



Ancient Maya used masks for a wide variety of reasons. The main material was wood, but other materials include: gold, jade, shell and obsidian!

Event masks were bright and vibrant and were designed on heavenly animals.

Death masks were the most sacred and protected the person into the afterlife.

Ancestor: A family member from long ago who someone is descended from.

Archaeologist: A person who studies history by digging up objects.

Astronomy: The study of space, the objects in space and the universe.

Codex: An illustrated book made by the Maya.

Hieroglyph: A picture or symbol that represents a word, phrase or sound.

Merchant: A person who buys and sells goods.

Scribe: A person who copies out documents or writes down the words of

Key Events	
2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to an extensive drought . People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.
AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.
AD 1500s	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.
AD 1839	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood explore Copán and extensively document what they find, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation . They go on to document other Maya cities, including Chichén Itzá.
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.



Chichen Itza – one of Ancient Maya’s most famous temples. Also, a place Mr. Cullen has visited!

Key Words

Civilisation	An organised society with its own culture, existing in a particular area.
Maize	Sweetcorn. A crucial crop to Ancient Maya. Often planted with beans.
Codices	Handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina.

Religion

The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that the gods could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods.

Priests were very important in Maya society as it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods. They would perform different **rituals** during festivals or special ceremonies in order to appeal to the gods.

Maya’s most famous game is ‘Pok-a-Tok’. The game was sometimes used to settle disputes instead of going to war. This exciting ball game ends with a **HUMAN SACRIFICE!**



If the Maya were so advanced, what happened to them? There are many theories including: politics, war, famine and invasion by the Spanish.

Inventions



The number 0! Maya was one of very few civilisations to discover the idea of 0 in counting.



Hot Chocolate! Using cacao beans, Ancient Maya made a hot drink. It was bitter though.



A Calendar! Ancient Maya invented a calendar up to 2012!



Writing! Maya used hieroglyphs to communicate ideas.

Around 900AD, lots of city-states in the south of Mayan region were suddenly abandoned. In 1502, the Spanish arrived in Mayan territory. They fought with the Maya for decades, and by the 1540s they had taken control of most of the Mayan region.