



Where did the Ancient Maya live?

The Ancient Maya were people who made their homes in an area known as Mesoamerica. Mesoamerica is the strip of land joining North and South America together. They lived for thousands of years.

The Ancient Maya people shared a common culture and religion but they lived in different city-states. Each city-state had its own ruler.

You can see some of the different city-states on this map.

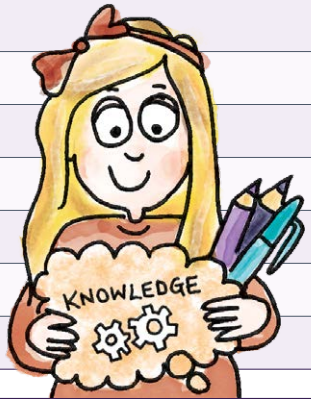


Timeline

- 2000BC
- c.1750BC – First settlements.
- 1000BC – Maya begin to form larger cities.
- 600BC – Successful farming means cities grow larger.
- 500BC – First pyramids built.
- 400BC – Evidence of writing.
- 300BC – Cities are now ruled by kings and queens.
- 400AD to 900AD – Maya golden age.
- 900AD – Some cities abandoned, new cities built.
- 1500AD – Europeans arrive.
- 2021AD – Descendants of the Ancient Maya still live today.

Glossary

1	Maya	the indigenous people of Yucatan and other areas of Central America
2	ancient	something in the very distant past and no longer in existence
3	civilization	a society, culture and particular way of life in a certain area
4	temple	a building devoted to the worship of a god or gods
5	city-states	a city and the surrounding areas which have their own ruler
6	archaeologist	a person who studies human history and prehistory by examining sites and artefacts
7	god/goddess	a superhuman being or spirit who is worshipped
8	ancestor	a person in your family that lived before you
9	worship	to show devotion to a person or a god/goddess
10	sacrifice	killing an animal or a person as an act of worship
11	corn	a plant originating in Central America — also known as maize
12	cacao	seeds from a tree that you can make chocolate from
13	codices	an ancient text in the form of a book
14	glyphs	a character or symbol that stands for a word or part of a word
15	base-20	a number system which works in groups of 20
16	Tzolk'in	the 260-day Maya calendar
17	Haab	the 365-day Maya calendar
18	Long Count	the Maya calendar which measures 1,872,000 days
19	invaders	people who enter a country or region so they can take it over
20	decline	to go down or decrease slowly



Significant People and Places



Central America	Tikal	Chichen Itza	Palenque
Central America is a region found in the southern tip of North America, where the continent joins with South America. The Ancient Maya were one of the great civilizations located in this part of the world.	Tikal is the ruin of a great Ancient Maya city which may have been called Yax Mutal. It is located in a rainforest in modern day Guatemala and was one of the most powerful Maya cities. The Tikal Temple is 47 metres high.	Chichen Itza was built by the Ancient Maya in the Northern Lowlands. It was one of the largest cities and in the centre is the Temple of Kukulcan.	Palenque was an Ancient Maya city-state found in modern day Southern Mexico. It is smaller than Tikal and Chichen Itza but has some of the best architecture and carvings. Pakal the Great ruled here.

Significant People and Places



Ix Chel and Chaac	Great Ball Court	Pakal the Great	The Red Queen
Two of the many Ancient Maya gods and goddesses. Ix Chel was the goddess of the moon, water and cycle of life. Chaac was the god of rain. He could strike with his lightning axe and thunder and rain would come.	The Great Ball Court is located in Chichen Itza but ball courts like this one were found in cities across the Maya lands. Here they played and watched the game of 'Pok-a-Tok'. The game was a life or death battle.	Pakal the Great ruled over the city-state of Palenque. He ruled for 68 years — the longest in history of any ruler in the Americas.	This mask was uncovered in the Tomb of the Red Queen in Palenque. The remains in the tomb are thought to belong to Lady Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw, the wife of Pakal the Great.