



The Ancient Maya

Summary

The Maya Empire was at its most powerful around 600 A.D. The Maya lived in the country now known as Guatemala. The Maya were known for their skilled agriculture, pottery, hieroglyphic writing, calendar making and mathematics. They left behind an impressive amount of architecture and symbolic artwork. The Maya were deeply religious and worshiped various gods. They performed elaborate religious rituals and ceremonies in order to please the gods.



Key Words

Ancient	Belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence.
Astronomy	The branch of science which deals with space and the physical universe as a whole.
Cacao	Seeds that the Maya used to make chocolate.
Cenote	A sinkhole or pit filled with water. Cenotes were sources of water for the Maya.
Chichen Itza	The most powerful Mayan city.
Civilisation	The society, culture and way of life of a particular area.
Classic Period	The golden age of the Maya civilization.
Code	A book written by the Maya that was created by one long sheet of paper.
Glyph	A symbol used in writing.
Kukulcan	The Maya god of the 4 elements.
Ah Puch	The Maya god of the underworld (death).
Night Jaguar	The Maya god of the night.
Popol Vuh	A book or codex that described Mayan religion and mythology.
Pyramid	The Maya built step pyramids with flat tops. At the top, they built a temple to their gods.
Sacrifice	To give up something valued for the sake of something else.
Settlement	A place where people have come to live and have built homes.
Temple	A building devoted to the worship of gods.

1100 BC Settlements begin to appear

100 BC The first Maya Pyramids are built

900-1200 AD El Castillo is built

1502 AD First contact with Europe

700 BC Maya writing is developed

250 AD Beginning of the Classic Period

1000 AD Chichen Itza is the most powerful city