

History - How did the achievements of the Maya civilisation impact their society and beyond?

Key Vocabulary

achievement*	A significant accomplishment or contribution that had a lasting impact.
ancient*	From a very long time ago.
archaeologist	Someone who studies the buildings, graves, tools and other objects of people who lived in the past.
civilisation*	A large group of people with a common language, way of life and governance.
creation*	Something being made.
currency*	The type of money that a country uses for buying and selling goods and services.
decline*	A situation where something becomes less important or successful.
Mesoamerica	The historical region that is now Mexico and Central America.
ritual*	A set of actions or ceremonies performed in a fixed way, sometimes for religious purposes.
theory	An idea that is intended to explain facts or events, often based on some evidence.

Maya Inventions

The Ancient Maya developed many things and each invention was linked to their beliefs about the world. Some examples include the ball game, which was a form of telling stories about heroes and gods; calendars to know when to plant their crops and celebrate festivals that honoured the stars and the seasons; temples where people went to give gifts to their gods.



Ancient Maya Periods

Ancient Maya periods

Pre-Classic period	Classic period	Post-Classic period	Contact and Spanish conquest period
From 2000 BC to AD 250, the Ancient Maya went from hunter-gatherers (hunting animals and gathering food from nature) to living in cities.	From AD 250 to AD 900, the Ancient Maya thrived, invented and flourished.	From AD 900 to 1524, this period saw the development of Chichen Itza, one of the largest and most magnificent Ancient Maya cities.	From 1524 to 1697, the Ancient Maya had more contact with the Europeans and the Spanish took control.



Maya settlements in a rainforest

The Ancient Maya faced many challenges settling in the rainforest, including dangerous animals, dense vegetation and shady conditions, which made growing crops difficult. They solved these problems by slashing and burning trees to clear rainforest areas, becoming adaptable hunters and developing crops that could grow successfully in the conditions, such as cacao and maize.



Maya City States

Ancient Maya cities such as Tikal thrived in the Classic period. The cities had a grand plaza (main street) on which the most important buildings (such as temples, observatory towers, ball courts and palaces) were found. Ordinary people lived in houses on the outskirts of the city and the cities themselves were connected by roads. Historians have learned more about these cities from recent archaeological discoveries in the rainforest (e.g. hieroglyphics were discovered in the buildings).

I can explain how the Ancient Maya adapted to live in the rainforest.

I can describe the beliefs of the Ancient Maya and how these influenced their daily life.

I can explain what we can learn about Ancient Maya cities from archaeological remains.

How did the achievements of the Ancient Maya shape their society and influence the wider world?