

What was the greatest achievement of the Maya?

Key Knowledge Questions and vocabulary

When and where did the Maya people live?

Existing knowledge about the Mayans. Key facts about the Maya – Established by 1000BC up to around 900AD, eras within Mayan civilisation (links to other times in History especially Egyptians). Mayan's lived mainly in Mexico and Central America (identify on map). Key cities, timeline of key events in Mayan history and identify significance of cultural traits.

Mayan, Maya, civilization, ancient, eras – pre-classic, classic, post-classic, Central America, Mexico, Mesoamerica, culture, BC & AD/CE, settlement

What was everyday life like for the Maya?

Games that children played (Pok-ta-pok), foods (including maize and chocolate), hunting and farming methods. Traditional clothes influenced by social status, Mayan homes.

Mayan, Maya, Pok-ta-pok, maize, chocolate, cacao, farming, crops, physical geography, mountainous, terrace farming, social status, wealthy, poor, manta (blanket), noble, palace, stone, mud, hut, platforms

What were the religious beliefs of the Maya and how did they worship?

Belief in the world as 3 parts – Heavens, Earth and Underworld. Belief in a variety of gods for different purposes including – ItzamnaChac, Ah Bolon Tzacab, Ah K'in and Buluc Chabtan. Link between Mayan kings and gods. Importance of Mayan ceremonies and belief in the afterlife.

Mayan, religion, gods, Heavens, Earth, Underworld, afterlife, Kings, ceremonies, worship

What goods did the Maya trade and where did they trade?

Early Maya were self-sufficient and had no need to trade, when cities grew so did the need for trading. Trading included everyday items - salt, clothes, tools as well as luxury goods – jade, ceramics and jewellery. Food was traded locally whereas luxury items involved long distance trading including to other areas of central America and the Caribbean.

Mayan, trade, trade routes, self-sufficient, luxury, goods, local, long distance, Central America, Caribbean, canoe, journey

What can we find out from Maya buildings?

Importance of architecture in Mayan civilisation including decorative pyramids and palaces. Pyramids built for religious purposes - El Castillo and Temple IV at Tikal. Large palace built in each city for the king and royal family. Link back to traditional Maya homes.

Mayan, architecture, pyramids, palaces, decorative, religion, King, royal family, homes

How did the Maya number system work?

Shell - dot-bar numerical system to represent all numbers, first known use of zero (shell), numbers written vertically, use of base 20 system. Convert modern numbers to the Mayan number system.

Mayan, number system, shell, dot , bar, base 20 system, maths, mathematician

What else can we find out about the Maya?

TBC based on class interest in Mayan civilisation (Hieroglyphics, weaving, medicine, astronomy)

What was the greatest achievement of the Maya?

Class visit to Pitt Rivers Museum for Mayan Civilisation workshop - TBC

Possible cross-curricular links –

Music – Maya musical instruments

DT – Masks, worry dolls, weaving, temple models