

Name _____

The Mayan Civilization: Builders of Pyramids and Mysteries

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Maya agricultural innovations, such as slash-and-burn agriculture, terracing, and irrigation, enabled them to cultivate crops effectively and support a growing population. These techniques contributed to the civilization's growth and sustainability by providing food security and surplus for trade.
2. As a Maya astronomer, one would have observed celestial movements carefully, using landmarks and instruments to track the positions of stars, planets, and the sun. The creation of calendars would involve recording celestial events and aligning them with religious ceremonies and agricultural activities to maintain harmony with the cosmos.
3. The deciphering of Mayan hieroglyphics in the 20th century was a significant breakthrough that required the collaboration of scholars and the study of inscriptions on stelae and codices. This discovery enriched our understanding of the Maya civilization by revealing their history, beliefs, and rituals in their own words.
4. The enduring cultural and linguistic heritage of the Maya people is vital in preserving their identity and traditions. It connects modern generations to their ancient ancestors, fosters a sense of belonging, and contributes to the cultural diversity of the region. The Maya language, cultural practices, and art continue to be celebrated and passed down through generations.

