

Timeline

1,100 BC

The first 'Mayan' settlements begin to appear in Mesoamerica along the Pacific coast.



800BC

Instead of foraging, maize farming begins and trade between villages begins.



700BC

Mayan writing begins to develop through the form of hieroglyphs.



100BC – 450AD

Maya constructs its first pyramids and developing cities, prompting the rapid rise of Tikal in the tropical lowlands.



638AD

Pakal the Great (King of Palenque) dies. His death mask made of jade is created.



800AD – 1,502AD

Mayan civilization begins to decline and vanish. The Mayan ruins are found by a Spanish expedition lead by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba.



Key Vocabulary

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| archaeologist | Someone who studies the past by exploring old remains |
| architecture | The art of planning, designing and constructing buildings |
| Chichen Itza | A village in Yucatán state in Mexico: site of important Mayan ruins. A UNESCO World Heritage Site |
| chronology | The order of events in time |
| cira | Latin meaning 'around'. c. 800 BC means around 800 BC. |
| civilisation | A human society with its own social organisation and culture . |
| climate | The general weather conditions that are typical of a place |
| continent | A very large area of land that consists of many countries . South America is a continent . |
| culture | Activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilisation. |

Mayan Society

- **Mayan cities** had similar layouts to each other. They would have a palace for the ruler, a **plaza** for the marketplaces and temples, in the form of **pyramids**.
- **Mayan cities** were often found near **trade routes** and good farmland.
- Mayans were **polytheists**, believing in many nature gods or **deities**.
- Priests were considered the most important people in the **Mayan culture**. **Warriors, craftsmen and traders** were next in the **hierarchy**. Farmers, workers and slaves were at the bottom of the **hierarchy**.
- **Mayan merchants** traded many goods including salt, cotton, honey and jade.
- The **Mayan calendar** (Tzolkin) consisted of 260 days and 13 months.
- The **demise** of the **Mayan civilisation** came about because of a mixture of **deforestation, land erosion and drought**.

Why are we learning this?

So we know Modern day Mayans still live within the boundaries of the old empire in Central America. The region that makes up this area now consists of: Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. They number nearly 7 million.

Why is it important?

So we know Mayans believe that the world started from nothing. They believed that 6 deities helped the Heart of the Sky to create the Earth. They believe that a tree was then planted to segregate sky and earth reaching up to the Mayan Upper World.