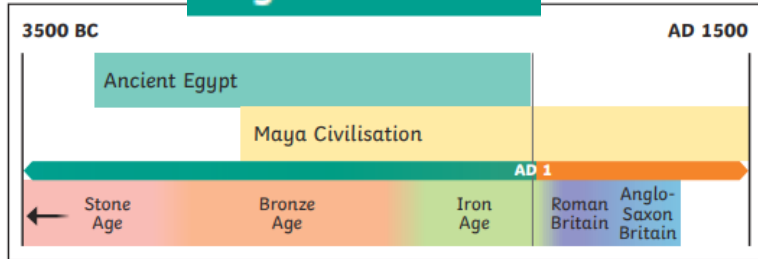


Maya Civilisation



Key Dates

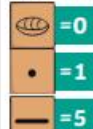
(c. stands for circa, which means approximately)

c. 2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
c. 300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to a drought . People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.
AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.
AD 1500s (16 th century)	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.
AD 1839	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood, explore Copán and other cities including Chichén Itzá, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation .
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

Why is it important to save our rainforests?

Maya Numbers

The Maya developed an advanced number system for their time. They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero as a placeholder. The number system used three symbols in different combinations.



Food

The Maya people mainly ate **maize** (corn). **Maize** was very important to them as they believed that the first humans were made from **maize** dough by the gods. The Maya made a bitter chocolatey drink from **cacao beans** that was enjoyed by the rich. It was used for medicines and in ceremonies. The **cacao beans** were highly valued and even used as a form of money.



Location of Tropical Rainforests



The Maya built cities, pyramids and ornate sculptures in the rainforest.

Rainforests

A rainforest is a very **dense**, warm and wet forest with a tropical **climate**.

They are habitats for millions of different animals and plants.

Deforestation

Deforestation is the deliberate act of clearing large areas of trees through cutting down or burning them. This happens so the land and trees can be used for other purposes.

Reasons

Trees are a useful and valuable material and are used for buildings, furniture, firewood and paper. Species of trees, like teak and mahogany, found in rainforests are ideal building materials. Land is also cleared for planting crops like soy and producing palm oil - an edible vegetable oil which can be found in foods and other products like toothpaste and shampoo.

Both smaller (subsistence) and larger-scale (commercial) farming require areas of forest to be cut down and burnt to improve the soil and make room for cattle.

Writing

The Maya writing system was used to write several different Maya languages. It was made up of many symbols called glyphs. Logograms are glyphs representing whole words. Syllabograms are glyphs representing units of sound (syllables). The glyphs were carved on stone buildings and monuments and painted on pottery. Maya **scribes** also wrote books called **codices**.

