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**All about the Maya**

Use information found in the [Ancient Maya handout](https://www.nga.gov/kids/mayakids.pdf) or online at the [Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya](http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2004/maya/lifeatcourt.htm) to gather information to answer the questions below. Discuss your answers with a partner or a small group of students. Be prepared to discuss your thoughts in class.

1. Identify the names of five great Maya cities. Describe what a traditional Maya city looked like.
2. Identify three complex achievements of the Maya.
3. What years are considered the peak years of the Maya civilization? How many Maya are living today and where do they live?
4. Describe the government system of the Ancient Maya.
5. How do the hierarchy and interactions of kings, queens, and courtiers compare with those of government officials today?
6. What symbols of power are shown in the art of the Maya? What symbols of power do we have today?
7. Look at the cylinder with the court scene. What evidence is shown on the cylinder to indicate the wealth and status of the man pictured? What are some of the outward signs of wealth and good living for modern people?
8. Who are the principal Maya gods? What roles did maize and cacao play in the religious life of the Maya?
9. What does the figure of the maize god reveal about life in the court?
10. What were some of the features of physical beauty for men and women of the Maya court?
11. How is the maize (corn) growing season related to Maya life?
12. What was the “ball game”? How was the game connected to the Maya religion?
13. What is the Popol Vuh? According to it, who were the Hero Twins?
14. What role did women play in Maya society? What does the art tell us about the role of women compared to the roles of women in our society today?
15. Look at the carving of the queen drawing the thorned rope through her tongue? What did this represent? Do you believe that suffering and sacrifice must always precede success and good fortune? Why or why not?
16. Describe war in the Maya culture. Look at the pieces of art that show Maya warfare and captive prisoners. How were the reasons for going to war similar to or different from those used by modern leaders?
17. What is a theory for the collapse of the Maya civilization?
18. By looking at the art of the Maya, what seems to be important in their lives?