

Exploring the Maya Civilisation with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To recall key facts about the Maya civilisation, including their location, society, and achievements.

Read each flashcard to learn more about the ancient Maya. Test your knowledge by covering the answer side and seeing if you can remember the key details Ellie has shared.

Where in the world did the ancient Maya live?

The Maya lived in Mesoamerica, a region that includes parts of modern-day Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize.

What type of environment did many Maya cities grow in?

Many Maya cities were built within dense tropical rainforests.

What was the most important crop for the Maya people?

Maize, which is a type of corn, was the main food source for the Maya.

What was the name of the complex writing system used by the Maya?

The Maya used a system of picture-symbols called hieroglyphics.

Why did the Maya build stone observatories?

They built observatories to track the movement of the stars and planets for their calendar.

Name one famous Maya city mentioned by Ellie.

Tikal or Chichen Itza are two of the most well-known Maya cities.

What valuable drink did the Maya make from cacao beans?

They made a bitter, frothy chocolate drink.

What shape were the large stone structures built by the Maya?

They built large stone step-pyramids.

Did the Maya have one single king for all cities?

No, the Maya lived in independent city-states, each with its own ruler.

What did the Maya study to help them with farming?

They studied the sun, moon, and stars to create accurate calendars to know when to plant crops.

How did the Maya transport goods in the rainforest?

They used a network of stone paths called 'sacbeob' (white ways) to travel between cities.

What was a popular game played by the Maya in a stone court?

A ball game where players had to move a eraser ball through a stone hoop without using their hands.