

Key Vocabulary

The Americas	A large body of land that comprises of the two continents: North and South America.
native people	People that are originally from a land since birth.
conquistadors	Spanish explorers that invaded and plundered lands in the Americas.
Mesoamerica	Mesoamerica is the piece of land that connects the North and South American continents.
archaeologists	People who study human history through historical sites and artefacts.
hieroglyphs	A picture or object that represents a word or sound in an ancient language.
absolute monarchy	A king or queen that is not restricted in their rule by constitution or law.
blood sacrifice	The process where slaves or captives are sacrificed by the process of drawing blood.
maize	A plant that produces a large harvest of what resembles hard sweet corn.
afterlife	Mayans believed that when people died, they get another life. People would go to either heaven or the underworld. Only sacrificed people went straight to heaven.
city state	City states had control over their own city but were still ruled by the monarchy.
stelae	Stone columns that the Mayans used to engrave their hieroglyphs.
codices	Books made from bark that contained writing from the Mayans.

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Key people and gods

Christopher Columbus
-Spanish explorer that first discovered the Americas.

Hernan Cortés
-Spanish explorer, who discovered the Aztec people.

Kukulkan
-God of the temple of El Castillo.

King Tecan Uman
-One of the last Mayan kings.

Kinich Ahau
-The Sun God

Chacc
-God of Rain

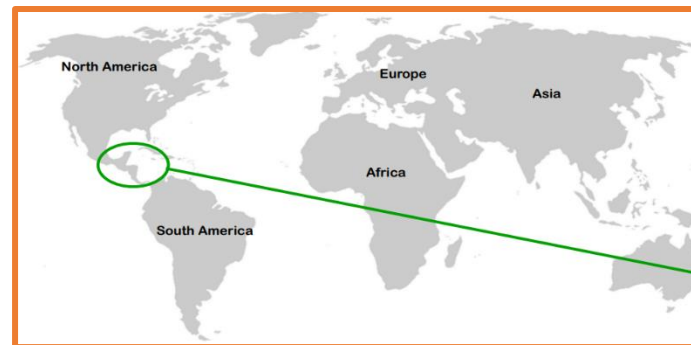
Itzamna
-God of Agriculture and Education

King Shield Jaguar
-One of the last Mayan kings.

The Aztecs and the Maya were not part of the same ancient empire. The Maya collapsed approximately 600 years before the peak of the Aztecs. Both Empires did exist in Mexico but their centres were in differing locations with Maya occupying other central American countries.



The Maya people were not blood-thirsty savages. They were a highly intelligent, peaceful people and one of the only native American races to develop their own system of writing.



Key dates

900 BC	Farmers begin to use irrigation systems to help their plants to grow. This means larger settlements can form.
300 BC	The first cities begin to develop and the Mayan population grows rapidly.
250 AD	The Maya begin their most powerful era. Astronomy, mathematics and architecture are all developing.
500 – 800 AD	Major cities develop and thrive, such as Tikal, Palenque, Uxmal and Copan. Fine temples and palaces are built and art, culture and religion all reach their peak.
800 – 900 AD	The major cities begin to decline and are eventually abandoned.
1492 AD	Christopher Columbus first sailed from Europe to North America. He first landed in what is now the Bahamas.
1519 AD	Hernan Cortés sailed for Mexico. He discovered the Aztec people, whom he defeated two years later.
2022 AD	The Mayans still live today but have integrated into wider society.



The Maya Knowledge Organiser