



Topic:	Ancient Mayans	Year:	4	Term:	Spring
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Key Facts

Who were the Ancient Mayans?

The Ancient Mayans were an ancient civilisation.

Where did they live?

They lived in the Yucatán in North America. Today, this area is known as southern Mexico, northern Belize, and western Honduras.

Maps



What was important to them?

They were very religious people who performed ceremonies and rituals for their gods.



One of these rituals was human sacrifice. They believed that making sacrifices would offer them more help from their gods.

They had priests who they believed communicated with their gods.

They built elaborate architecture such as pyramids, temples, palaces and observatories.

The Mayans observed the stars to work out the number of days in a year.

They were able to develop their own calendar, writing, and mathematics system. Their writing system used their own hieroglyphs.

The Mayans were farmers who grew maize crops and hunted for animals to eat.



Key Facts

There were three main periods of Ancient Mayan times:

Pre-classic (2000BC – 250CE)	Classic (250CE – 900CE)	Post Classic (900CE – 1500CE)
Farming villages begin to develop.	Some parts of Ancient Maya civilisation collapse. Archaeologists do not know why.	Chichen Itza becomes the most powerful city-state. But is later abandoned.
Monarchy is adopted. They are ruled by kings.	Anglo-Saxons and Vikings battle for control of Britain.	Spanish Conquistadors arrive, signalling the end of the Ancient Mayans.
The first pyramids are built.		



Vocabulary

Word	Explanation
Ahau / Ahaw	The main king or lord of a Maya city or state
archaeologist	Someone who studies the past by exploring old and ancient remains
civilisation	A large group of people who live together under the same rules and laws
codex	An ancient manuscript
excavate	To remove by scooping or digging out
Haab'	The Maya solar calendar that was used to measure time and had 365 days
hieroglyphs	Writing that uses pictures, characters or symbols to represent words or sounds
Itzamna	The main god of the Maya; Itzamna was the god of fire who created the Earth
monarch	A person who rules over a country or state, usually a king or a queen
motif	A recurring architectural or decorative design
sacrifice	The act of killing something or someone as part of a ritual and gift to the gods