

The Maya Civilization



Objectives

Chronology

- Use dates and historical terms to describe events
Use a timeline within a specific time in history to set out the order things may have happened
- Understand the concept of change over time, representing this, along with evidence, on a timeline

Continuity and Change

- Give a broad overview of what life was like in the Ancient Mayan civilization

Cause and Consequence

- Suggest causes and consequences of some of the main events and changes in history

Similarity and Difference

- Describe the social, ethnic, cultural or religious diversity of past societies
- Describe the characteristic features of the past, including ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children
- Begin to compare some of the times studied with those of other areas of interest around the world

Historical Enquiry

- Use evidence to ask questions and find answers to questions about the past
- Use documents, printed sources, the Internet, pictures, photographs, artefacts and historic buildings as evidence about the past.
- Recognise the part that archaeologists have had in helping us understand more about what happened in the past
- Use research skills in finding out facts about the time period being studied

Vocabulary

civilization	Mayapan	hierarchy	migration	Mesoamerica
glyphs	maize	jaguar	artefacts	spectators
Northern lowlands		ceremonial	sacrifice	ancestor
Southern highlands		terrace	chamber	archaeological
codices	scribes	drought		

Hook into a Book



Activate Prior Knowledge

EY

- Making sense of their own life story and family's history
- Comment on images of familiar situations from the past
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

Context: All about me, Dinosaurs, Space, Transport

KS1

- Chronology of time periods. What comes before and after.
- Using historical evidence to find out about the past
Context: Captain Cook, GfOL, Local History

KS2

- Construction of the pyramids (Egypt) – similarities/difference
- Overlaps in time period with Ancient Egyptians and Romans.
- Using historical evidence and evaluating its reliability
- Links to Mexico topic (locational understanding), how has Mexico changed, lasting influences from the Mayas
- Civilizations
Context: Ancient Egypt, Romans, Titanic

Links to Future Learning

- Overlaps in time period with Anglo - Saxon Britain
- Chronology of time periods. What comes before and after.
- Using and selecting historical evidence and evaluating its reliability
- Civilizations and their impact on the world
Context: Anglo – Saxons, Ancient Greece

How do we know about the Maya?

Who were the Maya?

Who are the Maya today?

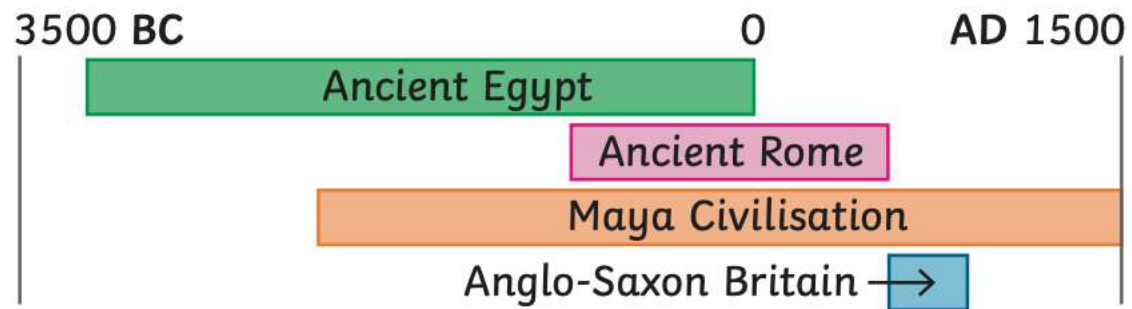


Chronology

Key Events

2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to an extensive drought. People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.
AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.
AD 1500s	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.
AD 1839	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood explore Copán and extensively document what they find, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation. They go on to document other Maya cities, including Chichén Itzá.
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

Timeline



Mayan civilisation flourished in Central America from about 2600BC until around AD1000

Location



Maya civilisation lived in Central America which at the time was known as Mesoamerica

Maya lived in the rainforest and this impacted how they lived, their dwellings, food and clothing

There are descendants of the Maya alive today

Calendar



- According to Maya, the world was created on 11th August 3114BC (the date their calendar starts from).
- The Maya developed a complex calendar



Writing

The Maya writing system, used to write several different Maya languages, was made up of over 800 symbols called glyphs. Some glyphs were logograms, representing a whole word, and some were syllabograms, representing units of sound.

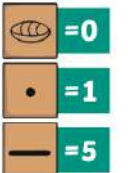


The Maya logogram for b'alam - jaguar

They were carved onto stone buildings and monuments and painted on Maya scribes also wrote books, called codices, made from the bark of fig trees. Only priests and noblemen would know the whole written language.

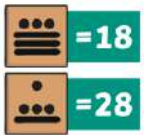
Numbers

The Maya developed a complex number and counting system that was advanced for their time. They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero.



The Maya people used just three symbols in their number system. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with, such as pebbles, sticks and shells.

The Maya used a base 20 number system, so after number 19, multiples of 20 were written above the bottom number.



Food

- Maize was a very important crop that formed up to 80% of the Maya people's diets. They believed that the first humans were made from maize dough by the gods.
- The Maya made a bitter chocolatey drink from cacao beans that was enjoyed by the rich and used for medicines and in ceremonies.
- The beans were highly valued and even used as a form of money.



Buildings and Land



- They built pyramids, many of them larger than those in Egypt.
- According to evidence provided by archaeological excavations, Maya cities feature large palaces, temples and plazas.
- Large populations of farmers surrounded the cities and provided supplies.
- During the 8th century, the Maya civilisation was in a state of decline, and by 900, it collapsed completely. The reason for this decline is subject to speculation, with some historians believing that it was due to a catastrophic environmental change. Others argue that the constant warfare with competing states led to the collapse of the Maya civilisation.

Religion

- The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that the gods could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods.
- Priests were very important in Maya society as it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods. They would perform different rituals during festivals or special ceremonies in order to appeal to the gods.
- Human sacrifice was rare but took place during times of difficulty, war or when new temple leaders

