



Mayan Civilization



Central America

Timeline								
1100 B.C.	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	300 B.C.	100 B.C.	600	800	900	1502
The first hunter-gatherers settle on the pacific coast	Village farming and trade become established	First solar calendars invented	Cities become centres for trade and Kings begin to rule	First pyramids are built	Cities start expanding quickly	Building of stepped pyramid of Chichen-Itza	Decline of Mayan cities	First contact with Europeans is made

Key Vocabulary

astronomy		The Mayans were able to predict solar eclipses and used observatories and shadow-casting devices.
calendar		These were circular and charted the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets, with 365 days in a year.
hieroglyphs		They used about 800 symbols to create writing, often on folded pages forming a book (codex).
Kings/Queens		The King/Queen was thought to be given the right to rule by the gods. Each city had a palace for them.
maize		The staple food of the Mayans which was so important that they even had a maize god.
numbers		Using a base 20 system (we use base 10), they used dots and bars to create numbers and had a symbol for zero.
pok-a-tok		A game where large rubber balls were aimed at stone hoops. Losers were sometimes sacrificed to the gods!
pyramids		Built with a temple at the top to give sacrifices to the gods, others were built for the gods themselves.
sacrifice		Humans and animals were used as a blood offering to gods, mostly war prisoners by decapitation or heart removal.

General Knowledge

Mayan Dress
Commoners and slaves wore plain loincloths, but the elite added feathers, animal skins or gems. Noblemen covered their lower half with a colourful garment and wore large, elaborate headdresses. Women wore skirts and tunics. Footwear was simple, usually being barefoot or sandals.

Trade
Merchants drove their human caravans along roads, down rivers and around coasts to trade with fellow Mayans and other Mesoamericans. The geography was so varied that they relied on trade to get the things they needed off each other, from maize, fish and salt to stingray spines (used for bloodletting) and valuable stones such as jade and obsidian.

What happened to the Mayans?
Around 900, many cities in the southern lowlands were abandoned but states in the uplands of the Yucatan peninsula continued to flourish until the arrival of the Spanish in 1502. One belief is that the Toltecs and the Aztecs took over with their own empires but later, when the Spanish arrived, they brought disease and forced them to give up their gods and become Christians.

Famous Figures

Mayan Gods
Some were in human form, others in animal but the most supreme god was Itzamna, the creator god, lord of day and night and ruler of the heavens. Many looked after the weather or crops such as Chac, the rain god and Kinich-Ahau the sun god. Priests would perform ceremonies (including sacrifices) to please them and Kings were thought to turn into gods after they died. They believed the world was divided into three parts (Heaven, Earth and the Underworld), linked together by a giant world tree.

Palenque Rulers
Archaeologists can name 17 rulers of the city-state of Palenque from 431-800. The most famous was Pakal I, also known as Pakal the Great, who ruled from 615-683. He began his rule at the age of just 12 and constructed some of Palenque's finest buildings and founded a great dynasty. His funeral mask was carved from stunning Jade.

The Mayans tied boards to their babies' heads to produce a flat forehead. They also tried to make their babies cross-eyed! Big noses were also considered

Mexico



Central America

Timeline

1100 B.C.	800 B.C.	1517 AD	846	1877	1913	1946	1968	1992
The first hunter-gatherers settle on the pacific coast	Village farming and trade become established	Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, the first European to visit Mexican territory	U.S. declares war on Mexico	Mexico is a under a dictatorship but has huge economic growth	Lots of conflicts and riots	The first civilian president elected. Huge gaps grow between rich and poor.	Mexico hosts the Olympic games.	The North American Fair Trade Agreement

General

Key Vocabulary

Continent		A continent is one of several very large landmasses. There are 7 continents.
Contour line		A line on a map or chart joining points of equal height or depth.
Fairtrade		Fair trade is the worldwide movement that aims to help farmers in less economically developed countries. It means that they will receive a fair price for their products.
Migration		The movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions
Migrant		A person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions.
Landscape		This is area of land as one can see it.
Poverty		This means not having enough money for basic needs such as food, water, shelter, or toilets.
Environmental		This relating to the natural world and the impact of human activity on its condition.

The flag shows three bands in green, white and red. The colours stand for independent, unity and religion. In the middle is a picture of an eagle, sitting on a cactus, eating a snake. Legend state it dates back to the Aztecs.

- Population: 130 million people live in Mexico (2018)
- Capital: Mexico City with 9 million inhabitants is the country's biggest city.
- Mexico City metropolitan area: 21.3 million (2018)
- Name: United Mexican States (in Spanish: Estados Unidos Mexicanos)
- Government: Democracy, Republic
- Language: Spanish
- Religion: Christians (Roman Catholics 89%)
- History: Mexico was conquered and colonised by the Spanish from the 16th century