

Key Content

know who, where and when the Maya lived

know about Maya writing system and compare to others the children know

know about Maya religious beliefs including the upperworld and underworld

know what still exists from the Maya period

Key Vocabulary

Knowledge

Key Events

BCE	Before the common era—used to show that a date is before the year 1. It is counted backwards.
CE	Common Era—Used to show that a date is after the year 1. This is counted forwards.
Hieroglyphs	a stylized picture of an object representing a word.
Mesoamerica	The term is derived from the Greek and means "Middle America."
Afterlife	Life after death.
Codice	an ancient manuscript text in book form
Abandoned	Having been deserted or left.

- In the 16th century, Spanish explorers came across the ruins of mysterious abandoned cities.
- The Maya had their own writing system. This system used hieroglyphs (pictures) to represent words.
- There were lots of different groups of people living in Mesoamerica and that the Maya first settled there around the year 5000 BCE.
- Mayan society was organized into city states. Each city had its own king who was in complete control over his subjects.
- Mayan society was structured a bit like a pyramid. The higher up the pyramid you were, the more important you were.
- The Maya believed that kings were chosen by the gods.
- The Maya believed in lots of different nature gods who ruled people’s lives and decisions, such as the gods of maize, the Sun and fire.
- The Maya believed in an afterlife. They believed that there was an upperworld (heaven) and an underworld.
- Until quite recently, historians believed the Maya to be a peaceful people. However, they now know that there were many battles between city states.

- 5000-2000 BCE** - Hunter-gatherers live in the rainforests and volcanic mountains.
- 2000 - 1000 BCE**- People begin to farm and settle in small villages. People made crafts including making pottery and carving with jade. Basic trade is developed.
- 900 BCE** - Farmers begin to use irrigation systems to help their plants to grow. This means larger settlements can form.
- 300 BCE** - The first cities begin to develop and the Mayan population grows rapidly.
- 292 BCE** - The first known Mayan writing is produced.
- 50 BCE** - The first temple is built in Cerros.
- 250 CE** - The Maya begin their most powerful era. Astronomy, mathematics and architecture are all developing.
- 300 CE** - The Maya adopt the idea of a monarchy and are now ruled by kings.
- 500 - 800 CE** -Major cities develop and thrive. Temples and palaces are built. Art, culture and religion reach their peak.
- 800-900 CE** - The major cities decline and are abandoned.

