

The Basics

Mesoamerica (Geography link)	The part of the Americas where the Maya lived- see the map on the back.
The civilisation was most prominent from 1800 BCE/ BC to 1500 CE/ AD Lasting around 3300 years	
civilisation	The society, culture, and way of life of a particular area.
culture	The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.
customs	A traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time.
religion	A set of beliefs followed by a group of people.
historian	Someone who learns about the past from a range of sources.
sources	Where evidence about the past can be found. These can be primary eg: buildings, skeletons, books written by the people being studied or secondary eg: books written by historians and tv programs based on primary sources.
codex/ codices	A very old book/ books. (There are only 4 of these left from the Ancient Maya.)
ruler	Person in charge of a society, the Ancient Mayan Cities had their own kings and queens.
Mayan Calendar	The way in which the Maya divided up the days and years and planned events and farming. It was actually three calendars working together. (One of them had 365 days in it like ours.)
Aztecs and Incas	Other civilisations living in Mesoamerica around the same time as the Ancient Maya.

Everyday Life (Geography links)

tropical forest	The environment in which the Ancient Maya lived, it is also known as the jungle. It was very warm with lots of rain.
biome	A large area with similar weather, animals and plants eg rainforests, deserts, tropical forests.
native	Plants and animals which naturally come from a country and haven't been imported from a different one.
natural resources	Things available in the local environment- eg: food, trees
medicinal	Plants which can be used as medicines- the Maya used lots of these.
native animals eaten or used by the AM	agouti, peccary, paca, tapir, monkey, dogs, jaguars, macaw, bees
native foods eaten by the AM	guava, avocado, papaya, sweetsop, cocoa beans
food farmed by the AM	maize (corn), beans, squash and pumpkins
pib- fire pit for cooking tamale- a savoury dish steamed in a banana leaf pitz- ancient ball game balche- a drink made from bark and honey	

Key Questions

When and where did the Maya live?

What were their buildings like and what did they eat?

What did they believe and how did they show these beliefs?

Why was the civilisation successful and why did it decline?



Religion	
polytheistic/ monotheistic	believing in many gods/ believing in one god
World Tree	The AM believed that the world had a tree running through it, from the underworld, the earth and up into the heavens.
glyph	A picture representing a word.
Chaac Itzamna K'inich Ahau Kukulhan	God of rain and maize Created humans God of the jaguar, leadership, fire, sacrifice God of the wet and dry seasons
sacrifice	When something is killed to honour the gods.
bloodletting	Kings cut themselves as they believed their blood let them talk to the gods.
priests were expected to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> impersonate the gods predict the future work miracles build tables of eclipses avert famine, drought, plagues, and earthquakes ensure adequate rainfall

Buildings	
temple	Where religious ceremonies took place- some pyramids were also built that were just for the gods and not to be climbed.
plaza	An open space for a gathering or market.
naah	Traditional wooden home- made of wood and covered in daub (sticky stuff made from mud/ clay/ soil and straw/ animal dung.)
flint and granite	Types of rocks often sharpened to use as tools.
partition wall	A wall inside a building to split it into rooms.
canopy	A rainproof roof. Made of palm leaves on the naah.

Theories for the decline of the Mayan Civilisation	
over-farming	The land gets its goodness from the trees so once they are removed, there's only so long you can grow crops.
weather change	It is believed that there were long droughts (no rain) meaning nothing could grow to be eaten and there was no water to drink.
war	The different Kingdoms started fighting and destroyed each other. Survivors would have become refugees and moved.
illness	Diseases were brought to the continent by explorers- these included Small Pox, Measles and Influenza- many were killed.
The Spanish	The Spanish Conquistadors (army) took over the land and enslaved or drove out the Mayan people destroying their art and codices too.