

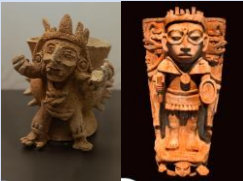





Maya Civilisation | History | Years 5 & 6 | Autumn Term 2025-26

2000 BC to AD 250	AD 250 to AD 900	AD 900 to 1524	1524 to 1697
<p>Pre-Classic period</p> <p>The Ancient Maya went from hunter-gatherers (hunting animals and gathering food from nature) to living in cities.</p>	<p>Classic period</p> <p>The Ancient Maya thrived, created and flourished (their 'Golden Age').</p>	<p>Post-Classic period</p> <p>This period saw the development of Chichen Itza, one of the largest and most magnificent Ancient Maya cities. Decline begins.</p>	<p>Contact and Spanish conquest period</p> <p>The Ancient Maya had more contact with the Europeans and the Spanish took control.</p>

National Curriculum History	Artefacts	Cause and Effect	Vocabulary
<p>Pupils should continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. They should note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms. They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. They should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.</p> <p>In planning to ensure the progression described above through teaching the British, local and world history outlined below, teachers should combine overview and depth studies to help pupils understand both the long arc of development and the complexity of specific aspects of the content.</p>	<div data-bbox="614 368 857 529">  <p>'Tikal': an Ancient Maya city (temple)</p> </div> <div data-bbox="614 554 857 715">  <p>Cacao ('chocolate')</p> </div> <div data-bbox="614 746 857 925">  <p>Artefacts depicting Maya gods</p> </div> <div data-bbox="614 961 857 1160">  <p>The Maya calendar</p> </div> <div data-bbox="614 1196 857 1396">  <p>Maya writing system: Hieroglyphs on stone slab (stela)</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="1078 375 1489 496"> <p>Where did the Maya settle? Why?</p> <p>The Ancient Maya faced many challenges settling in the rainforest. They solved these problems, becoming adaptable hunters and developing crops that could grow successfully in the conditions.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 729 1489 851"> <p>What were Ancient Maya's greatest achievements?</p> <p>The Ancient Maya developed many things, with each invention linked to their beliefs about the world, including: ball games, calendars, temples and writing system.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 1039 1489 1160"> <p>What caused the decline of Maya civilisation?</p> <p>Several factors influenced the decline of Ancient Maya cities, to a greater or lesser extent, including: overcrowding, deforestation, drought, new trade routes, constant battles, and water supply issues.</p> </div>	<p>Achievement: a significant contribution that has a lasting impact.</p> <p>Ancient: a very long time ago.</p> <p>Archaeologist: a person who finds and studies objects from the past to learn about how people used to live.</p> <p>Civilisation: a large group of people with a common language, way of life and governance.</p> <p>Currency: a type of money that a country uses for buying and selling goods and services.</p> <p>Decline: a situation where something becomes less important or successful.</p> <p>Mesoamerica: the historical region that is now Mexico and Central America.</p> <p>Ritual: a set of actions or ceremonies performed in a fixed way, sometimes for religious purposes.</p> <p>Theory / claim: an idea that is intended to explain facts or events; based on evidence.</p> <p>Conquest: control of a place or people by military force.</p>

Key Learning: How did the achievements of the ancient Maya impact their society and beyond?

- 1 How did the ancient Maya settle in a rainforest?**
Recall how historians learn about the past including terms 'source', 'settlement', 'ancient' and 'civilization'. Introduce the Maya civilization, its duration and location. Discuss and consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in a rainforest, drawing on geographical knowledge from LKS2. Match challenges with potential solutions. Evaluate the effectiveness of these solutions.
- 2 How important was chocolate to the ancient Maya?**
Consider foods the ancient Maya may have eaten in such a location. Compare to European food sources of the time, drawing comparisons. Examine a range of artefacts to deduce how cacao was used by the ancient Maya. Reflect on the importance of chocolate today compared to its importance for the ancient Maya.
- 3 What did the ancient Maya believe?**
Retrieve knowledge of creation stories from studies in 'Religion and Worldviews'. Share the Maya creation story documented in the 'Popol Vuh' (display images of artefact records). Reflect and draw comparisons. Learn about the Maya gods and ask: How is the king connected to the gods? Is this similar or different to other civilisations we have learned about? Examine further artefacts to discover information about the Maya gods. Discuss how the gods influenced and impacted the daily lives of the Maya.
- 4 How did the Maya reflect world beliefs in their inventions?**
Explain the Maya were among the first to discover and use rubber for various purposes, including making balls for games. Explore how rubber is still used today. Learn about the role of an 'archivist'. Acting as an archivist, examine Maya inventions and categorise them by asking open-ended questions. Record information in a log. Discuss forms of Maya inventions that are still being used today.
- 5 What do remains tell us about ancient Maya cities?**
Read and discuss information about ancient Maya city-states. Explain the role of an 'archaeologist' then, using the ruins of Tikal in Guatemala, learn about the features of ancient Maya city-states. Study images of ruins and ask: what do you think this building was used for? Why? Apply knowledge to design a plan for an ancient Maya city. Annotate plan to provide additional detail about uses and features.
- 6 What caused the decline of the ancient Maya cities?**
 Study the timeline. Explain that around AD 900, many ancient Maya cities were abandoned and eventually began to decline. Listen to recordings of historians sharing their claims on this decline, explaining that historians, archaeologists and scientists still cannot come to a single conclusion today. Learn that other cities continued to thrive and evolve so this did not mean the end of the Maya (communities still exist in the region today). Evaluate claims made by historians, selecting evidence to prove and disprove their claims. Rank causes of the decline using 'Diamond Six'.