

Maya Civilization

1800 - 250 B.C.E.



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Political System and Impact on Society



- Mayans believed in groups of nature gods, but Mayans had a priestly class that was in charge of conducting rituals and ceremonies
- Officials may ascend through hierarchy of positions to ultimately become respected village elders, or principales
- Didn't have a political system until more modern times, everything was based on their religion and all holidays are the holy days of the Christian calendar

Economic System and Impact on Society



- Traded with anyone that was close with them
- Export: jade, obsidian, quetzal feathers, salt, dried fish, seashells
- Imported: ceramics
- Would use cocoa beans as currency
- Social classes were based on wealth and status
- Upper class- aristocrats (religious and political leaders)
- Lower class- priests, military officers, scribes, engineers, administrators, merchants
- This wasn't rigid you could move through classes

Beliefs and Religious Impact on Culture

- Mayans had 4 major gods that controlled their lives
 - The Sun, The Moon, The Rain, and Corn
- Mayans had The World, The Heavens, and The Underworld, called Xibalba
- Catholicism was introduced by Spanish Missionaries
- Mayans merged their nature gods with the Catholic saints
- The gods made three attempts to human kind
- Milestones like birth, puberty, and death, are marked by religious ceremonies
- Marriages may be strict and arranged, alternating between nuclear and extended



Rise of Civilization



- Different city states had different rise and falls
- Two big cities Tikal and Palenque rose in the classic era (250-900 C.E.)
- One important part of the rise of the city states was building many tremendous and big temples

Art and Architecture



- The Mam (southwestern Guatemala and southeastern Mexico)
 - Houses with adobe walls, small, shuttered windows, roofs of tile or corrugated metal, and a floor of hard-packed dirt
- K'iche' (Guatemala highlands)
 - Rectangular houses, double-pitched tile roofs, walls of adobe, and thatch supported by boards or poles, or other materials
- Mayans made glazed and unglazed pottery, ceremonial wood masks, and goods woven from palm, straw, reeds, and sisal
- Women are famous for their weaving with handspun yarn and natural vegetable dyes

Writing System and Written History

- Mayans spoke about 30 different languages
- Most widely spoken was Mam, Quiché, Kekchí, and Cakchiquel
- Inco graphic and morphophonemic glyphs can be found in ceramics and stone
- Have a 27 letter alphabet
- Additional 26 letters to represent sounds



Major Technological Advances



- An impressive development of mathematics and astronomy
- A complex system capable of estimating the solar year (eighteen months of twenty days, plus an unlucky five-day month, and the sacred year of 260 days, thirteen cycles of twenty named days)
- Astronomers at that time was able to predict solar eclipses
- Domestic Spinning has become factory-woven clothes
- From stone tools for clearing and hardening the end of a digging stick with fire to steel machetes and metal-tipped sticks/spears

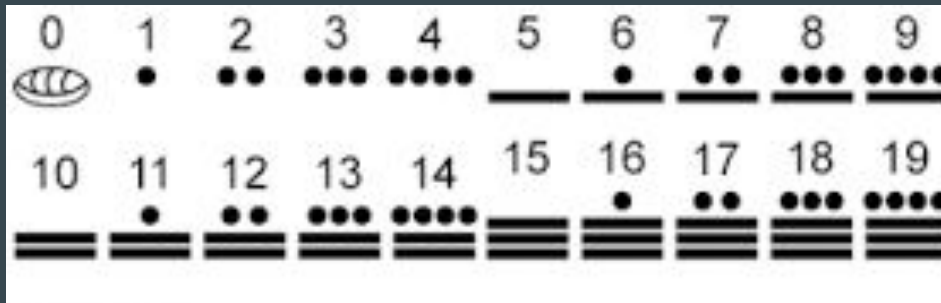
Golden Age

- The Mayans didn't really have a golden age
- The Classic Era was one of the best era
- The Mayans just suddenly disappeared



Famous Citizens and Achievements

- Mayans didn't have famous people, but they worshipped their gods and didn't have ruler, like a political figure, to take charge
- Achievements
 - Created a calendar system
 - Predict Solar Eclipses
 - Academic achievements with mathematics and astronomy



Slavery



- Mayans didn't really have slaves they did have war prisoners that would be kept at slaves
- Slaves were not usually treated badly they were just used at free labor

Fall of Civilization

- During the Classic Era, Tikal and the city of Calakmul were frequently at war
- Tikal abandonment was slow and faced drought, climate change, or soil reduction
- The trade networks that supported the city moved to the coasts
- Many do not know the actual cause that made the Mayan civilization fall
- Locals were then after haunted by the ancient ruins
- Rain forest has grown over most of the ancient buildings, only really tall pyramids are visible

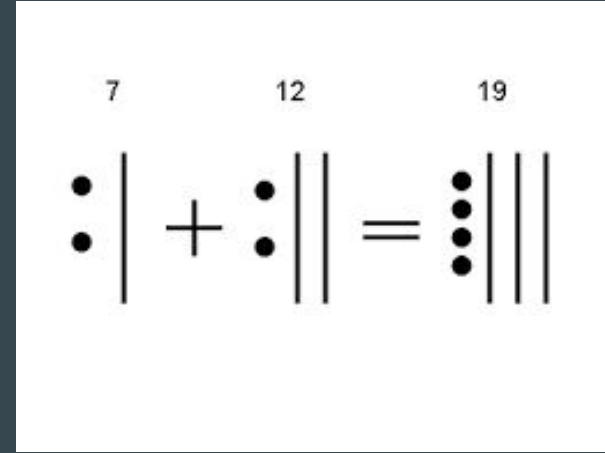


World Wide Contributions

Mayans made huge contributions to many things including

- Math
- Astronomy
- The calendar

The mayans also built many great buildings without having modern tools



Resource List

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Resources Continued

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