

## Key vocabulary

**Maya** The collective noun for the Maya people.

**Civilisation** An organised society with its own culture and way of life, existing in a particular area over a particular time

**Mesoamerica** The region in which the Maya lived, spanning over Mexico and parts of Southern America.

**Hieroglyph** A symbol that has a worded meaning, read like our graphemes.

**Maize** corn- a major food source for the Maya. With religious connections to the Gods.

**Sacrifice** An offering to please the Gods. A slaughtering of an animal or human as an offering to please the gods.

**Ritual** A ceremony, often religious, with set actions performed in a set order.

**Codices** Ancient handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina. One text is called a codex.

**Cacao beans** Cacao trees sprout pods directly from their trunks. When they are ripe, the pods can be broken open to reveal the beans, which can be dried, roasted and ground.

## Magnificent Maya



The Maya land included parts of what we now know as Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

## Gods

Religion was an integral part of the ancient Maya culture. The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that they could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offers of blood to the gods to demonstrate their respect and loyalty.



## Timeline

3500 BC

1 AD

AD 1500

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Rome

Maya Civilisation

Anglo-Saxon Britain →

1100BC

700BC

100BC

AD400

AD800

First hunter, gatherers settle in the area

Maya writing developed

First pyramid built

Different city states take power

Decline of the Empire

## How do we know?

American explorer and travel writer, **John Lloyd Stephens** and British artist, **Frederick Catherwood** are credited with re-igniting interest in the ancient Maya civilisation from 1839 onwards.

The ruins and lost cities of Mesoamerica had been explored and recorded earlier in history, but detailed documentation by Catherwood brought attention back to the Maya and their fascinating civilisation. Numerous archaeological expeditions of the Maya region were launched following the work of Stephens and Catherwood.



## Food



Maize was a very important crop to the Maya and made up about 80% of their diet. They believed that humans were made from maize dough by the gods.

The Maya made a bitter chocolatey drink from 'cacao beans'. This drink was enjoyed by the rich and used in medicines. The beans were highly valuable and even used as a form of money.



## Chichén Itzá

Chichén Itzá is a well-preserved example of a Maya city, located in Mexico now, which was part of the Maya, Mesoamerica. It is a popular tourist destination as it hosts a series of Maya sculptures and pyramids.



## Amazing Inventors

### Number and Writing

0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19

Some glyphs used in Maya hieroglyphic writing are called logograms. Logograms represent a whole word.

CHAN 'sky'	WINIK 'person'	WITZ 'mountain'	K'IN 'sun'
B'ALAM 'jaguar'	K'AK' 'fire'	BAK 'bone'	WAY 'spirit'

ahau (bird)	b'ih (road)	hok' (to take office)	k'at (twenty)	na (house)	tak' (tree)
shol (to dance)	chan (sky)	ky (to know, make proper)	k'at (spirit)	na (place)	tun (stone)
chao (snake)	huh (headband)	ak (flower)	k'in (sun)	ak (flower)	tun (stone)
huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)
huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)
huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)
huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)
huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)	huh (one)