

The Maya Civilisation

Enquiry Question: Why should we remember the Maya?

Key Vocabulary		Sticky Knowledge
Archaeology		The Maya lived in over 60 city states, each ruled by a king and occasionally a queen.
Civilisation		The area they lived in now comprises of parts of Mexico and Guatemala. It is an area of tropical rainforest.
Sacrifice		Royal palaces were found in the city centre, which was also devoted to religion with pyramids and temples.
Hierarchy		Poorer people lived in small villages surrounding the city and worked the land.
Agriculture		The pyramids were temples and sometimes tombs. They were used for ceremonies, including human sacrifice, to keep the gods happy.
Astronomy		The Maya believed that a god existed for each of the most important aspects of human life and it was important to worship and praise all of them in order to live peacefully.
Codices		They believed their gods needed to be offered blood, and this led to the practice of human sacrifice and bloodletting.
Pagan		The Maya developed accurate calendars by using astronomy and mathematics.
Scribe		The Maya knew about wheels but did not use them for transport. We know this from toys found with wheels.
Myth		They traded items like food, materials and luxury items like valuable stones.
		They gave the world chocolate. They used cacao beans as a form of currency.
		Around 90% of the Maya population are said to have died around 900 AD. Historians disagree about why this happened.
		Codices are folding books written by the Maya in hieroglyphic script.