

**ALL QUESTIONS WORTH 4 POINTS****THE OPOSSUM BRINGS FIRE**

The Mazatec people live in the Oaxaca mountains of Mexico. They are known for a drink that makes people fall asleep, which is prepared from fermented fruit. The Mazatec understood how important fire was for their lives. Here is how they explained how they came to know fire.

A long time ago, the Mazatec worshipped the most powerful animals such as the snake, the panther, the alligator, the eagle, but they also worshipped a god who used to put wood into the fire of the sun so that it couldn't be put out.

The Mazatecs believed that once an opossum named Tlacuache ruled with kindness and wisdom over humans and animals. At that time life was very hard for humans because they did not have the fire. So, they asked the Great Opossum, King Tlacuache, to bring them the fire.



The king prepared a sleeping drink and, riding an eagle, went to offer it to the god who used to put wood in the fire of the sun. Being thirsty, the god drank it and soon fell asleep. Tlacuache knew that the god would wake up soon and would not allow him to bring fire for people. He looked for a stick to light it, but not finding it, he pulled his fluffy tail into the fire. With his tail in flames, Tlacuache brought people the fire.

When the god woke up, he wanted to put wood in the fire of the sun. Then he noticed, down there – on earth, fires burning in people's houses. Confused and angry, he couldn't understand how it was possible for people to have fire. Then he remembered of Tlacuache's visit and everything became very clear.

So, the god went to punish Tlacuache. Feeling the danger, the opossum pretended to be dead. As he was lying there on the ground, staying still, having the tail burned, with no hair on it, the god felt pity for him so he left, considering that Tlacuache had received his punishment. When King Tlacuache saw the god leaving, he realized that the danger had passed. Since then, opossums have hairless tails.



The opossum is a nocturnal animal, which lives in trees. He can reach the size of a house cat. It eats fruits, pollen, insects, frogs and other small animals. When threatened or harmed, the opossum has a strange habit of pretending to be dead and to give out a foul-smelling fluid.

*An opossum carrying its babies*

**1. Where do the Mazatecs live?**

- A) In Mexico                      B) In China                      C) In France  
D) In Russia                      E) In USA

**2. The Mazatecs prepare a drink which ...**

- A) makes you feel better      B) makes you fall asleep      C) heals you  
D) poisons you                  E) makes you sick

**3. The ancient Mazatecs believed that the fire in the sun never goes out, because ...**

- A) there are atomic explosions within the sun  
B) the sun is very big  
C) an opossum lights it every morning  
D) the sun is made of wood  
E) a god keeps it burning

**4. Before knowing how to use fire, people could not ...**

- A) eat raw meat                  B) eat fruit and vegetables      C) fry or boil meat  
D) make tools                      E) hunt

**5. King Tlacuache was ...**

- A) an opossum                      B) a snake                      C) a panther  
D) a brave man                      E) an eagle

**6. People went to King Tlacuache and asked him to bring them the fire, because ...**

- A) they didn't have wood for the fire  
B) their fire was put out  
C) they needed weapons  
D) their lives were very hard  
E) they wanted to play with it

**7. According to the old Mazatecs, who brought fire to the people?**

- A) god of Sun                      B) Tlacuache                      C) The Mexican people  
D) The Sun                      E) The bird

**8. When the god saw people using the fire, he ...**

- A) got mad                      B) was happy                      C) laughed  
D) put woods into the fire      E) started crying

**9. The opossum doesn't eat ...**

- A) pollen                      B) crocodiles                      C) insects  
D) fruits                      E) frogs

**10. According to this story, Tlacuache ...**

- A) was brave  
B) didn't have courage  
C) was selfish  
D) didn't care for his people  
E) had a short tail

**11. Look at picture 2. How many opossums are there?**

- A) 5                      B) 6                      C) 7  
D) 8                      E) 9

**12. Opossums search for food ...**

- A) at night                      B) during the day                      C) in the morning  
D) at noon                      E) on a sunny day

**13. How does an opossum get rid of his enemies?**

- A) He bites them  
B) He uses a sharp stick  
C) He throws fire on them  
D) He pretends to be dead  
E) He plays with them

In nature, people have most often encountered fire caused by lightning. People, like animals, were afraid of fire. Before they knew how to use it, they ate raw roots or meat; they were suffering from cold, because they were not warming themselves from the fire, and they were suffering from fear, because they could not drive away wild animals with the help of flames.

Later, out of curiosity, people approached the fire, they learned how to use it, to maintain it, and finally to produce it by smashing 2 stones or rubbing wood. People have been using fire for at least 125,000 years.

At first, people used fire to warm up, to prepare their food, to make light at night and to protect themselves from animals. Six thousand years ago, by the use of fire, people began to process metals, to make tools, weapons, ornaments, clay or glass pots. To make light, they used torches, candles and oil lamps.

In modern era, people invented trains, ships, cars using the energy obtained by burning wood, coal, oil, and gas. To produce electricity, mankind today burns huge amounts of coal, oil or gas. Billions of electrical appliances: light bulbs, computers, cars, household appliances, industrial equipment use electricity. These massive burns have disturbed the balance of nature. Hurricanes and devastating fires occur more and more often and endanger the lives of humans, animals and plants. **We've already burned too much oil, gas and forests!** Unfortunately, people have used fire in wars to make weapons for destroying cities and killing other people.



The first locomotives and ships used the power of steam. A stoker put coal into the engine combustion chamber. Gradually, locomotives have got bigger and bigger. For example, in America, the biggest steam locomotive the *Big Boy* was consuming several tons of coal and water per hour.



A simple spark can cause devastating fires. To avoid them, follow these rules:

- **Do not play with lighters, candles or matches!**
- **Do not play around the stove!**
- **Do not pull-on sockets or cables or insert objects into the socket!**
- **Use household appliances only in the presence of an adult!**
- **Do not open the electrical panel!**



**14. With the help of fire, people could ...**

- A) dwell in caves                      B) cook food                      C) climb trees  
D) eat fruits                              E) grow vegetables

**15. In nature, people first encountered the fire caused by ...**

- A) floods                                  B) thunders                      C) wild animals  
D) snow                                    E) lightning

**16. People could make fire by ...**

- A) putting wood in the sun    B) heating water in the sun    C) rubbing pieces of wood  
D) rubbing bones                      E) rubbing hands

**17. Ancient people thought that fire was brought from ...**

- A) water                                  B) underground world            C) forest  
D) sky                                      E) mountains

**18. The locomotives and ships in the picture have steam engines. The water is turned into steam by ...**

- A) using electricity  
B) burning coal and wood  
C) burning gas  
D) using solar energy  
E) throwing wood in water

**19. A stoker's job is to ...**

- A) keep the fire burning in the combustion chamber  
B) drive the locomotive  
C) check the wheels  
D) light the oil lamps  
E) cook food for passengers

**20. People produce electricity by burning ...**

- A) glass
- B) coal
- C) metals
- D) clay
- E) paper

**21. The balance of nature is endangered because of ...**

- A) burning candles at homes
- B) burning coal, oil and natural gas
- C) breeding whales and sharks
- D) planting trees
- E) using solar batteries

**22. A fire can be caused by ...**

- A) a spark produced by an electrical appliance
- B) heavy rains
- C) wild animals
- D) polluting forests
- E) fire bugs

**23. In order not to cause a fire, children are not allowed to ...**

- A) burn paper
- B) run fast
- C) play with wooden toys
- D) read books about fires
- E) stay home alone

**24. Who puts out a fire?**

- A) the wild animals
- B) the hunters
- C) the postmen
- D) the nurses
- E) the firefighters

