

Spring 1 – The Mayans

- There are many theories as to why the empire declined. Some of these were:
- Constant war
- A drought
- A killer disease
- The crops no longer grew on the land so they had no grain or maize to eat.

Why did the empire decline?

- Mayans sacrificed animals and people, mainly slaves.
- Mayans believed the only way the sun would rise every morning was if they sacrificed someone every day to the gods.
- Mayans believed in an afterlife, so buried the dead with objects that will help them in the afterlife.

Why did Mayans carry out human sacrifice?

- We know what life was like because of surviving objects, buildings, sculptures, writing and art from the Mayan civilisation.



How do we know what life was like?

- They developed their own mathematics and had a concept of zero. This allowed them to count.
- They had their own system of writing.
- They knew a lot about the stars and had their own calendar.

Why do we study Mayans?

- They were great architects and built large cities.
- They worshipped their own gods.
- They were sculptors and craftsmen.
- They played ball games.

How did they become important?

- They learned how to trade with other civilisations, such as those in Mexico.
- They learned how to grow crops and when the best time was to grow them so they had plenty to eat.
- They sold their expensive materials, such as precious stones.
- They took over other areas nearby.
- They knew how to live in the jungle.

What was everyday life like?

The king, the link between his people and the gods was at the top of Mayan society.

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Then came top generals, scribes and priests.

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Then came merchants and warriors

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above the farmers and labourers.

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Right at the bottom were the slaves.

Learning Journey

Why do we study the Maya in history?

LO: To understand the accomplishments and developments made by the Mayans.

How did the Maya become so important?

LO: To give reasons for the growth of the Mayan civilisation.

What was every day life like in Mayan civilisation?

LO: Understand what life was like for both the rich and the poor Mayans.

How do we know what Mayan life was like?

LO: To make conclusions based on physical clues and ask historical questions.

Why did Mayans carry out human sacrifice?

LO: To explain why human sacrifice was practised.

Why did the Mayan empire decline?

LO: To understand and explain why the Mayan empire declined.

Discuss how life was different for the Mayans, comparing it to life now.

Explain why the Mayan empire declined and discuss the lasting impact of the civilisation today.