

Key Knowledge

- The Maya lived in many countries in the South of the continent North America.
- The Maya arrived in Central American jungles around 12,000 years ago.
- There are around 6 million Maya living today, with the largest groups living in Mexico.
- The Maya had an advanced farming method for their time, called terrace farming.
- The Maya were experts at astronomy and made some of the very first calendars by tracking the sun, moon, stars and planets.
- The Maya ate many different types of food. Their main food source was maize, which they even worshipped!
- The Maya were incredible at architecture, using their skills and knowledge to build whole cities based around huge step pyramids, some of which can still be seen today.

Key Texts

The *Mystery at the Maya Ruins*, written by Carole Marsh, explores a family's intriguing and dangerous journey through the Maya Ruins. *The Hero Twins*, is an exciting adventure of how two brothers overcome the forces of the Maya underworld.



Key Vocabulary

exploration	Search an unfamiliar area to learn about it.
mural	A painting that has been directly painted on a wall.
archaeologist	A scientist who looks at man-made objects to find things about people in history.
civilisation	A group of people with their own languages and way of life.
ancestor	A person who someone has descended from many generations ago.
excavate	To make a hole or hollow place in by digging.
Mayan	A large family of languages spoken in Central America and Mexico.
merchant	Someone who trades goods.
naah	A traditional Mayan house
quetzal	A bird of the trogon family, which has brightly-coloured feathers.
relic	An object of historical interest that has survived for a long time.
ritual	A religious or solemn ceremony.
settlement	A community of people living together in one place
territory	An area of land that someone rules.

BIG QUESTION: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAYA?

KEY QUESTIONS:

- HOW DO WE KNOW THE MAYANS EXISTED IN THE FIRST PLACE?
- HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAYA?
- WHAT WERE THE MAYANS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS?
- HOW WERE THE MAYANS SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT TO OTHER CIVILISATIONS?
- HOW DID THE MAYANS BUILD SUCH INCREDIBLE ARCHITECTURE?

1100BC – The first hunter gatherers settle along the Pacific Coast and then expand into central highlands.

700BC – Mayan writing is developed in Mesoamerica.

300BC – Nobles and Kings are made rulers.

683AD – Pakal the Great of Palenque dies and is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions.

1000BC

500BC

500AD

1502AD

800BC – Village farming and trade becomes established throughout the Maya Region.

400BC – Earliest solar calendars are carved in stone.

100BC – The first pyramids are built.

900AD – The Maya mysteriously 'disappear'

1502AD – First contact with Europeans made.