

PROJECT IDEAS

CITY STATES PROJECT

Several schools have selected the *Jaguar Stones Series* for their all-school readathon and celebrated the Maya world with a day of Maya themed lessons. Below are some of the ideas they have shared with us. You can see what one school did here: <https://www.jaguarstones.com/teachers/schoolprojects/mayaday.html>

Pyramid building:

Recreate one or more of the pyramids in the *Middleworld* book using textual evidence and/or our imagination. (Clues: Itzamna is based on Palenque, Ixchel is based on Chichen Itza, Chahk is based on Uxmal, Ah Pukuh is based on Tikal for architecture/Tulum for setting, and K'awiil is based on Topoxte.)

Mystery Jungle-scapes:

Some art is based on observation; some art is based on imagination. Use both to create your own mystery jungle-scapes.

Shadow puppets:

Create puppets based on Maya themes and the story of *Middleworld*.

Tortillas:

Cook with the staple of the ancient Maya diet: corn. Use Maseca Masa (available at many grocery stores) to hand make your own tortillas. Serve with salsa, guacamole and a typical Maya spicy chocolate drink.

Backstrap Looms:

Build a simple backstrap loom and weave cloth the way the Maya have for two thousand years. See how to build a simple loom: <http://bobs crafts.com/bobstuff/backstrp.htm>

Drama:

Rabinal Ach is an Ancient Mayan drama set a century before the arrival of the Spanish. A story of city-states, war, nobility, diplomacy, mysticism, and psychic journeys—still performed in the Guatemalan town of Rabinal today. Use Dennis Tedlock's excellent translation to recreate Maya theater. ISBN-13: 978-0195139754

Royal Jade Masks:

Cover a 3-D plastic face mask with torn green tissue-paper "tiles" and brush with decoupage solution to create a hard finish.

Dream Interpretation:

Dreams feature heavily in *Middleworld*. Dream interpretation is a part of many cultures. Consider some of our own dreams. Discuss where reality truly lies: in our experience or in our dreams.



Making Animal Totems:

Get out the clay and make modern versions of ancient Maya animal totems.

Did the Maya vanish?

People often say the Maya vanished, but we know that is not true. Explore what really happened to the Maya, the factors leading to what is known as the Maya collapse, the role of the Spanish Conquistadores and the status of modern Maya.

Max and the Real World:

Open discussion on the character of Max Murphy, centering on Max's relationships with his parents, Uncle Ted, Lola and the people in the village of Utsal. How did these relationships evolve through the course of the series?

Maya Mythology:

Read some ancient Maya myths (eg "Hero Twins & the Popul Vuh") and discuss. What do they tell us about the Maya? How do we respond to them today?

Cracking the Maya Code:

Show and discuss this excellent DVD documentary by eminent archaeologist Michael Coe, following the fascinating story of how archeologists unlocked the secrets of the Maya glyphs.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/mayacode/>

Play Bul:

Recreate the Ancient Maya warrior game of chance. Make your own pieces out of clay. For a simple description of the game and how to play see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bul_%28game%29

Broadcast News:

Research and prepare a news broadcast about the events and factors leading up to and through the Maya collapse. Videotape a mock TV program including interviews from: the king, nobles, farmers, soldiers, priests, etc.

Maya Codex:

Design and create a Maya codex (folding book). This could explain an event in Maya history, retell a myth such the story of the hero twins, be a an almanac of predictions based on astronomical observations, or a personal story. Simple directions can be found here: http://www.kidsgen.com/school_projects/mayan_codex.htm

To download a high resolution pdf version the Dresden Codex - the most complete of the three surviving Maya codices - click here (95.7 MB) http://www.famsi.org/mayawriting/codices/pdf/dresden_fors_schele_all.pdf