

Name:

Tree Girl
Pre-Reading Activity
Guatemala

In order to understand some of the events or what motivates characters in *Tree Girl*, it is important to uncover the history of Guatemala—the main setting of the novel. Please read the handout and answer all questions thoroughly.

1. What year did the Spanish conquer and colonize Guatemala?
2. What is the name given to the people who created one of the most complex societies in the Americas?
3. In spite of their illustrious past, in recent history the members of indigenous groups have often been the victims of _____, _____, _____, and _____, especially during the violent civil war that lasted for more than thirty years in Guatemala.
4. In 1954, why did troops trained by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency overthrow Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, Guatemala's democratically-elected president?
5. What American company contributed to the political turmoil? Why did this company contribute to the coup?
6. What happened in 1962?
7. What did the Guatemalan government do from 1963-67 to respond to guerilla threats?
8. In what year did the first massacre of civilians occur? How many documented massacres?

9. From 1966-74 government troops resorted to what actions? Who specifically was targeted?

10. In the 1970's, what forms in response to increased state repression?

11. What did the Guatemalan government do under the National Security and Development Plan of 1982? Which communities were targeted?

12. Where did the people fleeing from the government try to go?

13. What was approved in 1985? What were the benefits? What were the negative effects?

14. Why did rural Guatemalans join paramilitary groups or guerillas?

15. Why did Rigoberta Menchu Tum receive the Nobel Prize?

16. When was the Accord for Firm and Lasting Peace signed?

17. From 1954-90 what did the United States provide the various administrations that helped them come to power?

18. The Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) determined that _____ people were victims of arbitrary execution while _____ were victims of forced disappearance..

19. What is the Commissions estimate for the number of people who died in the civil wars?

20. What is the *Memory of Silence*?

21. What is happening in Guatemala right now?