

Lesson 6: Maya Water Management

Challenge your students to calculate solutions to these math problems and learn facts about Maya resource management systems.

This lesson complements the Water Management and Map puzzles in the **Mayan Mysteries** game. To learn more about the online game, visit www.dig-itgames.com.

Objectives:

- Identify techniques used by the Maya in managing water resources
- Use math skills to solve problems involving water management techniques

Materials: The *Maya Water Management* student [activity sheet](#); map of Central America; calculator

Time Required: 30 minutes

Directions:

1. Introduce students to the geographical and climate features of the various regions of the Maya civilization. Use a map of Central America to point out the area in which the Maya lived, which now consists of southern Mexico, Yucatán Peninsula, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize. Ask students to research and describe the type of geographic features and climate found in this area of the world. Tell students that the land of the Maya is generally divided into three areas: The lowland (the arid Yucatán Peninsula), the central rain forest zone, and the southern highlands and Pacific slope. The climate is generally hot and humid, while rainfall amounts vary across the different regions. The rainy season lasts from May to December.

However, since rainfall is not consistent throughout the year, the Maya had a need to collect and manage their water resources for use throughout the dry season. Remind students that the Maya civilization was largely an agricultural society, so the need for consistent supply of water was important to the Maya's survival.

2. Distribute the *Maya Water Management* student activity sheet and review the instructions with students. Permit students to use calculators as needed.
3. As a follow-up activity:
 - Review the answers with the students and discuss how each type of water management technique described might have been used by the Maya. Then have students compare and contrast the Maya water management techniques to water management techniques that are used today.
 - Have students research the major crop(s) produced in each Maya region to understand how the climate and water supply affect each area's agriculture. Students can learn more about the land of the Maya in the **Mayan Mysteries** Map puzzle.

Student Activity Sheet

Answers:

1. A. 250 gallons
 2. C. $6 \frac{2}{3}$ yards
 3. D. 594,000 gallons
 4. C. 12 feet wide, 80 feet long
- Bonus: D. At least 2.5 feet