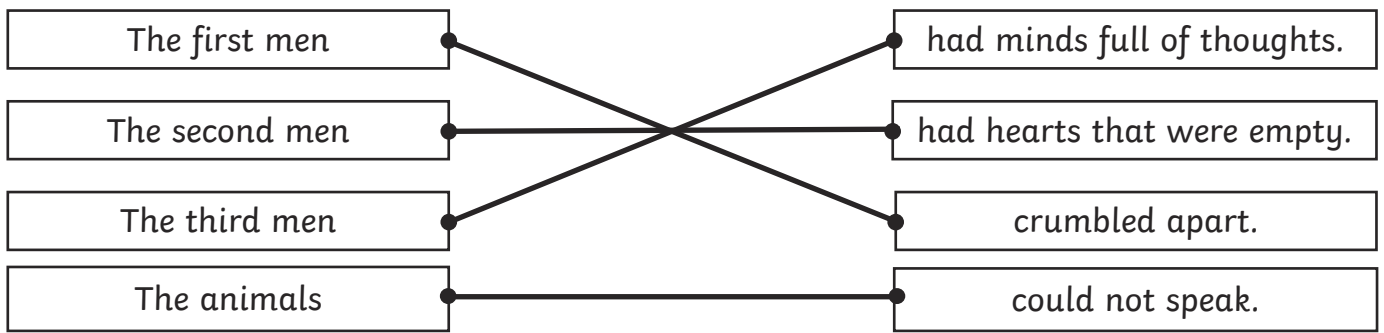
Answers

1. What are Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz also known as?
They are known as the Maker and the Feathered Spirit.
Also accept 'the creators'

2. How did they make Earth? Tick **one**.

- They moulded it from clay
- They made it out of wood
- They thought of it and it appeared**
- They made it out of corn paste

3. Draw lines to match the different creations and their features.



4. Explain in your own words how the first and second set of men were different.
 Give 3 differences.

Pupils own response, that lists the similarities and differences mentioned in the text, such as: The first men and second men were different because the first men were made from clay while the second men were made from wood. This made the second men stronger than the first men who crumbled when they tried to speak. The second set of men were able to speak, but their words were empty and meaningless.

5. How were monkeys created?

Monkeys were created by accident – they were the second set of men who survived the floods and the animals, they were kept alive as an example to the next set of men.

6. What did the two gods remove from the third set of men?

They removed some of their vision.

7. Why do you think they did this?

Pupil's own response, such as: I believe they did this because they wanted to be more powerful than the men on Earth, they did not like them being able to see everything they could see.

8. Who are the eight men and women said to be ancestors of?

They are said to be ancestors of all K'iche' men and women.

9. Do you think the gods were kind? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

Pupil's own response that refers to the text, such as:

No, I do not think that the gods were kind because even though they created the Earth and all of the animals, they only did it so they could be praised. They were also cruel as they destroyed the second set of men and also took back some of the third men's vision as they wanted to be more powerful than them.

Or

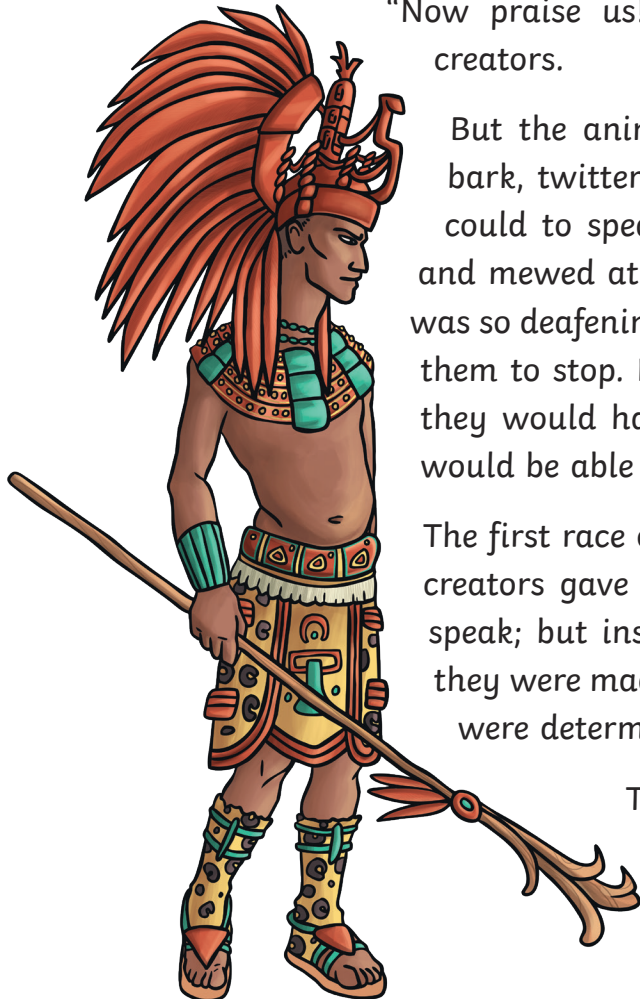
Yes, I do think the gods were kind because they created the Earth and all of the animals and beings, giving them life. All they asked for in return was to be recognised for creating their world. They also gave the four men mates so they would have company.

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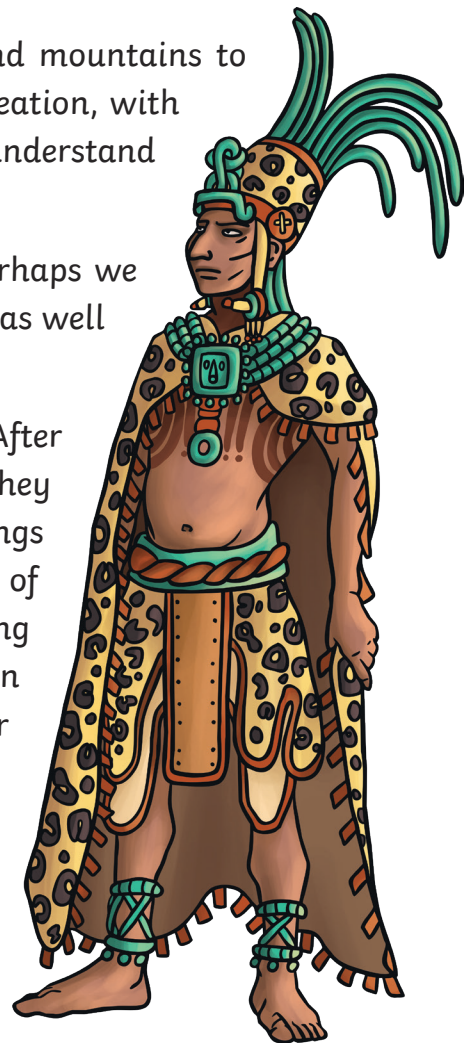
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Questions

1. How did the creators make Earth?

2. Read the following statements and tick **True** or **False**.

Statement	True	False
Tepeu was also known as the Feathered Spirit.		
The first set of men were made from wet clay.		
The gods wanted beings on Earth to praise them and nothing more.		
Before they created the world, everything was dark.		

3. Why were the gods disappointed with the animals?

4. Look at the **paragraph that begins 'The first men...'**.

Find and **copy** one word which means **stronger**.

5. How were the first and second set of men different? Explain your answer fully using evidence from the text.

6. What do you think might have happened to the third set of men if Tepeu and Q'uj'umatz had not been happy with them? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. 'Thus, their understanding of the world was weakened.'

The word **thus** is similar in meaning to... Tick **one**.

- additionally
- therefore
- and
- because

8. Why do you think the third set of men still praised the gods after they took away some of their vision?

9. Why do you think Tepeu and Q'ujumatz didn't want the beings to see as well as they do?

10. Do you think the gods were kind? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

Answers

1. How did the creators make Earth?

They thought of it and it came into being.

2. Read the following statements and tick **True** or **False**.

Statement	True	False
Tepeu was also known as the Feathered Spirit.	✓	
The first set of men were made from wet clay.	✓	
The gods wanted beings on Earth to praise them and nothing more.		✓
Before they created the world, everything was dark.	✓	

3. Why were the gods disappointed with the animals?

The gods were disappointed with the animals because they could not speak so they couldn't praise them as they had wanted.

4. Look at the **paragraph that begins 'The first men...'**.

Find and copy one word which means **stronger**.
hardier

5. How were the first and second set of men different? Explain your answer fully using evidence from the text.

Pupil's own response, that lists the similarities and differences mentioned in the text, such as: The first men and second men were different because the first men were made from clay while the second men were made from wood. This made the second men stronger than the first men who crumbled when they tried to speak. The second set of men were able to speak, but their words were empty and meaningless.

6. What do you think might have happened to the third set of men if Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz had not been happy with them? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that if Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz had not been happy with the third set of men, they would have destroyed them too. I think this because that's what they did with the second set of men.

7. 'Thus, their understanding of the world was weakened.'

The word **thus** is similar in meaning to... Tick **one**.

- additionally
- therefore**
- and
- because

8. Why do you think Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz didn't want the beings to see as well as they do?
Pupil's own response, such as: I think Tepeu and Q'uc'umatz didn't want the beings to see as well as them because they wanted to be more powerful than the beings they created. It could also be because they didn't want them to have the same understanding of the world as them.

9. Why do you think the third set of men still praised the gods after they took away some of their vision?

Pupil's own response, such as: I think the third set of men still praised the gods, even after they took away some of their vision, because they were grateful to them. The gods had given them life and created the Earth and the animals and they were grateful for those things.

10. Do you think the gods were kind? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

Pupil's own response that refers to the text, such as:

No, I do not think that the gods were kind because even though they created the Earth and all of the animals, they only did it so they could be praised. They were also cruel as they destroyed the second set of men, and also took back some of the third men's vision as they wanted to be more powerful than them.

Or

Yes, I do think the gods were kind because they created the Earth and all of the animals and beings, giving them life. All they asked for in return was to be recognised for creating their world. They also gave the four men mates so they would have company.