

Name _____ **Ancient Mayan**



The Maya

The Maya are an ancient indigenous people from Mexico and Central America. Beginning around 1500 BCE, the Maya lived in villages. By 200 BCE, they were living in cities which included temples, stone pyramids, palaces, and ball courts. From about 250 CE to 900 CE the Mayan civilization was extremely advanced for its time. They invented hieroglyphics, which is a system of writing that uses pictures instead of words. The Maya created a very accurate calendar based on their observations of the planets and the stars. They also created a system of mathematics.

The Maya cleared areas of the rainforest to create farmland, where they grew corn, beans, and squash. The Maya worshiped gods of the sun, the moon, rain, and corn. They sacrificed humans to these gods during religious ceremonies because they believed that the gods required human blood for nourishment. These sacrifices were often people they had captured during battle.

The Mayan population began to decline around 900 CE. When the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, they brought diseases with them that killed many Maya. Others were taken as slaves and forced to work for the Spanish. Today descendants of the Maya can be found in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize.

1. What is significant about the Maya? _____

2. What did the Maya invent? _____

4. Where did the Maya live? _____
