

Mayan Civilisation

How advanced were the Maya for their time?

Who were the Maya?

The Maya people are remembered for amazing creations, like their spectacular buildings and beautiful objects. The Maya **civilisation** began long ago in a place called **Mesoamerica**. This huge area is made up of Mexico and part of Central America.

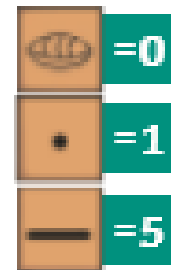


Writing

The Maya writing system was used to write several Maya languages. It was made up of many symbols called glyphs. **Logograms** and **syllabograms** were used to help writing. The **glyphs** were carved into stone buildings and monuments and painted on pottery. Maya **scribes** also wrote books called **codices**.

Maths

The Maya developed an advanced number system for their time. They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero as a placeholder. The number system used three different combinations:



The Maya had two kinds of calendars; a religious calendar called Tzolkin and a solar calendar called Haab'.

Religion

The Maya believed in many gods and goddesses. They thought that the gods/goddesses had a good side and a bad side which could help or hurt them. The Maya people would dance, sing and make offerings to the god/goddesses. Maya priests were believed to be able to communicate directly to gods/goddesses. As a result, they were important in society.

Timeline of British History

Stone Age	Bronze Age	Iron Age	The Celts	Romans in Britain	Anglo-Saxons	Vikings	Normans	Middle Ages	Tudors	The Great Fire of London	Georgians	Empire and Sea Power	The Industrial Revolution	Victorians	World Wars	Modern Day
15,000BC - 2,500BC	3,000BC - 800BC	800BC - AD43	800BC - AD43	AD43 - AD410	AD449 - AD1066	AD793 - AD1066	AD1066 - AD1154	AD1154 - AD1485	AD1485 - AD1603	AD1666	AD1714 - AD1830	AD1714 - AD1837	AD1760 - AD1820 (approx.)	AD1837 - AD1901	WWI: 1914-1918 WWII: 1939-1945	1945 - Present

Mayan Timeline

■ Pre-classic period (2000BC-250AD) ■ Classic period (250AD-900AD) ■ Post-classic period (900AD-1500AD)

Key vocabulary:

Architecture- the art or practice of designing and constructing buildings.

Civilisation- a human society with well-developed rules and government, often where technology and the arts are considered important.

Codices- ancient handwritten texts which can be unfolded like a concertina. One text is called a *codex*.

Glyphs- a hieroglyphic character or symbol.

Logograms- Glyphs representing whole words.

Maize- Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.

Merchants- individuals who deal goods that they do not produce themselves, in order to get a profit.

Mesoamerica- a historical region and cultural area in southern North America and most of Central America.

Scribes- people trained to write things down, either as an official record or for someone else unable to write.

Syllabograms- glyphs representing units of sound.

Trade- the action of buying and selling goods and service.

Key Dates (c. stands for circa, which means approximately)

c. 2000BC	c.300BC	AD 900	AD1000	AD1500s	AD1839	A42014
They Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to a drought. People move north to the highlands.	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of the Maya as part of their conquest.	American explorer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood, explore Copán and other cities, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation.	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

Trading

Maya **merchants** dealt in two kinds of goods, subsistence items and luxury items. Subsistence items were things used every day such as salt, especially necessary in a hot climate, foodstuffs, clothing and tools. Luxury items were those things royalty and nobles used to showcase their wealthy and power. These included jade, gold, beautiful ceramics, jewellery and feather works.

Great cities with large populations required food brought into markets. Most food was grown by farmers who lived outside the city. However, what wasn't grown nearby had to be brought in via trade or tribute.

Farming and Food

They Maya people mainly ate **maize**. This was very important to them as they believed that the first humans were made from **maize** dough by the gods.

Art and Architecture

The Maya civilisation is famous for its **architecture**. Many city-states built large palaces, pyramids, and other public buildings that are still standing today. The Maya built two types of pyramids which were similarly built in many ways. The first type had a temple on top and was climbed by the priests to make sacrifices to the gods. The second type of pyramid was a sacred pyramid built to a god.

El Castillo was built as a temple to the god Kukulcan in the city of Chichen Itza.

