



History – Year 6 Summer 1 Ancient Maya

Vocabulary

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Ancient	Settlement	Glyph
Maya	City State	Codices
Civilisation	Sacrifice	Maize
Temple	Agriculture	Cacao Beans
Scribes	Astronomy	Dynasty
Jaguar	Drought	Hierarchy



don't know



I know this word



I can use it in a sentence

Key Dates

(c. stands for circa, which means approximately)

c. 2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
c. 300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to a 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 (16 th century)	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 other cities including Chichén Itzá, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation .
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

Key Questions/Facts

Who were the Maya?

The Maya were a civilisation who lived in Mesoamerica (now Central America) between approximately 2000 BCE and 900CE. They are known for being the first Mesoamericans to develop writing. They also had a sophisticated culture in which they lived in city states. They built spectacular monuments and stepped pyramids – some (e.g. Chichen Itza) have become world tourist destinations in the modern day. They were also well-known for their advanced maths and calendars. Around 900CE, Maya cities became abandoned. No one knows for sure why this happened.

The Afterlife

The Middleworld – The Maya people believed that the Earth, which they called the Middleworld, was large and flat and resting on the back of a creature, such as a turtle or crocodile. The Upperworld – The Maya believed this was in the sky or heavens and was connected to the Middleworld by the branches of a tree. The Underworld – A tree connecting its branches to the Upperworld was also believed to grow its roots down to the Underworld.

Fun facts

1. The Mayans predicted that the world would end in 2012.
2. Flat foreheads were fashionable so they would put baby's heads in a press to squash them.
3. It was considered beautiful to be cross-eyed so parents would hang balls in-between their children's eyes to make them look inwards.
4. Mayans sacrificed humans for religious and medical reasons. It was an honour to be sacrificed!
5. Noblewomen would file their teeth into sharp points.

Useful Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/za6svc>

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Maya/353445>

