



The Mayans were an ancient civilisation situated in central America. The Mayan city states began to grow around AD250 and started to decline around AD900 and were abandoned not to be discovered again until the Spanish arrived in AD 1550. We will cover the standards of home life/society, religious beliefs and power/monarchy.

What you should already know

- South America is a continent.
- The **climate** of South America is different to that of the UK.
- **Human and physical geographical** features of a region in South America.
- Other **civilisations** include the Egyptians and the Greeks.
- What **erosion** is and what impact it can have on land.
- The **chronology** of British history.

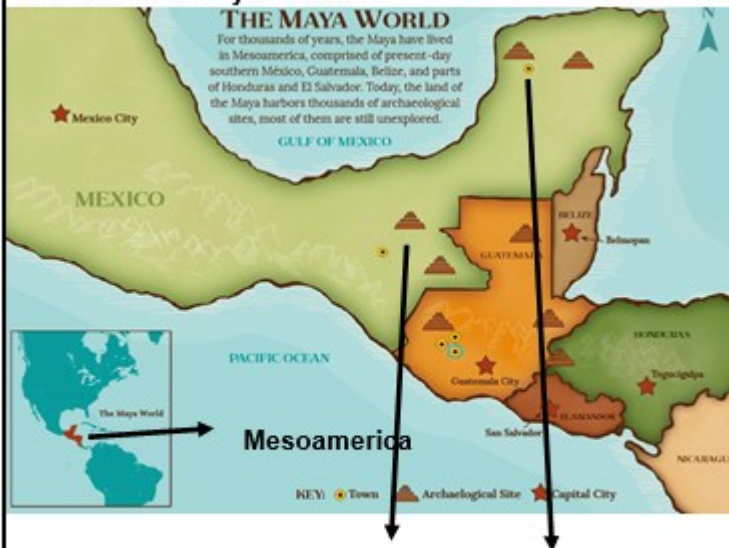
Key knowledge

- Comparison between the Maya and other ancient civilisations
- Maya society (see next box for more detail)
- Artefacts and their purpose
- Maya gods and the creation story
- Maya glyphs and the numerical system
- Maya Pyramids
- Maya calendar— The codices
- Maya City States and Maya decline
- Mayan tourism in the modern day
- When the Maya cities were found abandoned the Tudor monarchs were on the throne: Henry, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth

Mayan Society

- **Mayan cities** had similar layouts to each other. They would have a palace for the ruler, a **plaza** for the marketplaces and temples, in the form of **pyramids**.
- **Mayan cities** were often found near **trade routes** and good farmland.
- Mayans were **polytheists**, believing in many nature gods or **deities**.
- Priests were considered the most important people in the Mayan **culture**. Warriors, craftsmen and traders were next in the **hierarchy**. Farmers, workers and slaves were at the bottom of the **hierarchy**.
- **Mayan merchants** traded many goods including salt, cotton, honey and jade.
- The **Mayan calendar** (Tzolkin) consisted of 260 days and 13 months.
- The **demise** of the **Mayan civilisation** came about because of a mixture of **deforestation**, **land erosion** and **drought**.

Where did the Mayans live?



Famous Mayan cities include Palenque and Chichen Itza, which are found in Mexico.

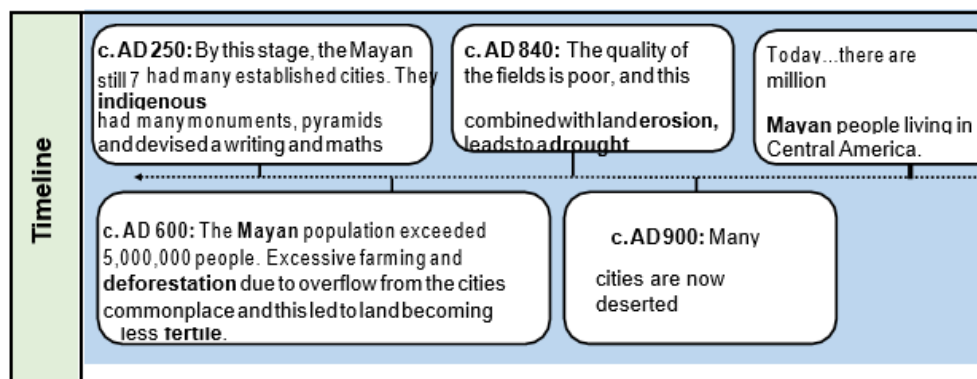


Vocabulary

Vocabulary	
archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains
architecture	the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings
Chichen Itza	a village in Yucatán state in Mexico: site of important Mayan ruins. A UNESCO World Heritage Site
chronology	the order of events in time
circa	Latin meaning 'around'. c. 800 BC means around 800 BC.
civilisation	a human society with its own social organisation and culture .
climate	the general weather conditions that are typical of a place
continent	a very large area of land that consists of many countries . South America is a continent .
culture	activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilisation
deforestation	if an area is deforested, all the trees there are cut down
deities	a god or goddess
demise	something or someone is their end or death
drought	a long period of time during which no rain falls.

economy	the wealth that a society or country gets from business and industry
erosion	the gradual destruction and removal of rock or soil
fertile	rich in nutrients to support the growth of many plants
hierarchy	a system of organising people into different ranks or levels of importance, for example in society
indigenous	people or things belong to the country in which they are found
Mayan	of, relating to, or characteristic of the Maya or any of their languages
merchant	a person who buys or sells goods in large quantities
Mesoamerica	Central America - the countries consist of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Belize; and the western sections of Honduras and Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica
plaza	an open square in a city.
polytheists	the worship of or belief in more than one god
society	people in general, thought of as a large organized group
trade	the activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services

Timeline



Key Skills

- ☐ Examine a variety of sources and use these to make inferences about the past - in particular about **Mayan economy, culture, religious beliefs and society**.
- ☐ Describe how the **Mayan civilisation** has had an impact on modern **society**.
- ☐ Examine the timeline of the **Mayan civilisation** and consider where there was rapid change and where there was a little change. Explain why this may be the case.
- ☐ Compare what was happening in the **Mayan civilisation** with what was happening in Britain at the same time.
- ☐ Place the **chronology** of key events of the **Mayan civilisation** on a time line with a **chronology** of the history of Britain. Where are the overlaps?
- ☐ Compare the **Mayans** with the Greek and Egyptian **civilisations** using a Venn diagram.
- ☐ Describe the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of all groups of people in the **Mayan civilisation**.
- ☐ Use appropriate vocabulary to communicate about the **Mayans**.