

Ancient Maya

The Maya were an advanced ancient _____ that lived thousands of years ago. The first Maya settled in Central Mexico around 800 BC. It is thought that the people travelled to this location in search of better farmland. Small _____ grew over time until, by 300 BC, they had become large _____ ruled by their own kings. The best known city-states include Tikal, Calakmul, Palenque, Caracol, Copan and Yaxchilan. Many of these city-states were joined by roads so that _____ could travel between them and so large _____ could take place between the cities during important ceremonies.

At the heart of each city usually stood palaces and _____, which were built on raised ground so that they towered above the surrounding city. Buildings were carefully planned by skilled _____ and built out of strong stone by labourers. The elaborate temples stood at the highest point and they were either covered in white _____ and polished (so they shone in the sun) or painted red and blue. These huge buildings were sometimes up to 70 metres tall and constructed by hand without machines. Many had giant steps leading up to them and they were carved with elaborate images of gods and _____ creatures. The top of the temple was flat so the priest could stand there to perform _____ and _____ in honour of the gods as the people watched.

Around 1000CE, the Maya began to abandon the big city-states and return to the _____. In the sixteenth century, when European _____ arrived, they found the remains of the Maya cities and began to investigate this great civilisation. Historians regard the Maya to be an important ancient civilisation because of their skills in writing, mathematics and art, as well as their ability to construct incredible buildings. They created a _____ that was based on the movements of the stars and planets and this has enabled archaeologists to accurately date many of the key events in their history.

Fill in the blank spaces
in the text using the
words below.

city-states	temples
stucco	civilisation
ceremonies	mythical
settlements	jungle
calendar	sacrifices
architects	merchants
processions	explorers



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