

Hanal Pixan Question Sheet

Using the web links provided, or any other sources available to you, find the answers to the following questions about “Hanal Pixan” – the Mayan version of Day of the Dead.

- 1) How long have people lived in the Yucatan?
- 2) When did the Mayan civilization flourish?
- 3) When did the civilization disappear?
- 4) How many Mayans are there today and where do they live?
- 5) Who is the most famous living Mayan today?
- 6) What does “Hanal Pixan” mean?
- 7) What is the social purpose of “Hanal Pixan?”
- 8) How did the Mayan think about time?
- 9) How did they envisage the earth and its place in the universe?
- 10) Where did the “Pixan” come from?
- 11) How did the Mayan attitude towards suicide differ from Christian views?
- 12) How did the Maya bury their dead? Was it the same for men and women?
- 13) According to the Maya, what happened to the souls of the departed?
- 14) Where did the Mayans bury their dead? Was it the same for rich and poor?
- 15) What did the Mayans do to the bodies of warriors, priests, and nobles?
- 16) What did the altar represent in the Mayan system of beliefs?
- 17) What objects were placed on the altar and what was their meaning?
- 18) How were Mayan beliefs transformed by the Spanish invaders?
- 19) How did the Spanish (Christian) concept of time differ from the Mayans’?
- 20) Why are candles not lit for the souls of the adults?
- 21) In “Hanal Pixan,” how long do the souls of the dead stay among the living?
- 22) What are “pib” and “mucbil pollo?”
- 23) What unusual burial custom is still practiced in some Mayan communities today, and what is the main reason for this?
- 24) What differences did you find between “Hanal Pixan” and Day of the Dead in other parts of Mexico?
- 25) What is your reaction to these different customs?