

# The Mayans

The Mayans were native Americans who lived in Central America and built a great civilisation in the rainforest which lasted for over 2000 years. The Maya people were expert mathematicians, astronomers and architects. They used their talents to create some of the most sophisticated number and writing systems in the world at the time.

Useful websites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zq6sycw>

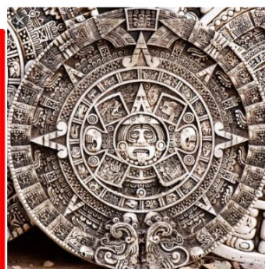
<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/mayans/>

[https://www.ducksters.com/history/maya/daily\\_life.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/maya/daily_life.php)



## Mayan Writing

The Maya created a writing system using symbols called glyphs. Each symbol represented a word or sound. Glyphs were used to record events on stone slabs called stelae.



## Key events:

800BC - Farming and trade becomes established

Around 750BC - Mayan civilisation is a major power in the region

700BC - Mayan writing system is developed

400BC - The earliest solar calendars are invented

100BC - The first pyramids are built

250AD - 950AD - The Classic Period

(the height of Mayan culture)

925AD - The state of Chichen Itza becomes the most powerful

950AD - 1524AD - The Post Classic Period in which cities began to be abandoned by the Maya people and latterly, the Spanish invaded.

## Mayan Calendars

The Mayans were expert mathematicians and astronomers. They used their studies to create calendars. Their calendars were extremely complex but were also used by other Mesoamericans.

### Topic Vocabulary:

Chichen Itza - A Maya city

Classic Period - The height of the Mayan empire

Mesoamerica - Modern day Mexico and Central America

Monument - A structure built to celebrate a person or event.

Temple - A place of religious worship

### General Historical Vocabulary:

AD (Anno Domini) - The period of history after Christians believe Jesus was born - sometimes known as BCE (Before Common Era)

BC (Before Christ) - The period of history before Christians believe Jesus was born - sometimes known as CE (Common Era)

Artefact - An object we can use to study the past

Chronological - In time order

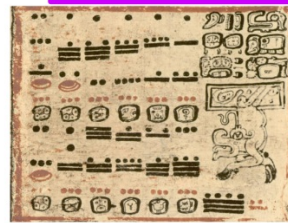
Continuity - A state where everything stays the same.

Continuity - A state of everything being the same.

Source - An object or account which gives information about a period of history

### The Mayan Number System

The Mayans were excellent mathematicians and created possibly the most advanced number system in the world at the time. It allowed them to do complex calculations and make precise astronomical predictions.



### Mayan gods

The Mayans worshipped many different gods. Priests performed special ceremonies to keep the gods happy. They believed that the world was divided into the Heavens, the Earth, the Underworld. Mayan kings were also thought to become gods after they died.

### Sun Worship

One of the most important gods was the Sun god. It was believed that if they did not make sacrifices, the Sun would not continue to make its journey across the sky. Special ceremonies were held in temples and on mountain tops.

