

# History: The Maya

## Year 6 Summer 2

### Key Dates

**1800 BC:** The first evidence of Maya culture in Guatemala.  
**700 BC:** Mayan writing is developed in Mesoamerica.  
**400 BC:** Earliest solar calendars are carved in stone.  
**300 BC:** The social structure adapts to include nobles and kings as rulers.  
**100 BC:** The first pyramids are built.  
**By 900 BC:** Sites in the southern lowlands are abandoned, while sites in the northern lowlands continue to flourish.  
**AD 1502:** First contact with Europeans.



### Key Facts

Mayan temples were very sacred buildings, some were used for priests to make sacrifices to the gods and others were built to a god which would not be touched or climbed by humans.

The Tzolkin (pronounced sole-keen) was a 260-day calendar that was used for rituals and divination. It was used by specialists to make predictions about the lives of individuals.

Cacao originates from the Maya and was grown mainly in Guatemala. Cacao beans could be roasted, then easily stored and transported – for that reason cacao became a medium of exchange (currency) in the great market places.

The Maya were advanced mathematicians and were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero.

### Key Vocabulary

<b>Emblem Glyphs</b>	Maya cities had emblem glyphs much as modern sports teams have insignias.
<b>Epigraphy</b>	The study and interpretation of ancient inscriptions.
<b>Sacred</b>	Connected with God or a god or dedicated to a religious purpose and so regarded with great respect.
<b>Slash-and-burn</b>	A method of agriculture in which existing vegetation is cut down and burned off before new seeds are sown.
<b>Trade</b>	Buying, selling or swapping goods.
<b>Interdependence</b>	Dependence of two or more people or things on each other.
<b>Conquistadors</b>	Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru in the 16th century.
<b>Codex</b>	An ancient manuscript text in book form.
<b>Stelae</b>	An upright stone slab or column.



### Website Links



### Enquiry Questions

1. Who were the Maya?
2. Where and when did the Maya live?
3. What was Maya writing like? What does it tell us about their society and civilisation?
4. How did the Maya trade?
5. Man-made or natural disaster: What happened to the Maya?
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### Historical Skills

#### **Chronology:**

Say where a period of history fits on a timeline  
 Place features of historical events and people from past societies and periods in a chronological framework

#### **Historical knowledge and interpretation:**

Describe features of historical events and people from past societies and periods they have studied

#### **Historical enquiry:**

Look at two different versions and say how the author may be attempting to persuade or give a specific viewpoint

### Why don't you...

- Create your own stelae that records all the important events in your life?
- Explore the similarities and differences of the Maya towns and cities then design your own Maya city?
- Write a report entitled 'Man-Made or Natural Disaster?' to explain the disappearance of the Maya around 900BC?

### Historical Concepts

Civilisation – making links between civilisations they have studied and are studying.

Cause and consequence- the how and why of history, the causes look for 'what were the actions/beliefs/circumstance' that led to a change or event that we examine.

Empire- understanding how empires have affected and influenced the world today.