

Name _____

Date _____



Rigoberta Menchú Tum

Rigoberta Menchú Tum was born in 1959.
More specifically, she was born on January 9th.
Her family is Mayan, more specifically K'iche—
An Indigenous group of people from the midwestern range
In the highlands of Guatemala. Rigoberta saw no problem
When it was time to help her family and work on the farm.
She participated in activism work with her father
Vicente, advocating for rights of Indigenous farmers,
Helping protect their land from being taken away
By wealthy landowners who saw all of the profits they could make.
Her work with Indigenous farmers made headlines.
But at the time in Guatemala, she was surrounded by violence
And discrimination
During the Guatemalan Civil War that swept her nation—started in 1960
And ended in 1996.
Rigoberta was wise and realized it didn't make any sense.
During the war, over 200,000 people were killed;
So many Mayan lives that were lost on the fields.
The government associated the Maya with guerrilla groups,
Attacked over 600 communities and villages, too.
Menchú lost her mother, father, and brother
While condemning government-led cruelty and injustices.
As a result, she fled out to Mexico
With other Mayans who were displaced during the civil war era.
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, she won the Nobel Peace Prize in '92
Since peace was something that she always pursued,
Inspires people to work toward peace, too.

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Menchú didn't stop her efforts to fight for peace.
After leaving Guatemala, she continued to bring
More attention to the war, human rights violations,
And the Indigenous people who were affected.
She joined and organized efforts to protest
The Guatemalan government, who the Mayans were against.
In 1983, Menchú published her autobiography
I, Rigoberta Menchú; the impact was astonishing.
The book garnered a lot of public attention,
Which she used to spread international awareness
Of the war and injustices occurring in Guatemala
And all the people lost like her mother, brother, and father.
In 1992, to no surprise,
Menchú received the Nobel Peace Prize
In recognition of her work to protect the rights
Of Indigenous people seeking social justice day and night.
She brought people together who had been fighting
In a civil war that caused Guatemala's dividing.
Gaining attention from her autobiography was a major part.
In the end, she won that Nobel Prize
'Cause she followed her heart.

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