

Year 4 History Assessment: The Maya Civilisation

Learning objective: To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Maya civilisation, including their society, achievements, and daily life.

Read each question carefully. Answer in full sentences where required. Ensure your spelling is accurate and your explanations are clear.

Ellie the elephant has been studying the ancient Maya, who lived in the tropical rainforests of Central America. Unlike a single country, the Maya lived in independent city-states, each ruled by its own powerful leader. They were brilliant mathematicians and astronomers, building magnificent stone pyramids that reached towards the clouds. They relied on farming, specifically growing maize, and used a complex system of writing called hieroglyphics to record their history.

Word bank: Hieroglyphics · Chichén Itzá · Astronomy · Maize · Step pyramid · City-state · Cacao · Tikal

1. Identify two staple crops that were important to the Maya diet. (2 marks)

2. Explain how the Maya political structure was organised. Why was it different from a modern country under one single government? (3 marks)

3. What was the primary purpose of the large stone pyramids built by the Maya? (2 marks)

4. Describe the Maya writing system. Why is it significant to historians today? (3 marks)

5. Max the monkey is trying to calculate the cost of a market stall selling cacao beans. If a trader sells 5 bags of cacao for £12 each, how much money does the trader make in total? Show your working out. (2 marks)

6. Compare the daily life of a Maya farmer to the life of a Maya noble. Mention at least two differences. (4 marks)

7. Justify why the Maya are often referred to as 'master astronomers' by historians. What evidence do we have for this? (4 marks)

8. Extended Writing: Imagine you are a traveller visiting a Maya city-state in 800 AD. Describe what you see, hear, and smell. Include details about the architecture, the marketplace, and the people. (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a labelled diagram of a Maya step pyramid. Label the temple at the top and the wide stone staircase leading down to the plaza.



Extension challenge: Greater Depth Task: What might have happened if the Maya had not developed their advanced mathematical system? How would their ability to build structures or track the stars have changed? Justify your answer with examples. Total: /25