

Who were more advance in 900AD – Britain or the Maya?

<u>Vocabulary</u>
Pyramid – a monument with a square base and sloping sides that meet at a point at the top.
Dynasty – a ruling family.
Maize – a Central American cereal plant that produces large grains (corn or sweetcorn) set in rows on a cob.
Hieroglyphics – a symbol or symbols used to represent a word or sound.
Civilization – a group of people with their own languages and way of life.
Archaeologists – someone who studies the remains of past societies.
Achievements – an accomplishment or result gained by effort.
Elite – In Mayan society, the superior class of people that were second in importance only to the King.
Peasantry/Peasant – a farmer or farm worker who does not have a great deal of money.
Mesoamerica – The name for central America and the civilizations that existed there before the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s.
Cenote – a natural pit, or sinkhole, resulting from the collapse of limestone bedrock that exposes groundwater underneath. Especially associated with the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico, cenotes were sometimes used by the ancient Maya for sacrificial offerings or burials.
Jade – usually a green mineral used for jewellery or carvings.
Popol Vuh – the story of the creation of the Maya.
City State - a self-governing independent state consisting of a city and the surrounding area.
Codex (plural codices) – an ancient manuscript that makes up a book of writings.

The Maya were people who lived in the forest of Mesoamerica (Central America). Mayan lands included much of modern day Mexico and Guatemala, all of Belize and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. The Maya society was complex and the people established powerful city-states, organized religion, writing and impressive architecture.



1800BC

ANCIENT MAYA

1500AD

Social class

There were 5 social classes in Mayan times. These were rulers, followed by nobles and priests, then craftsmen, peasants and finally the slaves. Each major city had a ruler and the position was passed down through the family. Priests were actually the most powerful people in Maya society. The peasants were generally the farmers who lived outside of the city.



Religion and Beliefs

The Maya believed in a large number of nature gods. Some gods were considered more important and powerful than others. They built a number of pyramid style temples to worship these Gods and believed in the power of sacrifice (including humans!) The most famous of these temples could be found in the city of Chichen Itza.



Farming and Food

Maize was a very important crop that formed up to 80% of the Maya people's diets. They believed that the first humans were made from **maize** dough by the gods.



The Maya made a bitter chocolatey drink from **cacao beans** that was enjoyed by the rich and used for medicines and in ceremonies. The beans were highly valued and even used as a form of money.