

Ellie's Maya Mystery: Sorting the Civilisation

Learning objective: To identify and categorise key features of the Ancient Maya civilisation, including their achievements in agriculture, writing, and daily life.

Ellie the elephant has been digging through history! She has found a collection of facts about the Maya civilisation, but they are all mixed up. Read the list below and sort them into the correct category in the table: 'Farming & Food', 'Writing & Numbers', or 'Buildings & Cities'.

Word bank: Hieroglyphs · Terraced farming · Step pyramids · The number zero · Maize (corn) · Stone temples · Cacao beans · Complex calendars

1. Draw a table with three columns (Farming & Food, Writing & Numbers, Buildings & Cities). Place the words from the word bank into the correct column. (8 marks)

Farming & Food	Writing & Numbers	Buildings & Cities

2. Why do you think the Maya used terraced farming? Think about the landscape. (2 marks)

3. The Maya used cacao beans as a form of currency. If a small sack of beans cost £2.50 and you bought two sacks, how much would you spend in total? (2 marks)

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4. Explain why the invention of the number zero was a clever development for Maya mathematicians. (2 marks)

5. Choose one item from the 'Buildings & Cities' category and describe one material the Maya would have used to build it. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of a Maya step pyramid in the middle of a rainforest, including some tall trees and a jaguar hiding in the shadows.



Extension challenge: Research what the Maya people ate for breakfast. Write a short menu for a Maya feast, including at least three ingredients that they grew themselves.