

The Nazca Lines

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Have you heard of the Nazca Lines?
If yes, what are they? If no, what do you think they are, based on the picture?
2. Where are the Nazca Lines located?
If you don't know, guess!
3. What types of instruments and equipment did people use to make art 2,000 years ago?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. wonder | a) a large drawing on the ground |
| _____ 2. geoglyph | b) impractical, unlikely |
| _____ 3. gravel | c) a person who studies people and culture |
| _____ 4. expose | d) to cut or carve into a surface |
| _____ 5. depict | e) able to be seen |
| _____ 6. far-fetched | f) a pattern of stars |
| _____ 7. visible | g) to keep in a protected form |
| _____ 8. anthropologist | h) to represent in the form of a drawing or description |
| _____ 9. etch | i) to reveal something that is usually covered |
| _____ 10. constellation | j) something mysterious and amazing |
| _____ 11. preserve | k) small rocks or pebbles |
| _____ 12. erosion | l) the gradual wearing away of the earth's surface |

Reading

1. The Nazca Lines are a mysterious **wonder** of **geoglyphs** in the Nazca desert in Peru. They are believed to be the artwork of the Nazca Indians who lived in the area between 200 BC and AD 600. The Nazca Lines extend for about 311 square miles (500 square kilometers).
2. To create their massive line drawings, the Nazcas made shallow trenches in the desert. They removed the top surface of red **gravel** and **exposed** the white earth below to create a color contrast. The Nazcas likely used poles, ropes, and lots of manpower to create the geoglyphs.
3. There are 70 creatures **depicted** in the Nazca Lines, including a spider, a monkey, a dog, and a hummingbird. The largest creature is a giant pelican that stretches about 919 feet (280 meters) long. There are also humans, plants, and countless straight lines that crisscross the desert. Similar designs can also be found in ancient Nazca pottery.
4. One of the great mysteries surrounding the Nazca Lines is that they are only truly **visible** from the air. While some lines can be seen from nearby foothills and a nearby watchtower, you have to go much higher up to see what the lines form. The Nazca artists most likely never saw their finished designs.
5. There are several theories about the purpose of the Nazca Lines. Some are **far-fetched** theories, while others make sense. **Anthropologists**, spiritual leaders, and even mathematicians have come up with ideas over the years. Some people think the lines were sacred walking paths with messages to God. Others think they were **etched** by gods or even aliens. Many believe the lines were giant calendars or maps based on **constellations** and seasons. The lines may also have been used to indicate water supplies.
6. The Nazca Lines have been **preserved** for thousands of years because the area gets almost no wind or rain. This type of weather results in a lack of **erosion**. In 1995, the Nazca Lines were named a World Heritage Site.

Maria Reiche was a German mathematician and archaeologist. She dedicated her life to researching the Nazca Lines, and was buried near them in 1995.

Comprehension

A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information.

- _____ 1. The same people who built the pyramids built the Nazca Lines.
- _____ 2. All of the Nazca Lines are animals, such as insects and birds.
- _____ 3. Other Nazca artifacts have similar designs to those found in the Nazca Lines.
- _____ 4. The best way to see the Nazca Lines is to take a flight over Peru.
- _____ 5. Nobody knows for sure how or why the Nazca Indians made these lines.
- _____ 6. The weather in the Nazca desert is dry and windy.

B. Ask and Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.

Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

- 1. What is a geoglyph?
- 2. According to the reading, what was probably used to make the Nazca Lines?
- 3. Why can't you properly see the Nazca Lines from the ground?
- 4. What types of images are depicted in the Nazca Lines?
- 5. What do some people think the Nazca Lines were for?
Describe a few theories.
- 6. How have the Nazca Lines been preserved so well for so long?

Vocabulary Review

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

1. The lines depict several animals, including birds and fish.
a) follow
b) find
c) show
2. The homeless man was exposed to the severe cold and wind.
a) killed
b) upset
c) unprotected
3. The stars are not visible to the naked eye.
a) microscopic
b) twinkling
c) viewable
4. The boy fell on the gravel and hurt his knee.
a) hilltop
b) pebbles
c) ground
5. Ancient people used the constellations to form their beliefs.
a) star patterns
b) religions
c) pathways
6. You can preserve the apple's color by squirting lemon on it.
a) detect
b) maintain
c) change
7. The extreme weather is causing the surface of the earth to erode.
a) wear away
b) melt
c) disappear
8. I want to be an anthropologist when I'm older.
a) professor
b) social scientist
c) mathematician

Group Assignment

OUR NAZCA LINE THEORY

Work together in small groups to come up with your own Nazca Line theory. The theory doesn't have to be realistic! It can be "far-fetched." Have fun!

Present your theory to the class. Try to respond to your classmate's questions and doubts. Which group has the most believable theory?

Questions to Answer:

1. Who created the Nazca lines?
2. How long ago were they made?
3. How were the designs made?
4. What was the purpose of those lines?
5. How did the artists view their own work?