

The Abbey Hill CURRICULUM

How mighty were The Maya?



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How mighty were The Maya?

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Key Idea:



Imagine a world where towering pyramids and ancient rituals shaped a mighty civilization. The Mayan people, who lived in Mesoamerica, built incredible cities and developed advanced knowledge in farming, astronomy, and writing. They believed their gods controlled the world and performed ceremonies to honor them. Discover the rise of the Mayans, the mysteries behind their decline, and how their achievements still influence us today.

We will:



Contribute a gallery to our School Museum, showcasing learning about The Mayans.

Core Text:



The Chamber
Gareth Baker



Core Knowledge



1. The Mayans began around 2000 BCE in Mesoamerica, evolving from small villages into a complex society through agriculture and settlements.
2. Mayan city-states like Tikal and Chichen Itza were independent, each with its own ruler
3. E&D: Lady Xoc was a significant queen in Mayan culture, known for her leadership. The Mayans worshipped multiple gods linked to nature and the cosmos, performing rituals to honor their deities and ensure prosperity.
4. Pok-a-Tok, a ceremonial ball game, symbolized cosmic battles and sometimes involved human sacrifices to please the gods.
5. The Mayans developed advanced farming techniques such as irrigation.
6. The Mayan civilization's decline around the 9th century CE remains uncertain.
7. Tulum's well-preserved ruins provide valuable insight into Mayan culture.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Being a Historian:










- Know that attitudes, beliefs and opinions about consequences may differ by groups of people.
- Know that people make decisions for a variety of reasons e.g. personal gain, the opinions of others, religious beliefs.
- Know the connections between local, regional, national and international history and between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history.
- Know which sources are generally considered most reliable for gaining an accurate understanding of events or periods in time.
- Know that some events, people and changes have been interpreted in different ways and suggest possible reasons for this.
- Know that some sources may be considered more useful or reliable for different purposes and gaining an understanding, than others.












Lesson 1: Who were the Mayans and where did they live?

Section	Details
 Learning Intention	To understand who the Mayans were and where they lived. <i>(NC: A non-European society that provides contrast with British history — Mayan civilization c. AD 900)</i>
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know the connections between local, regional, national and international history and between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history.
 Key Knowledge	The Mayans began around 2000 BCE in Mesoamerica, evolving from small villages into a complex society through agriculture and settlements.
 What the Teacher Does	Introduce Mesoamerica using maps and aerial photos. Model locating countries and ancient Mayan sites like Tikal and Chichen Itza. Provide printed maps and physical features overlays.
 What the Pupils Do	Use atlases and digital maps to locate Mayan regions. Label a map showing countries, rivers, and city-states. Add a colour key to show areas of agriculture and terrain.
 How the Lesson Will Be Evidenced	A labelled map of Mesoamerica with annotations about farming and settlements.
 Adaptation <i>(Resources and Aids)</i>	Use colour-coded overlays, icon markers and pre-printed map outlines for scaffolding.








Lesson 2: What were Mayan city-states like?

Section	Details
 Learning Intention	To understand how Mayan city-states functioned and who ruled them.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know that people make decisions for a variety of reasons e.g. personal gain, the opinions of others, religious beliefs.
 Key Knowledge	Mayan city-states like Tikal and Chichen Itza were independent, each with its own ruler.
 What the Teacher Does	Share images and a short video tour of major Mayan cities. Explain how they were ruled. Provide scenario cards for role-play.
 What the Pupils Do	In groups, take on the roles of rulers of different city-states and present to the class how they would govern (e.g., taxes, laws, gods).
 How the Lesson Will Be Evidenced	Annotated role-play sheets showing the city name, ruler, key decisions, and values.
 Adaptation <i>(Relational Approaches)</i>	Mixed-ability groups with clear roles and teacher check-ins during group work.












Lesson 3: Why was Lady Xoc important?

Section	Details
 Learning Intention	To explore the role of women in Mayan society through the story of Lady Xoc.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know that some events, people and changes have been interpreted in different ways and suggest possible reasons for this.
 Key Knowledge	Lady Xoc was a significant queen in Mayan culture, known for her leadership.
 What the Teacher Does	Share artefacts and stone carvings depicting Lady Xoc. Read an adapted historical account. Lead discussion on gender roles.
 What the Pupils Do	Compare two portrayals of Lady Xoc (one ceremonial, one as warrior queen). Write a short biography or diary entry in role as Lady Xoc.
 How the Lesson Will Be Evidenced	Written biography or diary entry from the viewpoint of Lady Xoc.
 Adaptation (Preteaching)	Preteach key vocabulary (e.g. “noble”, “ritual”, “sacrifice”) and provide sentence starters for writing.








Lesson 4: What was Pok-a-Tok and why did it matter?

Section	Details
 Learning Intention	To investigate the cultural and religious significance of Pok-a-Tok.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know that people make decisions for a variety of reasons e.g. religious beliefs.
 Key Knowledge	Pok-a-Tok, a ceremonial ball game, symbolized cosmic battles and sometimes involved human sacrifices.
 What the Teacher Does	Show a re-enactment or animation of Pok-a-Tok. Explain symbolism and consequences. Lead a class discussion about rules and fairness.
 What the Pupils Do	Create a rules poster for Pok-a-Tok, using Mayan symbols and explaining its purpose. Optional: act out parts of the game.
 How the Lesson Will Be Evidenced	Illustrated Pok-a-Tok rule sheet to display in museum.
 Adaptation (Dual Coding)	Provide a visual storyboard of game rules and icons to support vocabulary.












Lesson 5: How did the Mayans farm and feed themselves?

Section	Details
 Learning Intention	To understand Mayan farming methods and why they were advanced.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know which sources are generally considered most reliable for gaining an accurate understanding of events or periods in time.
 Key Knowledge	The Mayans developed advanced farming techniques such as irrigation.
 What the Teacher Does	Present visual sources (drawings, animations) of Mayan farming. Discuss irrigation, terrace farming. Provide a source evaluation table.
 What the Pupils Do	Explore sources and rank them by reliability and usefulness. Create a simple labelled diagram of a farming system.
 How the Lesson Will Be Evidenced	Diagram of a farming method with explanation of how it worked.
 Adaptation (Environment)	Use table trays with labelled models of farming systems (clay terraces, paper channels) for hands-on exploration.

Lesson 6: What can we learn from Mayan ruins today?

Section	Details
 Learning Intention	To explore what Mayan ruins reveal about their beliefs and way of life.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know that some sources may be considered more useful or reliable for different purposes and gaining an understanding than others.
 Key Knowledge	Tulum's well-preserved ruins provide valuable insight into Mayan culture.
 What the Teacher Does	Share photos and 3D tours of Tulum ruins. Provide source packs (temple drawings, burial sites, murals). Model inferring from evidence.
 What the Pupils Do	Use sources to complete a museum exhibit panel (mini poster or box display) explaining what one ruin tells us about Mayan life.
 How the Lesson Will Be Evidenced	Completed museum exhibit: written panel, 3D model or illustrated artefact display.
 Adaptation (Chunking)	Pupils work through 3 source stations in order with scaffolding prompts at each.



HOW MIGHTY WERE THE MAYANS?

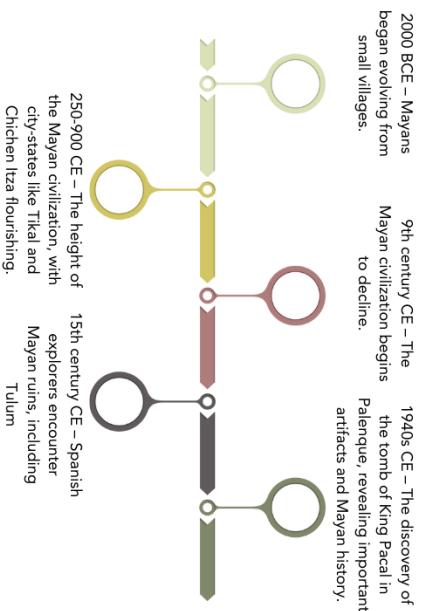
Imagine a world where towering pyramids and ancient rituals shaped a mighty civilization. The Mayan people, who lived in Mesoamerica, built incredible cities and developed advanced knowledge in farming, astronomy, and writing. They believed their gods controlled the world and performed ceremonies to honor them. Discover the rise of the Mayans, the mysteries behind their decline, and how their achievements still influence us today.



KEY KNOWLEDGE

- The Mayans began around 2000 BCE in Mesoamerica, evolving from small villages into a complex society through agriculture and settlements.
- Mayan city-states like Tikal and Chichen Itza were independent, each with its own ruler.
- Lady Xoc was a significant queen in Mayan culture, known for her leadership.
- The Mayans worshipped multiple gods linked to nature and the cosmos, performing rituals to ensure prosperity.
- Pok-a-Tok, a ceremonial ball game, symbolized cosmic battles and sometimes involved human sacrifices to please the gods.
- The Mayans developed advanced farming techniques such as irrigation.
- The Mayan civilization's decline around the 9th century CE remains uncertain.
- Tulum's well-preserved ruins provide valuable insight into Mayan culture.

TOPIC TIMELINE



FAMOUS 3



Lady Xoc – A powerful queen known for her leadership and ceremonial practices in the Mayan world.



King Pacal – A ruler of the city-state of Palenque, famous for his tomb and achievements in architecture and writing.



Dr. George E. Stuart – A renowned archaeologist who made significant contributions to Mayan studies, particularly through his work at Tikal.

GLOSSARY

- **Civilization** – A complex society with its own systems of government, culture, and economy.
- **City-State** – An independent city that also governs the surrounding land.
- **Pok-a-Tok** – A ceremonial Mayan ball game, often involving a ritualistic element.
- **Rituals** – Ceremonial acts performed for religious or cultural reasons.
- **Decline** – The gradual collapse or fall of a civilization.



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