

# MAYA: Religion

## CREATION

The Maya told many stories to explain a natural event or teach a lesson. The Maya creation story explained how the Maya thought gods created the world. According to the story, the world began in darkness. There was only an ancient ocean and the sky. The god Huracan made light appear and created land from the sea. The gods of nature then made plants and animals. The world was beautiful, but they wanted more. They made people to worship them. The people were made from mud at first, but they melted. The gods then made people out of wood, but they did not have spirits. The gods finally made people of corn dough. They were the ancient ancestors of modern people.



## LAYERS

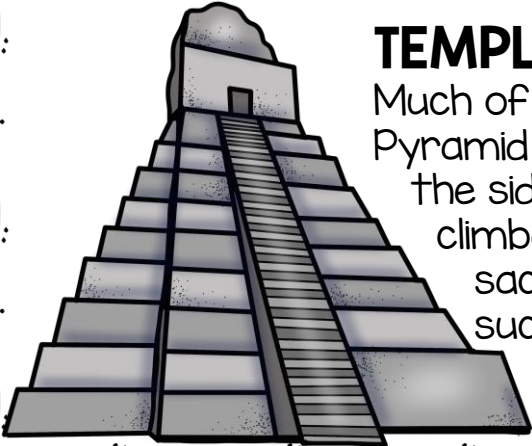
The Maya believed there were 13 levels of heaven above Earth. There were 9 levels of the underworld below Earth. The dead had to make a dangerous journey through each of the levels to get to paradise. The Maya believed people who were sacrificed went straight to paradise though.

## GODS

The Maya worshipped hundreds of gods. They thought they controlled everything from the weather to the birth of people. The Maya believed events like droughts or serious storms meant the gods were angry. Sacrifices were performed by priests to keep the gods happy. Complex calendars help keep track of important ceremonies.

## TEMPLES

Much of Maya architecture honored the gods. Pyramid temples built by the Maya had stairs on the sides and flat areas at the top. Priests climbed the stairs to perform ceremonies and sacrifices. The Maya gave the gods offerings, such as food, drink, and animals. Blood was the most important offering given to the gods.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**IDENTIFY:** Use the word bank to identify each description.

corn	heaven	Huracan	sacrifices	mud
underworld	calendars	temples	paradise	blood

	1. The Maya believed there were 13 layers of this above Earth
	2. Kept track of important ceremonies
	3. God who made light appear
	4. The most important offering given to the gods
	5. Material first used to make people
	6. The Maya believed there were 9 levels of this below Earth
	7. The Maya believe people were made of this dough
	8. The Maya believed people who were sacrificed went straight to this place
	9. Priests performed ceremonies at the top of these
	10. Performed by priests to keep the gods happy