

Module 9: Empires of Africa and the Americas

Topic 2 Content: The Mayan Civilization

Introduction

The Mayan Civilization

THE MAYAN
CIVILIZATION

Click on each of the bars in the accordion to learn more about the Mayan civilization.

- Geography
- Economy
- Society
- Government
- Religion
- Achievements

The image shows a digital interface for an interactive lesson. At the top, a dark grey header contains the text 'The Mayan Civilization'. Below this is a white rectangular area with a thin border. Inside this area, the words 'THE MAYAN CIVILIZATION' are written in a large, pink, outlined, sans-serif font. Below the title, there is a line of smaller black text: 'Click on each of the bars in the accordion to learn more about the Mayan civilization.' To the right of this text area is a vertical menu consisting of six dark red rectangular bars. Each bar has a white label written vertically in a sans-serif font. From top to bottom, the labels are: 'Geography', 'Economy', 'Society', 'Government', 'Religion', and 'Achievements'.

Click on each of the bars in the accordion to learn more about the Mayan civilization.


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Geography

The Mayan Civilization

Geography



The Mayan civilization existed on and around the Yucatán Peninsula, in modern-day Mexico. The Yucatán Peninsula is surrounded by the Waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. On the Yucatán Peninsula, the plant life is primarily short and tall tropical jungle.

Image: The Yucatán Peninsula is the darkest shaded area on the map

Economy

Society

Government

Religion

Achievements

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Economy

The Mayan Civilization

Geography	Economy	Economy <p>The economy of the Maya was primarily based on agriculture that relied on the use of raised fields and forest gardens. Crops grown by the Mayans included maize (corn), cotton, and sunflower seeds. The Mayan civilization developed methods of irrigation to support their agriculture. In addition, the Maya people traded with other cultures in Central America; however, there is evidence that they also traded with the people of the Caribbean islands. Items like cacao, jade, and obsidian were traded.</p> <p><i>Image: Corn was one of the crops grown throughout the Mayan civilization</i></p>	Society	Government	Religion	Achievements
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Image: Corn was one of the crops grown throughout the Mayan civilization

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Society

The Mayan Civilization

Geography	Economy	Society	Society <p>The social structure of the Mayan civilization included a hierarchy that placed priests, nobility, and warriors in an upper class. The majority of the people were peasants, who were small farmers with tiny plots of land. Using the maize grown through their agricultural system, peasants paid taxes to the king. The division of labor in a family meant that men did the hunting and farming, while women, who had little to no rights, were responsible for caring for children and maintaining the home. Mayan society also included slaves, who were often enemy soldiers captured in battle.</p> <p><i>Image: A sculpture of a Mayan warrior</i></p>	Government	Religion	Achievements
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Image: A sculpture of a Mayan warrior

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Government

The Mayan Civilization


Geography

Economy

Society

Government

Government



The government of the Mayan civilization was organized into individual city-states ruled by kings. The city-states were fairly independent of one another, and would often clash in war. They were typically organized around a pyramid which served as a temple to the gods. The Mayan city-state of Chichén Itzá was one of the largest and most famous.

Image: Chichén Itzá was a city-state of the Mayan civilization

Religion

Achievements

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Image: Chichén Itzá was a city-state of the Mayan civilization

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Religion

The Mayan Civilization

Geography	Economy	Society	Government	Religion	<p>Religion</p> <p>The religion of the Mayan civilization was polytheistic, and its people practiced ritual human sacrifice. Gods were associated with the sun, sky, and the cycle of maize growth. Mayan priests were aware of the concept of time, and many religious practices revolved around lunar, solar, or earthly cycles.</p> <p><i>Image: Ancient Mayan sculpture of an old Mayan god</i></p>	Achievements
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Image: Ancient Mayan sculpture of an old Mayan god

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Achievements

The Mayan Civilization

- Geography
- Economy
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- Achievements**

Achievements



The Mayans made numerous achievements, including a system of writing and mathematics. Like the ancient Egyptians, Mayans based their writing system on hieroglyphics, or representative symbols for sounds or objects, that they etched into materials like bark, clay, and bone, and were sometimes compiled into makeshift "books." Their system of writing included numerals. The Mayans had a complex 365 day calendar system based on solar and astronomical observations. They also

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Image: The Mayan calendar

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Conclusion

The infographic is titled "The Mayan Civilization" in a dark header. On the left side, there are six vertical maroon bars with white text labels: "Geography", "Economy", "Society", "Government", "Religion", and "Achievements". To the right of these bars is a white rectangular box containing the following text:

THE DECLINE OF THE MAYAN CIVILIZATION

Between the years of 850 and 1000 A.D. (C.E.), Mayan city-states declined and were abandoned. When Spanish forces arrived in the areas inhabited by this ancient culture in the sixteenth century, many of the Mayan cities and artifacts were burned or destroyed. Because of this, and the environment in which the Maya lived, there is still much to be learned about this fascinating civilization.

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