

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)

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)

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.