

The Maya – were they an important ancient civilisation?

Questions
What can we learn about the Ancient Maya from the lives of the Maya today?
What can we learn about the Maya by investigating their ancient cities?
Why did the Maya have so many Gods?
Were the Maya as clever as people in 21st century?
What happened to the Maya?

What should I already know?

Other ancient civilisations of a similar period - Romans, Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Ancient Egyptians.
Rainforest and South America

Key Facts	Vocabulary	
People who lived in the forests of Central America. Small groups still remain.	Maya	An ancient civilisation at its height from 250 — 900 AD.
The region where the Maya and Inca, Aztecs developed advanced civilisations.	Mesoamerica	The Mayans went from living as nomadic hunters to settling in villages as farmers.
A game often used to settle disputes instead of war. It could last for hours from dawn till dusk.	Pok a Tok	A strategic game between 2 teams. The Captain of the losing team was decapitated.
drought and global warming are thought to be reasons for the decline of the Maya.	drought	A long period of time with little or no rain.
used to make dough and baked into tortillas	maize	another word for sweetcorn
Maya kings wore jaguar pelts.	jaguar	large cat species native to America in Mayan times and today.
ancient hand written texts that could be folded like a concertina.	codices	Symbol of might and authority. ancestor of the modern book. A stack of papers bound at one edge.
Mayan writing system – used to write several different Mayan languages.	glyphs	– made up of many symbols
The Maya had 2 types of calendars using astronomy.	logograms	– glyphs representing whole words
Pods from cacao tree trunks containing beans	Haab	– based on the movement of Sun and Moon ~ 360 days + 5 wayeb days.
	Tzolkein	– religious calendar, 260 days
	cacao beans	– melted chocolate drink with chilli