

Maya Civilisation

Key Facts

Where did the Maya live?

The Maya made their home in an area known as Mesoamerica (modern day Mexico and Central America).

How did they live?

- Maya society was based in what is known as Mesoamerica.
- The Maya empire was organised into city states; each city state was ruled by a different noble family.
- Maya people lived in settlements with a central temple/pyramid as a focal point.
- Maya city states traded with each other - sometimes using cacao beans as money.

Who were the Maya?

They were expert mathematicians and astronomers.

Why are they significant?

- They used their studies to create calendars.
- The Maya also created a writing system called glyphs. Each symbol represented a word or sound.
- Their architecture. They built many large buildings, pyramids and palaces for their gods and their kings.



Timeline

Evolution of Maya culture	
Olmec	1200-1000 B.C.
Early Preclassic Maya	1800-900 B.C.
Middle Preclassic Maya	900-300 B.C.
Late Preclassic Maya	300 B.C. - A.D. 250
Early Classic Maya	A.D. 250-600
Late Classic Maya	A.D. 600-900
Post Classic Maya	A.D. 900-1500
Colonial period	A.D. 1500-1800
Independent Mexico	A.D. 1821 to the present

Culture

Music and art were important to the Maya.

- Each settlement had a wide open plaza area used as a central meeting point to play games such as pok-a-tok.
- The Maya used hieroglyphs to inscribe in stone slabs (called stelae) and in books (called codices).
- The Maya observed the movement of the sun, moon and stars to create calendars.
- The Maya created a logical and advanced number system.
- Masks were used for many purposes, but mainly funerals to protect important people in the afterlife.

Food

- The Maya produced maize as their main crop.
- We need to thank the Mayan people for the discovery of the cacao plant. Hot chocolate was a sacred drink for the Mayans.
- The Maya ate pozole – a type of stew.

Worship

- Maya temples were stepped to create a route to the heavens.
- The Maya religion was polytheistic (they believed in more than one god). Each god was associated with different areas of life.
- The Maya practised human sacrifice as well as animal sacrifice.

Today

- Chichen Itza (what remains of it) is a popular tourist attraction.
- There are lots of different theories about what happened to the Maya...



Class Society



King or High Priest (ahaw)

Council (Priesthood) - often part of the Royal Family



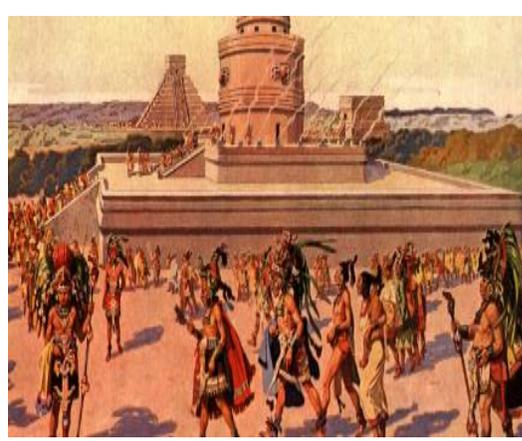
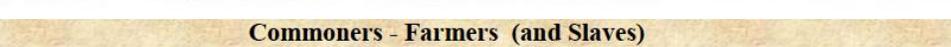
Nobles



Merchants & Artisans



Commoners - Farmers (and Slaves)



Map



Key Words

Civilisation	A society with a system of government, laws and records
Hieroglyphics	Pictures or symbols used to represent words for writing
Meso-America	The region of central America where the Maya lived
Pok-ta-pok	A popular sport, sometimes used to settle disagreements
Sacrifice	Giving of 'gifts' to gods, often killing animals or letting blood
Stelae	Tall sculpted monuments
Kingdom	A country ruled by a king or queen
Haab'	The 365 day Maya Calendar
Indigenous	Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place
Chichen Itza	A large pyramid that is one of the seven wonders of the World

Topic: Mayan Civilisation**Year: 6****Strand: Civilisation**

Question 1: What does the word Mesoamerica mean?	Start of unit:	End of unit:
South America		
North America		
Central America		
Argentina		

Question 4: Mayan cities thrived because they were located near...(tick two)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
trade routes		
monuments		
temples		
good farmland		

Question 8: The Mayans traded...(tick two)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
rice		
cacao beans		
salt		
bronze		

Question 2: Place these people in order of where they would appear in Mayan hierarchy (number 1-4)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
warriors		
farmers		
priests		
slaves		

Question 5: Mayan cities were very similar - they usually contained...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
a marketplace		
a palace		
a temple		
a plaza		
all of the above		

Question 9: The Mayans were famous because of their...(tick three)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
architecture		
forests		
early writing and number system		
calendar system		

Question 3: A person who believes in many gods is called...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
an atheist		
a polytheist		
an agnostic		
a druid		

Question 6: The Mayans exchanged goods between cities. This is called...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
buying		
trade		
selling		
stealing		

Question 10: One of the reasons we know about the Maya is because of their codices. These were...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
calendars		
written inscriptions on soft tree bark		
ruins		
temples		

Question 7: Deforestation led to the demise of the Maya people. This is because...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
the land became less fertile		
there was nowhere for the animals to live		
it caused pollution		