

Upper Key Stage Two Forest Academy: Knowledge Organiser: The Americas

Summary

The Maya were a civilisation who lived in Mesoamerica (now Central America) between approximately 2000 BCE and 900CE.

They are known for being the first Mesoamericans to develop writing. They also had a sophisticated culture in which they lived in city states.

They built spectacular monuments and stepped pyramids – some (e.g. Chichen Itza) have become world tourist destinations in the modern day.

They were also well-known for their advanced maths and calendars. Around 900CE, Maya cities became abandoned. No one knows for sure why this happened.



Artefact An object that is made by a person, such as a tool or a decoration, especially

civilisation Human society which is organised.

empire A group of countries ruled by a single person, government or country

hieroglyphics A system of writing using pictures not words.

kingdom A place ruled by a king, queen or important person.

worship To have or show strong feelings or respect and admiration for a God or God-

Pitz The ancient Maya ballgame. Played with a rubber ball ranging in size from that of a softball to a football, players would attempt to bounce the ball without using their hands through stone hoops attached to the sides of the ball court.

myth A story often describing the adventures of beings with more than human powers that attempts to explain mysterious events

Ancient ball game Pitz



Timeline

1100 BC Hunter gatherers settle along the Pacific coast.	1100 BC Settlements begin to appear.	700 BC Maya writing is developed.	100 BC The first Maya Pyramids are built.	900 -1200 AD El Castillo is built.	250 AD Beginning of the Classic Period.	1000 AD Chichen Itza is the most powerful city.	1502 AD First contact with Europe.
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The Mayan hieroglyphic writing is one of the most visually striking writing systems of the world. It is also very complex, with hundreds of unique signs or glyphs in the form of humans, animals, supernaturals, objects, and abstract designs.



The Mayan calendar systems are the most complex and intricate. They used 20-day months, and had two calendar years: the 260-day Sacred Round, or tzolkin, and **the 365-day Vague Year, or haab**. These two calendars coincided every 52 years.