LA LLORONA
Read the story. Then answer the following questions.

1. What was the dashing young man that Maria saw ride into town?

2. What does the Spanish-English Dictionary say a “Ranchero” is?

3. How did Maria feel when the Ranchero treated her bad?

4. When was a time that you felt that way also?

5. In English, what do we call a person that has killed another person, like Maria?

6. What happens in the United States if a person kills another person?

7. What does La Llorona do that gives her this name?

8. What does “warning” mean?

9. What would you do if you saw La Llorona?
The Weeping Woman

(La Llorona)

by Joe Hayes

This is a story that the old ones have been telling to children for hundreds of years. It is a sad tale, but it lives strong in the memories of the people, and there are many who swear that it is true.

Long years ago in a humble little village there lived a fine looking girl named Maria. Some say she was the most beautiful girl in the world! And because she was so beautiful, Maria thought she was better than everyone else.

As Maria grew older, her beauty increased. And her pride in her beauty grew too. When she was a young woman, she would not even look at the young men from her village. They weren't good enough for her! "When I marry," Maria would say, "I will marry the most handsome man in the world."

And then one day, into Maria's village rode a man who seemed to be just the one she had been talking about. He was a dashing young ranchero, the son of a wealthy...
rancher from the southern plains. He could ride like a Comanche! In fact, if he owned a horse, and it grew tame, he would give it away and go rope a wild horse from the plains. He thought it wasn't manly to ride a horse if it wasn't half wild.

He was handsome! And he could play the guitar and sing beautifully. Maria made up her mind—that was, the man for her! She knew just the tricks to win his attention.

If the ranchero spoke when they met on the pathway, she would turn her head away. When he came to her house in the evening to play his guitar and serenade her, she wouldn't even come to the window. She refused all his costly gifts. The young man fell for her tricks. "That haughty girl, Maria, Maria!" he said to himself. "I know I can win her heart. I swear I'll marry that girl."

And so everything turned out as Maria planned. Before long, she and the ranchero became engaged and soon they were married. At first, things were fine. They had two children and they seemed to be a happy family together. But after a few years, the ranchero went back to the wild life of the prairies. He would leave town and be gone for months at a time. And when he returned home, it was only to visit his children. He seemed to care nothing for the beautiful Maria. He even talked of setting Maria aside and marrying a woman of his own wealthy class.
As proud as Maria was, of course she became very angry with the ranchero. She also began to feel anger toward her children, because he paid attention to them, but just ignored her.

One evening, as Maria was strolling with her two children on the shady pathway near the river, the ranchero came by in a carriage. An elegant lady sat on the seat beside him. He stopped and spoke to his children, but he didn't even look at Maria. He whipped the horses on up the street.

When she saw that, a terrible rage filled Maria, and it all turned against her children. And although it is sad to tell, the story says that in her anger Maria seized her two children and threw them into the river! But as they disappeared down the stream, she realized what she had done! She ran down the bank of the river, reaching out her arms to them. But they were long gone.

The next morning, a traveler brought word to the villagers that a beautiful woman lay dead on the bank of the river. That is where they found Maria, and they laid her to rest where she had fallen.

But the first night Maria was in the grave, the villagers heard the sound of crying down by the river. It was not the wind, it was La Llorona crying. "Where are my children?" And they saw a woman walking up and down the bank of the river,
dressed in a long white robe, the way they had dressed Maria for burial. On many a
dark night they saw her walk the river bank and cry for her children. And so they
no longer spoke of her as Maria. They called her La Llorona, the weeping woman.
And by that name she is known to this day. Children are warned not to go out in
the dark, for, La Llorona might snatch them and never return them.
LA LLORONA-a ghost story from Mexico
Read the story. Then answer the following questions.

1. What was the dashing young man that Maria saw ride into town?
   Ranchero
   This question is “Text-Explicit.” This question is designed to be a question to ease the student into the worksheet without being overwhelming. The answer is right in the text, and easily found.

2. What does the Spanish-English Dictionary say a “Ranchero” is?
   Rancher, similar to a farmer
   This question is “Text-Implicit.” This question is not directly included by the author, but encourages the student to read around the text to find the answer. This question requires the student uses the resources within the classroom. This question also allows the Spanish-speaking students to relate to a word from their own native language. The non-Spanish-speakers are then able to experience a bit of another language.

3. How did Maria feel when the Ranchero treated her bad?
   Angry, or relating synonyms.
   This question is “Text-Explicit.” The answer is easily found in the text. This question is used to prepare the student for the next question.

4. When was a time that you felt that way also?
   Answers will vary.
   This question is “Experience-based.” The students are able to look at the story and see the anger that La Llorona experienced. This question is designed to create a connection between the student and the story. They are able to express themselves and write down different things that make them angry.

5. In English, what do we call a person that has killed another person, like Maria?
   A murderer
   This question is Text-Implicit.” Never does the author refer to La Llorona as a murderer. The student is asked to look between the lines to tap into their prior knowledge of what vocabulary word would be appropriate to answer this question.
6. What happens in the United States if a person kills another person?
   Similar answers to “go to prison/jail” are acceptable.
   This question is “Experienced-Based.” This question requires the student to tap into their prior knowledge of the Judicial System of the United States. If there are difficulties with this question, it’s a great window to talk about a few basic things about America’s Judicial System.

7. What does La Llorona do that gives her this name?
   She cries/weeps.
   This question is “Text-Explicit.” It is right in the text what is implied by the name La Llorona, the weeping woman.

8. What does “warning” mean?
   Getting your attention to tell you to be careful
   This question is “Text-Implicit.” This is designed to increase the vocabulary of the student. The student can pick the meaning from the text. If the student gets stumped, they can use the resources in the classroom such as a dictionary to find the definition.

9. What would you do if you saw La Llorona?
   Answers will vary
   This question is “Experienced-based.” This story is a ghost story that originated from Mexico. There are ghost stories in many countries. This is an opportunity for the student to put themselves in a place where they would be forced to react to The Weeping Woman that mourns for her children. Allow the student to be creative.
Anticipation Guide

FREEDOMS
- First Amendment Rights
  - Freedom of religion, speech, press, peaceful assembly, and right to petition the government.

Statements prior to Discussion-
- I can go to church and pray to God today.
- I do not like war.
- I signed a petition to make abortion illegal.
- I read in the newspaper that many people don’t like President Bush.

Class/Small Group Discussion
What is freedom?
What “freedoms” do you have in the United States?
Are there freedoms you have in the United States that you or your family did not have in your native country?

Post-discussion
Teacher read-aloud from www.freedomforum.org, “The 1st Amendment Explained.”
The First Amendment Explained

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

What do the words of the First Amendment mean?

Freedom of religion
The First Amendment prevents the government from establishing an official religion. Citizens have freedom to attend a church, synagogue, temple or mosque of their choice — or not to attend at all. The First Amendment allows us to practice our religion the way we want to.

Freedom of speech
The First Amendment keeps the government from making laws that might stop us from saying what we think. People have the right to criticize the government and to share their opinions with others.

Freedom of the press
A free press means we can get information from many different sources. The government cannot control what is printed in newspapers and books, broadcast on TV or radio or offered online. Citizens can request time on television to respond to views with which they disagree; they may write letters to newspaper editors and hope those letters will be printed for others to see. They can pass out leaflets that give their opinions. They can have their own Web pages and offer their opinions to others through the many means made available by the Internet.

Freedom of assembly
Citizens can come together in public and private gatherings. They can join groups for political, religious, social or recreational purposes. By organizing to accomplish a common goal, citizens can spread their ideas more effectively.

Right to petition
“To petition the government for a redress of grievances” means that citizens can ask for changes in the government. They can do this by collecting signatures and sending them to their elected representatives; they can write, call or e-mail their elected representatives; they can support groups that lobby the government.
Anticipation Guide Rationale

For some ELL students, the simple laws of the United States can be confusing and foreign. Some countries have laws that differ much from America’s. However, for the ELL students that come from a country where their freedoms were jeopardized or threatened, the laws here are confusing.

The point of this activity is not to attempt explaining all of the laws of the United States. That would be overwhelming. The simple rights from the First Amendment are a great place to begin.

If some of the students came from countries with lots of freedom and rights for their citizens, this would be an experience where they can hear about the world outside of Lincoln and perhaps from the experiences of their fellow students. For the students that came from countries with limited freedom, they are given an opportunity to share with the class and the teacher how their country presently or formerly relates.

As residents in this new country, I believe it is essential that these students know their rights, so they are not taken advantage of. This activity is just the beginning of political awareness for ELL students.

The activity utilizes the Language Domains of Writing and Reading within the Social Studies Content-Area Standards.

This activity would be appropriate for ELL students in Level 3-5 proficiency in middle levels to high school.
KWL Chart

Before you begin your research, list details in the first two columns. Fill in the last column after completing your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Want to Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Learned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name ___________________________________________ Date _________________________
KWL Chart

Before you begin your research, list details in the first two columns. Fill in the last column after completing your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>What I Know</th>
<th>What I Want to Know</th>
<th>What I Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The First Amendment</td>
<td>I can believe in whatever religion I want.</td>
<td>Is it okay if I disagree with the government?</td>
<td>Freedom of religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is part of the Bill of Rights</td>
<td>Am I allowed to say or think whatever I want?</td>
<td>Freedom of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can I try to change the government?</td>
<td>Freedom of the press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom of assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Right to petition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graphic Organizer Rationale

Using a KWL Chart, is a great way for ELL students to organize their thoughts. Since they are constantly being stimulated with information, they need a way to categorize the information that they are receiving. There are three categories: What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned. In this case, the information they are learning is about the First Amendment.

Some students may know about a few of their freedoms, but they may not know the basics within the First Amendment. The goal in teaching the First Amendment is not to read off the entire First Amendment. It should go in steps over the course of days. However, the section that I have isolated can be accomplished in one class period.

The student is able to share what they already listed as knowing, question about what they want to know, and hopefully by the post-reading stage, will be able to include all of the isolated material into “What I Know” or “What I Learned.”

The activity utilizes the Language Domains of Writing and Reading within the Social Studies Content-Area Standards.

This activity was created for ELL students with a Level of proficiency of 3-5 within middle to high school level.
Concrete Poem

Make a your own CONCRETE POEM!
Concrete Poem

Make your own CONCRETE POEM!

Love takes me away like a balloon. It started flat, but now it's alive. If you break my heart, I hope you never let it go.
Concrete Poems

Materials:

Description:
Concrete poems are poems that place a higher importance on the word and letter arrangement as the poem itself. For example, if there is a poem about a popsicle, the words of the poem would form the shape of a popsicle.

After the Teacher Read-Aloud from A Poke in the I, the students will be able to pick a topic or object of their choice to create their own concrete poem about.

Objectives:
Listening and comprehending the Read-Aloud in English by the teacher
Following the directions to create a concrete poem of their own
Exercising the creativity of the students
Creating a poem in English with their prior knowledge of the vocabulary that they have learned already

Rationale:
I think that this activity is fun, educational, and interactive. The language domains that are most prominent in this activity are Listening and Writing. This activity could be appropriate for Level 2 or 3 proficiency ELL students in middle elementary levels to middle school. My only concern with using this activity with high school students is that it might seem childish. ELLs are not children, and should never be treated at that level. That is just something to keep an eye on it the activity’s presentation or adaptations. The student’s level of proficiency and their strength in writing will determine the composition of their concrete poem. The students should be able to access their previous vocabulary lists to help with remembering the words and their spellings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reign</td>
<td>To possess power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Something that has to get done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Invisible</td>
<td>Cannot be seen with the eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Determine</td>
<td>To be fixed on a certain decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Eager</td>
<td>Does not want to wait/excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Eldest</td>
<td>The oldest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Grove</td>
<td>A place with fruit trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Illuminate</td>
<td>To make brighter with light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Frighten</td>
<td>To make afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>Beneath the surface of the earth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Twelve Dancing Princesses

There was a king who had twelve beautiful daughters. They slept in twelve beds all in one room and when they went to bed, the doors were shut and locked up. However, every morning their shoes were found to be quite worn through as if they had been danced in all night. Nobody could find out how it happened, or where the princesses had been.

So the king made it known to all the land that if any person could discover the secret and find out where it was that the princesses danced in the night, he would have the one he liked best to take as his wife, and would be king after his death. But whoever tried and did not succeed, after three days and nights, they would be put to death.

A king's son soon came. He was well entertained, and in the evening was taken to the chamber next to the one where the princesses lay in their twelve beds. There he was to sit and watch where they went to dance; and, in order that nothing could happen without him hearing it, the door of his chamber was left open. But the king's son soon fell asleep; and when he awoke in the morning he found that the princesses had all been dancing, for the soles of their shoes were full of holes.

The same thing happened the second and third night and so the king ordered his head to be cut off. After him came several others; but they all had the same luck, and all lost their lives in the same way.

Now it happened that an old soldier, who had been wounded in battle and could fight no longer, passed through the country where this king reigned, and as he was travelling through a wood, he met an old woman, who asked him where he was going. 'I hardly know where I am going, or what I had better do,' said the soldier; 'but I think I would like to find out where it is that the princesses dance, and then in time I might be a king.'

'Well,' said the old woman, 'that is not a very hard task: only take care not to drink any of the wine which one of the princesses will bring to you in the evening; and as soon as she leaves you pretend to be fast asleep.'

Then she gave him a cloak, and said, 'As soon as you put that on you will become invisible, and you will then be able to follow the princesses wherever they go.' When the soldier heard all this good advice, he was determined to try his luck, so he went to the king, and said he was willing to undertake the task.

He was as well received as the others had been, and the king ordered fine royal robes to be given him; and when the evening came he was led to the outer chamber. Just as he was going to lie down, the eldest of the princesses brought him a cup of wine; but the soldier threw it all away secretly, taking care not to drink a drop. Then he laid himself down on his bed, and in a little while began to snore very loudly as if he was fast asleep.

When the twelve princesses heard this they laughed heartily; and the eldest said, 'This fellow too might have done a wiser thing than lose his life in this way!' Then they rose and opened their drawers and boxes, and took out all their fine clothes, and dressed themselves at the mirror, and skipped about as if they were eager to begin dancing.

But the youngest said, 'I don't know why it is, but while you are so happy I feel very uneasy; I am sure some mischance will befall us.'

'You simpleton,' said the eldest, 'you are always afraid; have you forgotten how many kings' sons have already watched in vain? And as for this soldier, even if I had not given him his sleeping draught, he would have slept soundly enough.'

When they were all ready, they went and looked at the soldier; but he snored on, and did not stir hand or foot: so they thought they were quite safe.
Then the eldest went up to her own bed and clapped her hands, and the bed sank into the floor and a trap-door flew open. The soldier saw them going down through the trap-door one after another, the eldest leading the way; and thinking he had no time to lose, he jumped up, put on the cloak which the old woman had given him, and followed them.

However, in the middle of the stairs he trod on the gown of the youngest princess, and she cried out to her sisters, 'All is not right; someone took hold of my gown.'

'You silly creature!' said the eldest, 'it is nothing but a nail in the wall.'

Down they all went, and at the bottom they found themselves in a most delightful grove of trees; and the leaves were all of silver, and glittered and sparkled beautifully. The soldier wished to take away some token of the place; so he broke off a little branch, and there came a loud noise from the tree. Then the youngest daughter said again, 'I am sure all is not right -- did not you hear that noise? That never happened before.'

But the eldest said, 'It is only our princes, who are shouting for joy at our approach.'

They came to another grove of trees, where all the leaves were of gold; and afterwards to a third, where the leaves were all glittering diamonds. And the soldier broke a branch from each; and every time there was a loud noise, which made the youngest sister tremble with fear. But the eldest still said it was only the princes, who were crying for joy.

They went on till they came to a great lake; and at the side of the lake there lay twelve little boats with twelve handsome princes in them, who seemed to be waiting there for the princesses.

One of the princesses went into each boat, and the soldier stepped into the same boat as the youngest. As they were rowing over the lake, the prince who was in the boat with the youngest princess and the soldier said, 'I do not know why it is, but though I am rowing with all my might we do not get on so fast as usual, and I am quite tired: the boat seems very heavy today.'

'It is only the heat of the weather,' said the princess, 'I am very warm, too.'

On the other side of the lake stood a fine, illuminated castle from which came the merry music of horns and trumpets. There they all landed, and went into the castle, and each prince danced with his princess; and the soldier, who was still invisible, danced with them too. When any of the princesses had a cup of wine set by her, he drank it all up, so that when she put the cup to her mouth it was empty. At this, too, the youngest sister was terribly frightened, but the eldest always silenced her.

They danced on till three o'clock in the morning, and then all their shoes were worn out, so that they were obliged to leave. The princes rowed them back again over the lake (but this time the soldier placed himself in the boat with the eldest princess); and on the opposite shore they took leave of each other, the princesses promising to come again the next night.

When they came to the stairs, the soldier ran on before the princesses, and laid himself down. And as the twelve, tired sisters slowly came up, they heard him snoring in his bed and they said, 'Now all is quite safe'. Then they undressed themselves, put away their fine clothes, pulled off their shoes, and went to bed.

In the morning the soldier said nothing about what had happened, but determined to see more of this strange adventure, and went again on the second and third nights. Everything happened just as before: the princesses danced till their shoes were worn to pieces, and then returned home. On the third night the soldier carried away one of the golden cups as a token of where he had been.

As soon as the time came when he was to declare the secret, he was taken before the king with the three branches and the golden cup; and the twelve princesses stood listening behind the door to hear what he would say.

The king asked him. 'Where do my twelve daughters dance at night?'

The soldier answered, 'With twelve princes in a castle underground.' And then he told the king all that had happened, and showed him the three branches and the golden cup which he had brought with him.

The king called for the princesses, and asked them whether what the soldier said was true and when they saw that they were discovered, and that it was of no use to deny what had happened, they confessed it all.

So the king asked the soldier which of the princesses he would choose for his wife; and he answered, 'I am not very young, so I will have the eldest.' -- and they were married that very day, and the soldier was chosen to be the king's heir.
Vocabulary List Rationale

To implement a list of vocabulary words, I used the story of “The 12 Dancing Princesses.” Ten vocabulary words within the story have been highlighted to make them stand out better for the readers. As the class reads the story, we will explore each word more as we come to them.

The activity would be appropriate for Level 3-5 proficiency in middle to high school levels. The Language Domains that this activity exercises are Reading and Listening when a Read-Aloud is present.
Vocabulary Reinforced Activity
Verbal and Visual Word Association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invisible</th>
<th>Germs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannot see</td>
<td>Visible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verbal and Visual Word Association Rationale

This type of activity is great for ELL students. All in the same activity the student is able to see the vocab word, its definition, its opposite, and something that they can relate to. The personal experience that the student uses for this activity will ideally help them to remember the word and its definition and context.

This activity can be for students at a Level of Proficiency 1-5 in upper elementary to middle level depending on the difficulty of the word. The Language Domains that would be targeted for this activity are Writing. The purpose of this activity is not necessarily to hit a standard or a particular Language Domain. It’s designed to create an vehicle for retention. The student might retain the word by remembering it’s definition, its example/personal association, or “what it’s not.” The students could hit tons of Standards by an activity involving vocab, but if they do not retain it, it is pointless.
WORD SEARCH

Choose the correct vocabulary word from the vocab list that matches the definition given. Then find the correct vocabulary word in the Word Search.

Definitions:
*A place with fruit trees-
*To possess power-
*Does not want to wait/excited-
*To make afraid-
*The oldest-
*To be fixed on a certain decision-
*Beneath the surface of the earth-
*Something that has to get done-
*Cannot be seen with the eyes-
*To make brighter with light-
Word Search Rationale

All students want learning to feel like fun. Word Searches are always fun. I have created the word search without the vocabulary words. The only aid they have is the definition of the word. Once they match the definition to one of their ten vocabulary words, they can then search for the word.

This activity gets the kids looking at the definition and choosing a word based only on that given definition. It practices vocabulary retention.

The activity would be appropriate with upper elementary to high school level. Any Level of Proficiency from 1-5 would be appropriate for a Word Search depending on their level of difficulty. For this set of vocabulary words in particular, a Level 3 would be appropriate.
Maya Mystery Internet Activity

http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngexplorer/0709/articles/mainarticle.html

Read the online article. Then answer the questions.

How long have the Mayans lived in the Central American Jungle?

The Mayans from Cancuen left their home. Why do people today leave their home or country?

What do you think might have happened to the Mayans? Was it a volcano, a sickness, or did dinosaurs eat them?

What is an artifact?

The invaders went to Cancuen and made the Mayans leave. Have you heard of other invaders that made people leave their country or city in other countries?

Where is Central America on this map?
The author imagined in his mind what life was like for the Mayans. Write 3 sentences about how you imagine the Mayans 3,000 years ago.

What is a drought?

How did the Mayans live? Give examples from the article.

What did the author tell you about the Mayans that you had not known before?

Did the archaeologist find the answer to what happened to the Mayans? Why or why not?
Maya Mystery

En Español

Journey to Central America to explore one of history's great puzzles.

A lost world lies hidden in the rain forests of Central America. Hundreds of cities and towns stand among the trees. Once they were home to millions of Native Americans known as the Maya.

The Maya have lived in the Central American jungle for 3,000 years. They built an incredible civilization. It was at its peak for about 750 years. The peak ended about 1,000 years ago.

Today the Maya's cities are empty. Trees and vines embrace the old buildings. Many once proud temples and palaces are now ruins.

I walked through some of these places, and it was a strange experience. The world seemed to belong to the animals. Parrots cackled in the trees. Howler monkeys roared like lions and climbed among the vines. Jaguars prowled the ruins.

What happened to the Maya? Why did they flee their beautiful cities? Archaeologists have been asking these questions for years.

In Search of Answers

For years, scientists thought some disaster must have hit the Maya. Perhaps a volcano erupted, or an earthquake shook the ground. Maybe an epidemic tore through the population.

Recently, archaeologists have studied the Maya in many new ways. They don't just look at ruins and artifacts. A big breakthrough was learning to read Maya writing.

Archaeologists also look at layers of dirt in lake bottoms to see how the land has changed. They learn about rain by studying tree rings. They even dig through the Maya's trash.

All this work has given scientists new ideas. They now think the Maya faced many different problems. A big one was that the Maya world probably had too many people. That likely put a strain on the environment.

To explore what happened to the Maya, National Geographic sent me to Central America. I visited Maya cities and talked to archaeologists who are studying them.

Odd Invasion

One fiercely hot day, I stood on a riverbank near the ruins of Cancuen. It was a thriving city. Thousands of Maya lived there. Rich people from other cities likely came for vacation.

That all changed 1,200 years ago. Invaders came suddenly, probably by canoe. I pictured them as I gazed at the river. In my mind, I saw their grim faces and sharp spears. The invaders battled with soldiers at the river. Then they headed into town.

I followed the invaders' path. It led to an amazing palace. It had bedrooms, a gigantic kitchen, a workshop for making jade jewelry, and more. Stone monuments dotted the grounds.

In front of the palace, I saw the ruins of a large pool. It was lined with red tiles. The pool once held drinking water for the city. Then it became a tomb.

The invaders, you see, killed the city's leaders. They threw the bodies into the water. They killed the king and queen too and buried them nearby.

And then? The invaders left. They took nothing of value. No one knows who they were, what they wanted, or where they went.

The fall of Cancuen was sudden and terrifying. The city's people were so scared that they fled into the rain forest. Ever since then, the reason for the city's odd end has been a puzzle for archaeologists.

Leaving Town

I learned a different story in another place that I visited. Its name is Tikal. Tikal was one of the greatest Maya cities. Some 55,000 people lived there 1,300 years ago. The city boasted roughly 3,000 major buildings.

Tikal remained a lively city for decades after Cancuen fell. Yet its people then left too. Why?

Archaeologists think Tikal suffered a drought, or lack of rain. That made it hard to grow corn, beans, squash, and other foods. Warfare may also have weakened Tikal. The people of Tikal fought bloody battles with neighboring cities.

That's not all. Drought and war probably shook the people's faith in their king. The
Maya thought of their rulers as gods. When the king couldn’t bring rain or victory, though, people may have stopped listening to him. Their community then fell apart.

Wandering among the pyramids and temples at Tikal, I imagined the people living there in the city’s last days. I could picture them—hungry, tired, scared, and fleeing forever. Like the Maya in many places in the rain forests of Central America, they left behind a great city and a great mystery.

Maya Mystery Internet Activity
Read the article. Then answer the questions.

How long have the Mayans lived in the Central American Jungle?
3,000
This question is “Right There.” This is a none threatening question to start the worksheet. It gets them thinking about the longevity of the Mayan existence.

The Mayans from Cancuen left their home. Why do people today leave their home or country?

Answers may include, but are not limited to religions persecution, political persecution, better life, education, etc.

This question is “On Your Own.” This question invited the students to look at similar situations that they might have come from. Each one of the students’ families has a reason to why they left their country to come to the United States. NOTE-Plyler v. Doe. Never should a teacher provoke a student to disclose their legal status.

What do you think might have happened to the Mayans? Was it a volcano, a sickness, or did dinosaurs eat them?

I think that the gods were Mayan gods were mad at them and killed them all.

This question is an “Author and You.” The author gives the reader an idea of some of the theories for the end of the Mayans. The author does not give just one theory, so this provokes students to think for themselves. This question is to provoke the logical ideas of the students.

Click on “artifact” and write the definition.

artifact: something made by humans

This question is a “Right There.” This question challenges the students to use hyperlinks that will lead to more information, in this case the definition of artifact. Some of the language in the article used is specific to history related topics. Having the option of defining some of those words right on the page, is a great tool for the ELL students.

The invaders went to Cancuen and made the Mayans leave. Have you heard of other invaders that made people leave their country or city?

Answers may include, but are not limited to Americans relocating Native Americans and the controversy with Pakistan and Israel, ect.

This question is an “On Your Own.” This question provokes the students to look at the world around them and the relevant situations. Some of the students may relate to these situations.
Where is Central America on this map?

The author imagined in his mind what life was like for the Mayans. Write 3 sentences about how you imagine the Mayans 3,000 years ago.

Answers will vary.

This question is an “Author and You.” This question is designed to give students the freedom to look back in time and write how they think that the Mayans lived in their own words. There information within the article that gives the students an idea of how they lived.

What is a drought?

Lack of rain

This question is a “Right There.” The definition of drought is right there in the text. Today, drought mainly affects farmers. Thousands of years ago, a drought could cause many deaths due to poor crop outcome, and lack of wild game because of scarcity of present water. Their way of life was controlled by nature. By understanding the meaning of drought, the students may better see the difference of needs between worlds.

How did the Mayans live? Give 2 examples from the article.

Answers may include, but are not limited to overpopulated, battled with sharp spears, and surrounded by the rainforest, ect.

This question is “Author and You.” This question is to be used by the teacher as a sort of self-assessment made by the student. Ideally, students will write in their own words what they had not already known about the “Maya Mystery.” As the teacher, I want to know if they have learned any new information.
What did the author tell you about the Mayans that you had not known before?

*Answers will vary.*

This question is “Author and You.” This question is to be used by the teacher as a sort of self-assessment made by the student. Ideally, students will write in their own words what they had not already known about the “Maya Mystery.” As the teacher, I want to know if they have learned any new information.

Did the archaeologist find the answer to what happened to the Mayans?
Why or why not? Use examples from the article.

*Yes or no. Explanation supported by the text.*

This question is a “Put It Together.” Many people use theories for answers. Does the student think that there needs to be more evidence? Is just an idea with a little evidence enough?