

Year 6 History

Why are The Mayans Considered an Advanced Civilisation?

Prior learning

In Year 3, you learnt about The Ancient Egyptians, who also built pyramids, which still exist today and were used as sacred tombs. The Ancient Egyptians also had their own system of writing called hieroglyphics.

In Year 5, you learnt about the inventions of The Ancient Greek and The Ancient Roman civilisations, many of which we still use in modern society. You also learnt about Ancient Greece being divided into city-states, which were governed in different ways.

In this topic you will:

- Learn about who The Mayans were and when they existed in history.
- Find out what life was like for an Ancient Maya.
- Discover what was invented during The Mayan civilisation, including their numerical systems, their calendar, their written language and their architecture.
- Find out about Ancient Maya beliefs, as well as their temples and pyramids used to worship a range of gods and goddesses.

A Timeline of this Period in History

2000 BC	Farming villages begin to form across the Maya region.
1000 BC	The Maya begin to form larger settlements at places like Copan and Chalchuapa
700 BC	Mayan writing first starts to develop.
600 BC	The Maya begin to farm. This enables their society to support larger populations and the cities begin to grow in size.
400 BC	The first Mayan calendars are carved into stone.
300 BC	The Maya adopt the idea of a monarchy for their government. They are now ruled by kings
100 BC	The first pyramids are built
683 AD	Pakal the Great dies and is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions.
800 AD	Sites in the rain forests and tropical lowlands are abandoned.
1283 AD	The city-state of Mayapan becomes the capital city of the Maya civilisation. The League of Mayapan is formed to rule the region.

Key Vocabulary

Civilisation	The society and culture of a specific period in history.
Agriculture	Farming or growing crops and rearing animals.
Hierarchy	The ranking of people, based on their social status
Mesoamerica	The area of land where The Ancient Maya lived.
Pyramid	A structure with a square or triangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top.
Glyph	A symbol used in writing.
Vigesimal	The numerical system used by the Maya.
Temple	A building used for the worship of a god or gods.
Sacrifice	The killing of an animal or person as a gift for a religious deity.
Tomb	A large stone structure or underground room where someone, normally an important person, is buried.