

The Magnificent Maya: Masters of the Rainforest

Step into the deep jungle and uncover the secrets of the ancient Maya!

- The Maya built colossal stepped pyramids and stone temples that served as both religious centres and astronomical observatories to track the movement of the stars.
- Unlike a single unified empire, the Maya lived in independent city-states, each ruled by a powerful king or queen who oversaw trade, politics, and rituals.
- They developed a complex writing system using hieroglyphs, which were carved into stone stelae or painted onto bark-paper books known as codices.
- Agriculture was the backbone of their society; they skilfully grew maize, beans, and squash, and used advanced irrigation techniques to farm in the rainforest.
- Their sophisticated understanding of time led them to create highly accurate calendars, including the Long Count calendar, which tracked cycles over thousands of years.

Did you know? Did you know? The Maya were brilliant mathematicians who independently developed the concept of zero—a vital discovery that changed how people count and calculate across the world today!

Key vocabulary: Hieroglyphs · Observatory · Chichen Itza · Mesoamerica · Maize · Astronomy · Stele