

Marvellous Maya

Find out when Maya civilisation was first recognised by archaeologists and when this society is said to have come to an end. Examine different types of evidence that tell us about the Maya. Explore the region of the Maya civilization and create a Maya corner in the classroom.

Background information

- The Ancient Maya empire is thought to have existed from 1500 BC to 900 AD
- The Maya were the only Ancient American civilisation to develop a writing system and only 1 of 5 in the world to do so. They were 1 of 2 cultures to use the number 0 in their number system.
- They built cities in the jungle and built some of the biggest pyramids in the world without using metal tools, pack animals or the wheel.
- They had one of the most elaborate and accurate calendar systems
- They invented chocolate.
- 8 million Maya people still live in various Central American countries today.

Knowledge and Understanding

In this unit pupils will learn...

- Establish a chronological context of the Maya
- Find out how the writing system was used.
- Learn Maya numerals and their maths and calendar system.
- Discover how the Maya transported goods and did trade.
- Learn about the legends of the Maya people, their religion and gods.
- Learn how the Maya made beautiful yet functional objects and their weaving and pottery skills

Enquiry skills and Key concepts

- Examine different types of evidence that tell us about the Maya.
- Research the location and environment where the Maya lived.
- Study different kinds of buildings and investigate aspects of daily life.
- Make deductions about Maya material culture based on historical knowledge.

Key Vocabulary:

Chichen Itza: large ancient city built by the Maya people.

El Castillo: famous sacred pyramid for the God Kukulcan.

Hieroglyphics: system of writing used by the ancient Maya people.

Maya: Mesoamerican Indians occupying a territory in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and northern Belize and Honduras.

Mesoamerica: a historical region extending approximately from central Mexico through to Northern Costa Rica.

Pakal the Great: One of the most famous Maya rulers. He was king of Palenque for 68 years.

Palenque: a Maya city state that flourished in the 7th century

Pok-a-tok: ancient Maya ballgame played with a rubber ball. Was part of political, social and religious life.

Polytheistic: a religion that believes in more than one god.

Sisal: a plant that is native to southern Mexico and widely used in weaving

Tikal: city and ceremonial centre of the ancient Maya civilization.

Yax K'uk Mo: Founder and first king of the dynasty

Marvellous Maya Weblinks and Projects

Our history topic this term will be organised a bit differently since we are all still self-isolating. We will be using purple mash and other websites to help with our learning. Please visit the following websites to help discover just how marvellous the Ancient Maya were.

There are many websites on the Ancient Maya but please do be careful – as always- some information on the internet is not reliable. I have found an article that gives you tips on how to spot a reliable Maya resource.

<https://mayaarchaeologist.co.uk/2016/06/08/untrustworthy-resources-maya/>

BBC Bitesize Ancient Maya

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zq6svcw>

PlanBee has a blog entry with a good basic overview of the Ancient Maya

<https://www.planbee.com/blog/maya-facts-ks2-children-teachers/>

Lots of fun resources, quizzes, activities all about the Marvellous Maya.

<https://mayaarchaeologist.co.uk/pupils/>

Even more Maya facts

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/the-maya>

https://www.ducksters.com/history/maya/pyramids_and_architecture.php

