Maya:
Lords of the Earth

2008 Fulbright-Hays
Seminar Abroad
Lianne Burnson
Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program

www.ed.gov/programs/iegpssap/index.html
Ancient Maya Accomplishments

- Intellectuals
- Mathematicians
- Astronomers
- Architects and engineers
- Artistic
Where does gum come from?

Sapodilla Tree and Resin
Theobroma Cacao
Maps of the Maya World
Maya Map 1
Maya Map 2

Source: ancienthistory.about.com/od/maps/ss/mapsindex_3.htm
Maya Map 4

Source: historylink101.com/1/mayan/mayan_maps.htm
New Wonder of the World

Chichen Itza
A.D. 400–950
El Castillo - Kukulkan Temple

Chac Mool
The Observatory
Great Ball Court
Chac-Mool
Tzompantli - Platform of Skulls
The Nunnery
Sacred Cenote (Well) of Sacrifice
Uxmal
A.D. 200–1200
Pyramid of the Magician
Chac -
God of Rain, Thunder, Lightning
Nunnery Quadrangle
Arch Entry
Sacred
Ceiba Tree
Palenque
A.D. 100–900
Population: 10,000
Temple of Inscriptions
King Pacal A.D. 603–683

Funeral Jade Mask
National Museum of Anthropology and History, Mexico City
Palace
Aqueducts
Bas-reliefs
Maya Homes
Ancient Commoner Homes
Maya People
Ancient Maya Clothing
Modern-Day Huipils
Maya Today
Population: ~ 6 million
Farming and Food
“Slash and Burn” Method
Ancient Maya Food
Food Today

Tamales

Beans

Corn tortillas

Chili Chocolate Drink
Ancient Maya
Religious Beliefs
Chac – God of Thunder and Lightning

Ix Chel – Earth and Moon Goddess, Patroness of Weavers and Pregnant Women
Huracan –
God of Gale
Force Winds

Kinich-Ahau –
Sun God
Coqueelaa – God of the Cochineal Harvest

Cama-Zotz – God of Bats
Yum Kaax – God of Agriculture and Maize
Ah-Puch –
God of Death

Ek-Chuah –
God of Chocolate
Religious Beliefs Today
San Juan Chamula
Basilica de Guadalupe
Maya Writing System
Hieroglyphs

- Written on: Stone, Wood, Buildings, Fig tree bark

- two glyphs/column
- left to right and
- top to bottom
Palenque Glyphs

Dresden Codex
Maya Logograms

CHAN ‘sky’
WINIK ‘person’
WITZ ‘mountain’
K’IN ‘sun’
B’ALAM ‘jaguar’
K’AK’ ‘fire’

BAK ‘bone’
WAY ‘spirit’
JUUN ‘book’
JA’ ‘water’
AJAW ‘lord’
MUYAL ‘cloud’

IX ‘woman’
CH’AM ‘to grab’
K’UK’ ‘quetzal’
CHAN ‘snake’
CH’UL ‘holy’
CHOK ‘to scatter’

JAAB’ ‘year’
YAX ‘blue/green’
PAKAL ‘shield’
TOK ‘flint’
NAJ ‘house’
K’AL ‘twenty’
Scribes Today - Spanish
Spoken Mayan Languages
Evolution of Ancient Mayan Languages
Number System
Maya Positional Number System

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Mayan positional number system

Source: www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/HistTopics/Mayan_mathematics.html
Maya Calendar
Sacred Round –
“Tzolkin”

- 260 days
- 20 day names
- Symbols for days
The Vague Year

“Haab”

- 18 months
- 20 days/month
- 5 unlucky days at the end
Maya Arts
Backstrap Weaving
Ancient Maya Symbols

**Monkey**
Ancestors who lost their faith.

**Grand Design**
The square Maya world, marked by crosses at each corner and the center.

**Earthlord**
Owner and protector of the earth who lives in the mountain caves.

**Father / Mother**
Ancestors who kept their faith and who reside in the sacred mountains.

**Toad**
Musician, her singing calls the rain.
Seven Sacred Ancient Maya Designs

Universe

Scorpion

Ancestors

Snake
Seven Sacred Ancient Maya Designs

Toad

Flowering Corn

Butterfly
Maya, Late Classic (ca. 600–900)
Cylinder vase, polychrome ceramic

Veracruz (250–600)
Seated image of Old Fire God

Norton Museum of Art
Boston Museum of Fine Art

Maya vase 650–750
(partyy/ritual)

Late Classic
Maya drinking cup
(A.D. 593–830)
Potters Today
Sellos - Ceramic Stamps
What happened to the Ancient Maya?
Jared Diamond’s 5-Point Framework Model

- Environmental Damage
- Climate Change
- Hostile neighbors
- Population growth exceeded resources
- Society’s response

Diamond, Jared M. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive* (2005).
Maya today live a ...

- simpler,
- agricultural,
- communal,

- and highly spiritual life
“Here were the remains of a cultivated, polished, and peculiar people, who had…reached their golden age, and perished, entirely unknown. The links which connected them to the human family were severed and lost, and (the ruins) were the only memorials of their footsteps upon earth.”

–John Stephens, 1853