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My name is Rosa, and I am an exchange student from Honduras. My teacher asked me to tell the class about my home. I chose Copán, because its history and its birds belong together.



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Copán is in western Honduras, close to the border with Guatemala. More than a thousand years ago, it was a great Maya city. In 1980, it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site, so people around the world now help to protect it.



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The most famous place in Copán is the Hieroglyphic Stairway. Maya carvers covered its stone steps with more than a thousand glyphs. It is the longest Maya text that we know. Reading it is like opening a history book made of stone.



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Macaws mattered to the Maya of Copán. Carvers shaped macaw heads for the ball court, and the name of the city’s first ruler includes the word for macaw. These birds were part of the city’s identity.



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Scarlet macaws nest in holes high in tall trees. A female usually lays two to four eggs, and the chicks hatch blind and without feathers. Fruit and nuts are the main foods of these birds, and they can live for decades.



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Scarlet macaws almost disappeared from the valley. Then people began to build nests, watch the chicks and teach visitors. Now macaws fly over Copán again. My report has one question for you: what is worth protecting where you live?

Questions for Rosa’s Copán Report

Read the story together first. Use the page prompts and the questions after reading. Answers are below the dotted line: fold them under or cover them while reading.

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Talk together: Why did Rosa choose Copán?

Page 2

Talk together: Where is Copán?

Page 3

Talk together: What makes the stairway special?

Page 4

Talk together: How do we know macaws mattered?

Page 5

Talk together: What do scarlet macaws eat?

Page 6

Talk together: What is Rosa’s question for the class?

After reading 1

What covers the steps of the Hieroglyphic Stairway?

After reading 2

How did people help the macaws return?

After reading 3

Why are history and birds linked at Copán?

Answers (fold under before reading)

After reading 1: More than a thousand carved glyphs.

After reading 2: They built nests, watched the chicks and taught visitors.

After reading 3: The Maya carved macaws and valued them, and macaws live in the valley today.

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