



Key Knowledge and Skills

Key Vocabulary

Who were the Maya Civilisation?

The Maya civilisation began long ago in a place called Mesoamerica. This huge area is made up of Mexico and part of Central America. The Maya first developed their civilisation in around 2000 BC (the Pre-classic period).



What did Maya society look like?

Maya society was very complex with hundreds of cities, commoners, a middle class, nobles and the king and his royal court. The Maya built amazing cities like Tikal (which they called Yax Mutal) and Palenque. Even though they lived in different cities, ruled by different kings and queens, the Maya shared a lot of common beliefs and traditions.



Maya Beliefs and Traditions

The Maya believed that their rulers could communicate with the gods and their dead ancestors through the ritual of bloodletting. It was a common practice for the Maya to pierce their tongue, or cut themselves with an obsidian (stone) knife. Mayan kings were the most important priests. They were seen as the link between humans and gods. When the kings died themselves, they became gods.

Maya Gods

The Maya worshipped many Gods. Mayan gods could change themselves into human and animal form. Priests performed ceremonies to keep the gods happy.



Word

Definition

Maya Civilisation

The Maya civilization was one of the most dominant Indigenous societies of Mesoamerica.

Tradition

A belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time.

Bloodletting

The practice of withdrawing blood from a person's veins.

hieroglyphs

A carved or inscribed symbol. It may be a pictogram or ideogram, or part of a writing system.

logogram

A written or pictorial symbol intended to represent a whole word.

Chichen Itza

A large pre-Columbian city built by the Maya people of the Terminal Classic period.

Archeology

The study things that were created, used or changed by humans.

Sacred

Considered to be holy and deserving respect, especially because of a connection with a god.

Our Enquiry Question

What was life like at the height of Mayan civilization?

Mayan Writing

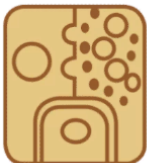
The Maya created a writing system using symbols called glyphs. Each symbol represented a word or a sound.



Cloud



Mountain



Spirit

Mayan books are known as codices. These were made from soft inner bark of trees. They used glyphs to represent ideas.



