

Willerby Carr Lane Primary School - History

Topic: The Maya

Year: 5

Strand: Early Civilizations

What should I already know?

- South America is a continent.
- The climate of South America is different to that of the UK.
- Human and physical geographical features of a region in South America.
- Other ancient civilisations include the Egyptians and the Greeks.

What will I know by the end of the unit?

When was the Maya civilisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maya lived in present-day Mexico and Central America, in an area called Mesoamerica.
What were the Maya famous for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From around 4000 years ago (2000BC) until around 500 years ago (1500AD).
When was the Maya civilisation?	<p>Architecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maya cities had similar layouts to each other • Their temples were in the form of pyramids <p>Calendar system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their sophisticated calendars helped them to track the time and important events like religious ceremonies. <p>Early writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maya hieroglyphic script was a writing system. • Each symbol (or glyph) could represent words, ideas or sounds. • Maya glyphs were read downward, in pairs, left to right. • The Maya covered their cities and buildings with hieroglyphs carved into the stone. • Only rich nobles and priests, who had been trained as scribes, could write. Priests used black ink made from coal and turkey-feather pens called 'quills' to write on long sheets of paper made from tree bark, which were folded together like a fan to make a book, called a 'codex'. These codices were wrapped with wood and deer hide. • The codices were sacred and kept in temples and important buildings. • Only four codices have survived because many were burned by Spanish

	<p>explorers, who thought the books were evil.</p> <p>Number system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maya were advanced mathematicians and invented the concept of zero. • The base of the Maya number system was 20. Larger numbers were written down in powers of 20, so 32 would be $1 \times 20 + 12$. (In our decimal system of mathematics, we use a base number of 10 and larger numbers are written down in powers of 10, so 32 is $3 \times 10 + 2$.) • They used a system of bars and dots as "shorthand" for counting. A shell stood for zero, a dot stood for one and a bar stood for five. • Maya merchants often used cocoa beans, which they laid out on the ground, to do calculations.
What were the religious beliefs of the Maya?	<p>The Maya Realm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maya believed in heaven, earth and the underworld. • They believed the Earth had the form of a giant turtle that floated on an endless ocean. • Those who were sacrificed, who died in battle, or women who died in childbirth, went to one of the top levels. Those who died of natural causes went to Xibalba, the underworld. <p>Gods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maya believed in many gods, each representing a different aspect of life. • Communities made regular offerings to the gods, including animal and human sacrifices. • People thought the priests were in touch with the gods. • The Maya gods were represented in human form, animal form or as a form of nature, eg: Sun God. • They carried out blood-letting, using barbed rope to cut their tongues, collecting blood as a gift to the gods. <p>• Creation Story</p>

- The Maya had their own creation story and believed that the world started from nothing.
- They believed that 6 gods helped the Heart of the Sky to create the Earth.
- They believed that a tree was then planted to separate the sky and the Earth reaching up to the Maya Upper World.
- Next the plants were created and then animals.
- After this, humans were formed from mud but were bad so were destroyed in a flood.
- Then they tried again forming humans from wood but they could not worship so were destroyed.
- The sun and moon were created next and then the current humans were created using maize.

Ball Games

- The Maya loved ball games and had ball courts in every city.
- The courts were situated at the bases of pyramids, to pay tribute to the gods and goddesses.
- Ball courts were very large, each with a stone hoop mounted on a wall at one side.
- The games were frequently played during religious celebrations, lasting for up to 20 days.
- The Maya loved to play pok-a-tok, the aim of which was to throw a strong elastic ball through the hoop using just their hips, shoulders or arms.
- The winners won the belongings of the losing side.
- The losing side, often made up of prisoners, was killed as a sacrifice to the Maya gods.

What happened to end the Ancient Maya civilisation?

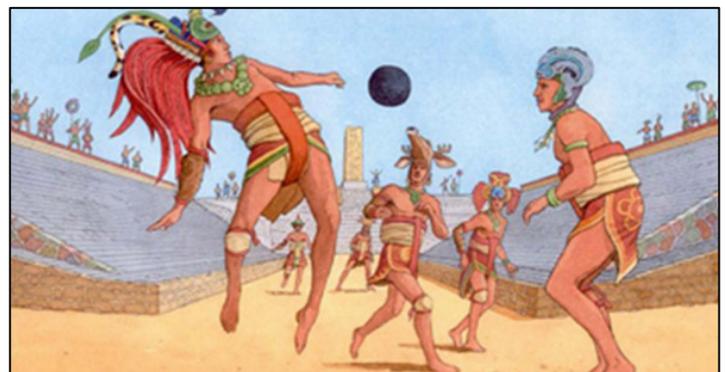
- People are unsure of why the Maya were largely wiped out. Suggestions range from disease, natural disasters to climate change.
- The Maya civilisation did not abruptly collapse but underwent a slow decline.

0 	1 	2 	3 	4 
5 	6 	7 	8 	9 
10 	11 	12 	13 	14 
15 	16 	17 	18 	19 
20 	21 	22 	23 	24 
25 	26 	27 	28 	29 

Maya (base 20) number system



Maya hieroglyphics



Pok-a-tok – Maya ball game

Vocabulary	
archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains
architecture	the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings
Chichen Itza	a village in Yucatán state in Mexico: site of important Mayan ruins. A UNESCO World Heritage Site
civilisation	a human society with its own social organisation and culture.
climate	the general weather conditions that are typical of an area.
codex / codices	Maya books written in hieroglyphics on paper made from tree bark, folded into a fan shape.
continent	a very large area of land that consists of many countries. South America is a continent.
culture	activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilisation
deforestation	if an area is deforested, all the trees there are cut down
deities	a god or goddess
demise	something or someone is their end or death
drought	a long period of time during which no rain falls.
economy	the wealth that a society or country gets from business and industry
erosion	erosion the gradual destruction and removal of rock or soil
fertile	rich in nutrients to support the growth of many plants

hierarchy	a system of organising people into different ranks or levels of importance, for example in society
hieroglyphics	a writing system in which each symbol (or glyph) was able to represent particular words, ideas or sounds. Sentences, and even whole stories, could be formed by placing several glyphs together.
human features	features of land that have been impacted by human activity
indigenous	people or things that belong to the country in which they are found
Maya	Maya (noun and adjective) describes the people and their culture
Mayan	The language of the Maya
merchant	a person who buys or sells goods in large quantities
Mesoamerica	Central America - the countries consist of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Belize; and the western sections of Honduras and Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica
physical features	natural features of land
plaza	an open square in a city.
polytheists	the worship of, or belief in, more than one god
society	people in general, thought of as a large organised group
trade	the activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services
Tzolk'in	religious calendar



Maya pyramid at Palenque



Mesoamerica

where the ancient Maya were found

Key Dates / Timeline			
Date	Event	Description	Simultaneous British History
2000BC	Start of Maya civilisation	Farming villages begin to form across the Maya region.	Bronze Age is an era of British history that spanned from c.2000 – c.750 BC
500BC	Hieroglyphics developed		Iron Age is an era of British history that spanned from c. 750 BC – 43 AD Iron tools became widespread by 500 BC
			First recorded Viking attacks on England in 793 AD
			Kingdom of Scotland formed in 843 AD
			Alfred, King of Wessex, agrees a treaty and England is divided between the Saxons and the Vikings in 886 AD
			The Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred the Great dies in 899 AD
900AD	Southern cities abandoned	Around 900 AD, many southern lowland cities were abandoned because of drought, deforestation, land erosion and war.	The construction of Westminster Abbey is completed in 1055AD
	Northern cities begin to flourish	Around 900 AD, northern cities begin to flourish and continued to flourish until around 1500 AD.	In 1066 AD, Harald Hardrada, King of Norway, invades England and defeats the English at the Battle of Fulford. Harald Hardrada is killed by Harold II at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Harold II killed in the Battle of Hastings, when William of Normandy invades, becoming King of England.
1502AD	Spanish invaders arrived	By the time the Spanish invaders arrived in 1502AD, most Maya were living in agricultural villages, their great cities buried under a layer of rainforest green.	Henry the Eighth become the Tudor king in 1509 AD
Today	Descendants of Maya	Around 7 million descendants of the Maya still live in Central America, in modern-day Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and parts of Mexico. The majority live in Guatemala, which is home to Tikal National Park, the site of the ruins of the ancient city of Tikal. Sixty per cent of Guatemalans are of Maya descent.	

Important figures	Image
<p>Pakal the Great</p> <p>An emperor of the Maya city-state, Palenque, he ascended to the throne at the age of 12 and lived to the age of 80. His mother handed the throne to him when he became 12.</p>	
<p>Kawill</p> <p>One of the rulers that ruled over Tikal. He was responsible for the creation of a lot of the structures in Tikal that are still standing today.</p>	
<p>John Lloyd Stephens American explorer and travel writer</p> <p>Frederick Catherwood British artist.</p>	<p>Stephens and Catherwood helped re-ignite interest in the ancient Maya civilisation after they published a book together that contains many detailed drawings and maps in 1839.</p>

Historical Skills and Enquiry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine a variety of sources and use these to make inferences about the past - in particular about Maya economy, culture, religious beliefs and society. • Describe how the Maya civilisation has had an impact on modern society. • Examine the timeline of the Maya civilisation and consider where there was rapid change and where there was very little change. Explain why this may be the case. • Compare what was happening in the Maya civilisation with what was happening in Britain at the same time. • Place the chronology of key events of the Maya civilisation on a timeline with a chronology of the history of Britain. Where are the overlaps? • Compare the Maya with the Greek and Egyptian civilisations using a Venn diagram. • Describe the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of all groups of people in the Maya civilisation. • Use appropriate vocabulary to communicate about the Maya