

History Topic:

a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history

The Mayan Civilisation

Year 5

Spring



Background understanding for teachers and parents

The **Mayan**, or **Maya**, people made their home in an area known as Mesoamerica (modern day Mexico and Central America). **Mayan** culture was well established by 1000 BCE, and it lasted until 1697 CE. All of the **Mayan civilisation** shared a common culture and religion, but each city governed itself and had its own noble ruler.

What happened to the Mayans?

Around 900, many cities in the southern lowlands were abandoned but states in the uplands of the Yucatan peninsula continued to flourish until the arrival of the Spanish in 1502.

When? (Timeline of key Events)

2000BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming villages begin to form across the Maya region.
1100BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first hunter-gatherers settle on the Pacific Coast.
1000BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Maya begin to form larger settlements.
800BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming and trading in villages becomes established.
700BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayan writing first starts to develop.
600BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Maya begin to farm. This enables them to support larger populations: the cities begin to grow.
600BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The settlement Tikal is formed. This will be a major Mayan city and will reach its peak of power during the Classic Period.
400BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first Maya calendars are carved into stone.
300BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Maya adopt the idea of a monarchy for their government. They are now ruled by kings.
100BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city-state of Teotihuacan is established in the valley of Mexico. It influences the Maya culture for many years.
100BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first pyramids were built
250AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Classic Period begins. It was the golden age of the Maya Empire. Maya civilization grew to some 40 cities, including Tikal; each city held a population of between 5,000 and 50,000 people.
800AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stepped pyramid at Chichen-Itza is built.
1000AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chichen-Itza is the most powerful city.
1502AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First contact with Europeans is made. The Maya Civilisation begins to decline.

What? (Key Vocabulary)

Spelling	Definition/Sentence
civilisation	A complex society characterized by urban development, social stratification, a form of government, and symbolic systems of communication (such as writing)
dynasty	A series of rulers or leaders who are all from the same family, or a period when a country is ruled by them.
hieroglyphics	A system of writing that uses pictures
Astronomy	Study of the moon, planets, Milky Way and sun. The Mayans were able to make predictions of solar eclipses using observatories and shadow-casting devices.
empire	A group of countries ruled by a single person, government or country.
temple	A building used for the worship of God/Gods.
maize	A staple food (also known as corn)- a cereal grain.
tomb	A large stone structure or underground room where someone, especially someone of importance, is buried.
Stelae	An altar or monument made to keep records of the achievements of their rulers at a certain time.
Pok-a-tok	A game where rubber balls were thrown into stone hoops. Losers were sometimes sacrificed to the Gods.

Mayan Number System

The Maya developed a complex counting system. They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero.

The Maya people used just three symbols. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with, such as pebbles, sticks and shells.

The Maya used a base 20 number system.



Learning Outcomes

- State facts learnt from a source about an event or period in history.
- Identify how different periods changed or stayed the same
- Identify and start to describe or recount key events.

