

Maya Artefact Pack (037809)

This collection contains a variety of engaging Mayan replica artefacts to encourage hands-on historical enquiry and insights into Mayan life.



Contents: -

1. 1 x Replica Maya Plaque
2. 1 x Maya Calendar
3. 1 x Cocoa Pod
1x Bag of Cocoa Beans
1x Wooden Chocolate Whisk
4. 1 x Woven Fabric Section
5. 1 x Set of Day Beads
6. 1 x Maya Civilisation Poster
4 x Colour Photocards
Photocopiable templates and Teacher Notes

Questions you could ask children about the artefacts

Initial Discussion

- What is this object?
- Does it resemble anything the children have seen?
- What do you think the item was used for and by whom?
- Does anyone know what it is called?

Collect any other questions the children might have about the artefacts and display them as you try to find the answers through your learning sessions.

Other questions to consider:

- Where does the object come from?
- Who might have made this object? And how were they made?
- Why were they made?
- **What do the objects tell us about Mayan culture and life?** *This last question can be returned to at the end of the investigation.*

All About the Artefacts

1. Maya Plaque

Mayan art often depicts religious beliefs, their way of life, wars they had fought and portraits of themselves.

Design plaques and use air dry modelling clay and a range of modelling tools to create unique designs such as a self-portrait plaque.

2. Maya calendar

The Maya used a complex but accurate calendar system to track time and to make sure religious ceremonies were carried out at the right times. The Tzolkin calendar was used for religious rituals and had 260 days. Each day with its own unique name. Then the Haab calendar to track the seasons and agricultural cycles had 365 days. The Maya followed the movement of the sun, moon, stars and planets to create their calendars. It was based on a mathematical system that brought together ways of counting time, astronomy and religion.

Create own Maya calendar wheels with moveable circles and use the calendar to explore dates.

3. Cocoa Pod, Beans and Whisk

The Guatemalan Maya were the first people to document their use of cacao, and it was considered very important. The Mayans would dry, grind and mix these beans with water to make a bitter and frothy drink, often mixed with chilli. The Mayans believed that chocolate was a gift from the gods, and they also believed it had healing powers. Research shows that the Maya used chocolate as a form of currency, exchanging the beans for goods and services, paying taxes and in religious ceremonies.

Use the beans as a starting point to explore the journey from cacao to chocolate! Investigate Fairtrade chocolate.

4. Woven Fabric

Fabrics were an important part of religious beliefs and art. They were usually bright and colourful with intricate patterns. Dyes were made from plants, insects and other natural materials.

Design and print own Maya fabric pieces.

5. Day Beads

Small often decorative beads. Mayans used the beads to make jewellery or for decorating clothing. The colours and patterns of the beads may have had special meaning and give us an insight into Mayan life.

Use beads to make own jewellery.

6. Poster, Photocards, etc

Visual representations of Mayan culture. Use the images to help children develop a deeper understanding and encourage them to ask questions and look closely at the artefacts to discover the secrets of Mayan life.

Reference Websites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zq6svcw>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z2pmvj6#zw8r7v4>