

Mayan Civilization PowerPoint Narration Guide

Use the PowerPoint presentation provided to introduce the Maya Civilization. Narrate the presentation using these descriptions and questions:

- Slide 1: Chicxulub Impact crater – ask students if they know what this represents.
- Slide 2: Sacred Cenote- ask students if they know what this is and what the relationship is between the cenotes and the Chicxulub impact crater.
- Slide 3: The “Castillo” at Chichén Itzá.
 - First, ask students if they know what civilization this represents.
 - Ask what the connection is between the Mayas and cenotes.
 - Make sure the students know that Chichén Itza is one of the “New Seven Wonders of the World.”
 - Were the Mayans the only civilization that built pyramids?
 - What were the pyramids used for? (Not just for burial but also as observatories.)
- Slide 4: The Observatory at Chichén Itza: tell students that this building was designed as an observatory: It is the Mayan equivalent of a telescope!
- Slide 5: The “Magician’s Palace” at Uxmal. Ask if anyone knows which Mayan city this is. Use the slide to figure out what the students already know about the Maya (What area they lived in/ how long ago/ how they lived etc.)
- Slide 6: Masks of the rain god, Chaac, at Uxmal
 - Ask students if they know what kind of religion the Maya practiced.
 - Tell students they were “polytheistic;” they had many gods.
 - Tell students these masks represent the rain god Chaac. Ask if they know why the rain god was so important to the Maya. (Long dry season, droughts, not all Mayan cities had cenotes – at Uxmal for example they depended on collecting and storing rainwater in underground reservoirs.)
- Slide 7: Detail of decorations at Uxmal. Tell the students that the Maya were expert architects and stone masons and we can learn a lot about their beliefs through the decorations on the buildings.
- Slide 8: The “corbelled” arch. Designers and builders were, however, restricted by the technical limitations of the corbelled arch as compared to the Roman arch. The Roman model features a keystone, which affords wide coverage of space, whereas the corbelled arch contains a capstone, which allows only narrow spaces.
- Slide 9: The “House of the Seven Dolls” at Dzibichaltun in the Yucatan. Tell students that not all the pyramids were as big as Chichén or Uxmal. The earlier

buildings were smaller. This small pyramid is also an observatory – the sun sets through the central doorway during the equinox.

- Slide 10: Some pyramids, like this early example from El Naranjal near Cancun, were little more than small mounds.
- Slide 11: Who are these people and what do they do? Why is it important for us to understand ancient civilizations? What can they tell us about our own civilization?