

Me Oh Maya



About the Show

A basketball game gets interrupted and the boys find themselves in Chichen Itza, Mexico, in the middle of a Mayan ringball court a thousand years ago! Of course in this game, the stakes are a little higher because if they lose, they lose their heads!

Introduction

Mayan culture, like other ancient civilizations, fascinates students. You can use this lesson in conjunction with any study of ancient cultures and to compare and contrast what was happening in the Americas and Europe during this time.

Historical Background

The Maya are probably the best-known of the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica. Originating in the Yucatán around 2600 B.C.E, they rose to prominence around 250 C.E. in present-day southern Mexico, Guatemala, northern Belize, and western Honduras. The Maya developed astronomy, mathematics, art, architecture, calendars, and hieroglyphic writing. They were also skilled farmers, weavers, potters, and traders.

Chichen Itza was the last of the great Mayan cities built during the period of Mayan dominance in Mesoamerica. By the middle of the 9th century, it had become one of the leading political and economic centers of the region. How long its hegemony lasted is unclear. Archaeologists once believed it lasted until the 12th century, but evidence now indicates a shift before 1000 that might have marked the beginning of the decline. ("Me Oh Maya" is set in 960 C.E.) The collapse of the Mayan civilization is one of the great mysteries of history.

Curriculum Connections

- ancient civilizations
- Belize
- Central America
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mayan civilization
- Mexico

Subject Areas

- language arts
- math
- social studies



Me Oh Maya

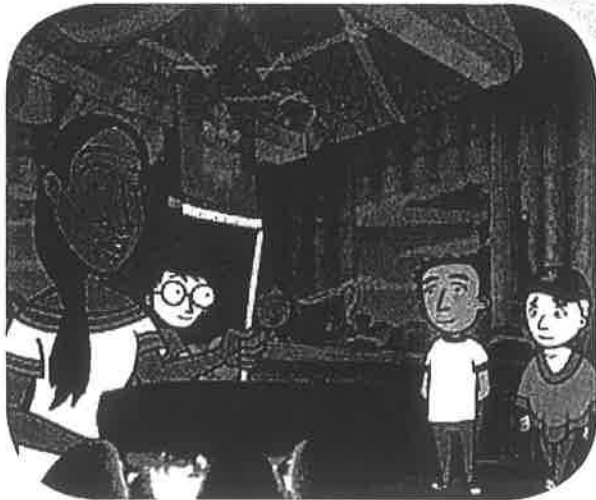


Historical Background *continued*

As in other cultures, the Maya used personal appearance, clothing, and adornments to indicate social status. Body paint was often used to mark special groups.

The fact that the Maya played ball games is known from archeological evidence and carvings. Although the games may have been played informally, the more formal version featured a specially constructed ball court. The size of the playing area varied from court to court, but the largest known court, the Great Ball Court at Chichen Itza, was about the size of a football field. In addition to being played for sport, the Maya ball game was also closely associated with religious rituals and beliefs.

There are about six million Maya today living in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. Each of the 31 Maya groups throughout Central America speaks a different, though related, language.



Check out the Mayan adventure for kids at

www.timewarp trio.com/adventures/maya/

Put It Back, Jack! and other interactive games to play.

Plentifox 487—the ultimate time traveler's guide—gives facts about the way the Mayan people lived, and more!

Cool Books that kids will love.