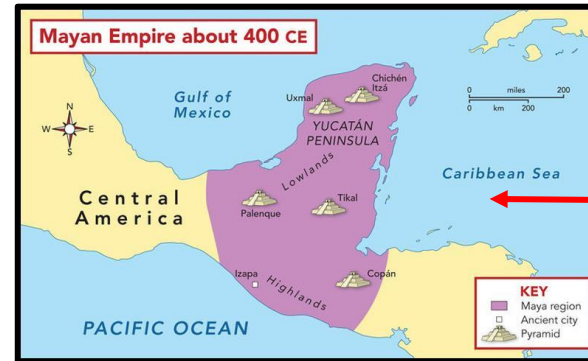




# Y5 History – Mayan Civilisation

## Overview

The Mayan people still exist today and have survived numerous attempts to wipe them out over the course of their history. The classical Mayan period stretches from approx. 250-950AD. During this time society became more organised around urban areas and society became more organised. Advances were made in astronomy, maths and language, as well as architecture and agriculture. Links were made with other peoples across the continent. Historians disagree over why the classical period came to an end, although it has been hypothesised that it was caused by a widespread drought, which ended the growth of society and created poverty for the population.



## Vocabulary

<b>Urbanisation</b>	Making an area more like a town or city
<b>Astronomy</b>	The science of space
<b>Architecture</b>	Designing and constructing buildings
<b>Plaza</b>	A public square or open space in a built-up area.
<b>Civilisation</b>	A settlement that has developed to an advance and organised point.

### Key People

- The Mayans did not have great historical figures, but each city had important people

### The Priest

- Held the regular rituals surrounding the temple.

### The Pharmacist

- Provided natural medicines which kept the people very healthy.

### The Farmer

- irrigated field and provided food for the city

## Mayan Temple at Yucatan





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## Life in a Mayan settlement

Mayan settlements appear to not have been planned, but a general centre point was the temple. It is thought that the stepped temples were built both as a statement of greatness and as a route to the heavens above. This is something the Mayans have in common with many other civilisations across the ancient world. Each settlement also had wide-open plazas which served as a meeting point, as well as a ball court where games were held. Cities were generally not organised in an identikit way, but had lots of common features. There does not appear to have been a central point of authority in the Mayan empire, rather society was organised through a number of rulers at local level. This is perhaps the reason the Mayans endured; without a central powerbase that could be overthrown easily, agreements had to be made with a number of rulers. In a way this is similar to the Indian, or even European, city states

## Changing Times

The Mayan civilisation cannot be credited with inventing writing or scientific advances but its position traversing Central America meant that the Mayans could copy and improve ideas from elsewhere. Their system of writing can be characterised as using hieroglyphs, at any one time anything from 200-500 were used, containing phonetic symbols and logos. Agriculture was hugely important as it was in many early civilisations, with population growth entirely dependent on the ability of the land to support its people.

## A Mayan Ball Court



## Mayan Glyphs



## Trade

Trade was a key part of Mayan civilisation. The cities that grew to become the most important usually controlled access to vital trade good and routes. The Maya engaged in long distance trade across the region and beyond. The best goods that were obtained by trading were most likely given as gifts to allies or for the use of the city's ruler.



## American Roadtrip