

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

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 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.



Ancient Maya vocabulary bank



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 and writing used to write down important things, including stories about gods and goddesses.

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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).

Ancient Maya periods

Pre-Classic 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.

Classic period

From AD 250 to AD 900, the Ancient Maya thrived, invented and flourished.

Post-Classic period

From AD 900 to 1524, this period saw the development of Chichen Itza, one of the largest and most magnificent Ancient Maya cities.

Contact and Spanish conquest period

From 1524 to 1697, the Ancient Maya had more contact with the Europeans and the Spanish took control.