

How did the Maya Civilisation compare to the Anglo-Saxons?

Key Dates

2000 BC	Preclassic period begins: this period saw the Maya change from hunter-gatherers to living in cities.
AD 200	Tikal became an important city.
AD 250	The Classic period: the height of the Maya civilisation in which independent city-states flourished.
AD 440	Anglo-Saxon groups arrive in Britain on longships.
AD 600	Chichen Itza: a major Mayan city and an important trading and religious centre.
AD 900	The Postclassic period: some city-states declined whilst others, such as Chichen Itza, continued to develop.
1066	Anglo-Saxon rule came to an end: William the Conqueror defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings and became the first Norman king of England.
1524	The Maya had more contact with Europeans.
1697	The Spanish took control

Key Events, Facts and People

The Mayan, or Maya people made their home in an area called Mesoamerica (modern day Mexico and Central America).

They initially lived in villages and then in cities. Their cities had large temples, stone pyramids, palaces, and ball courts. The Maya created farmland by cutting away the trees and vines of the surrounding rainforest. They grew crops such as corn and beans.

The Maya created a writing system (hieroglyphs), which used pictures instead of words. They also studied the planets and the stars. They observed the skies to make a very accurate calendar. The Maya also developed a system of mathematics.

The Maya worshipped many gods. These included gods of the Sun, the Moon, rain, and corn.

The pyramid in Chichen Itza has 365 steps to the top - one for every day of the year!



Key Vocabulary

abandon	To leave something and not return.
city-state	A large, independent city running the surrounding area.
Classic period	A period of time in the Maya civilisation from AD250 to 900.
creation story	A story which explains how the world was made, from a particular point of view.
decline	When something becomes less important, prominent or reduces in quality.
deforestation	When forests in a large area are cut down
drought	A prolonged period of no rain, leading to water shortages.
hieroglyphics	Maya symbols which represented words or letters.
pyramid	Pyramid-shaped buildings which functioned as temples.
slash and burn	Cutting and burning down trees and plants to clear land.

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Key Questions

- Who were the Maya and when did they live?
- How did the Maya settle in the rainforest?
- What similarities and differences existed between Maya and Anglo-Saxon homes?
- What did the Maya believe?
- What do archaeological remains tell us about Maya cities?
- The decline of the Maya cities: man-made or natural disasters?

Unit Outcomes

- ✓ Describe the key physical features of the Maya civilisation.
- ✓ Sequence the key periods in the Maya civilisation.
- ✓ Identifying periods that were happening in Britain at the same time.
- ✓ Name the features of Maya houses.
- ✓ Identify the similarities and differences between Maya and Anglo-Saxon houses.
- ✓ Explain the Maya creation story.
- ✓ Identify the characteristics of important gods or goddesses.
- ✓ Make deductions about cities.
- ✓ Name the features of Maya cities.
- ✓ Explain the reasons for the decline of the Maya civilisation.
- ✓ Evaluate the reasons for the decline of the Maya civilisation.
- ✓ Identify similarities and differences between the Maya civilisation and the Anglo-Saxons.

Links to other Subjects

D&T - designing, making and evaluating a healthy meal using Mayan food

English - writing a missing scene from a narrative about the Maya civilisation

Art - South American weaving crafts

Music - listen and appraise music from South America

Reading - Rainplayer - David Wisniewski

The Mayans gave us

The Mayans also had an advanced way to represent numbers. They were one of only two cultures in the world to represent the concept of zero.

																			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19

| = 5 •|| = 11

The history of chocolate can be traced to the ancient Mayans.



The Maya people were great builders who constructed roads, cities and temples. Mayan cities had magnificent palaces, decorated with intricate designs.

