

## **Lesson 3 Maya Writing**

LI: I can explain what the Maya writing system consists of, how words are constructed and what codices are.

### **Success Criteria**

- I can identify key facts about the Maya writing system.
- I can answer questions about the Maya writing system and codices.
- I can construct Maya words using syllabograms and logograms.

# Maya Writing

**Does this object look familiar?**

**Yes that's right it is from lesson 1. It is a Maya book.**

**Look carefully at the patterns, what are they?**

**Does it remind you of another civilisation we have studied who used hieroglyphics ?**

**Yes that's right the Egyptian civilisation when we made our cartouche.**

Watch [this video](#) to find out more about Maya writing. You only need to watch the first 4 minutes.



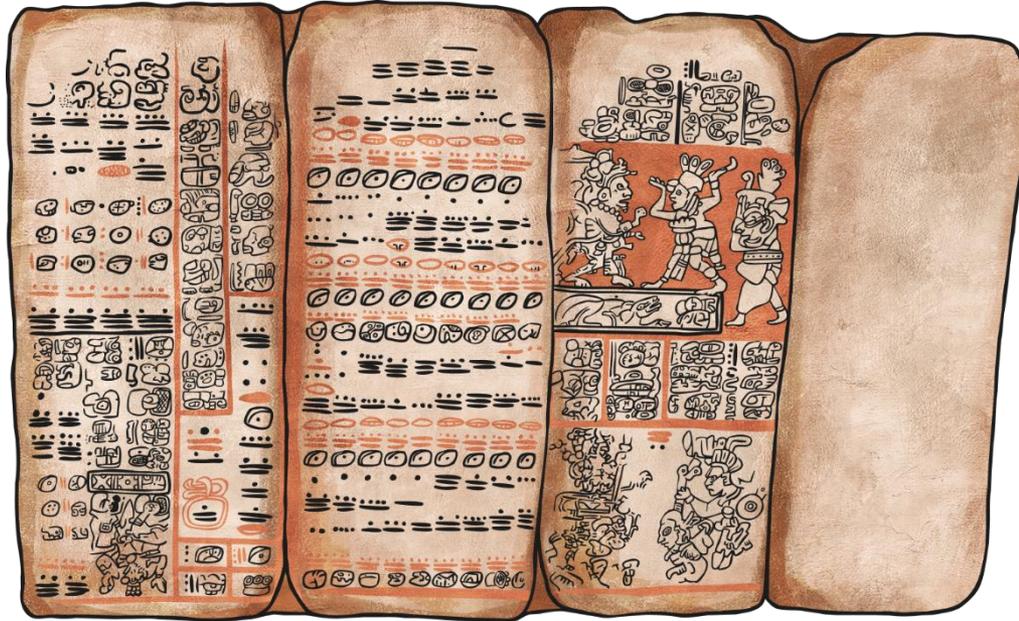
# Codices

The Maya people also wrote books made of the bark from fig trees. One book is called a codex and the plural is codices.

The codices were written by professional scribes and contained information about astronomy, gods, war and history.

Rather than having separate pages, the codices unfolded like a concertina.

There are not many codices left as Spanish invaders destroyed many.



# Maya Hieroglyphs

Maya writing can be found on statues, pottery and books.

Maya hieroglyphic writing can be made up of syllabograms (representing sounds) which is like our alphabet or logograms (representing whole words).



Logograms – represent whole words often resemble the thing that they represent, so it is easy for us to see what they mean.

Let's look at these logograms and their meaning.



# Activity 1: Maya Hieroglyphs

Let's look at these logograms. Draw them in your book and write what you think they mean?



Can you draw some Maya logograms and write down their meanings?

A large empty square box with a black border, intended for drawing a Maya logogram.

Name and Meaning

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A large empty square box with a black border, intended for drawing a Maya logogram.

Name and Meaning

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A large empty square box with a black border, intended for drawing a Maya logogram.

Name and Meaning

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# Activity 1: Answers

Here are the answers. How did you do?



to scatter



to grab



jaguar



fire

My own Maya style logogram

A large empty square box for drawing a Maya style logogram.

A description of my design:

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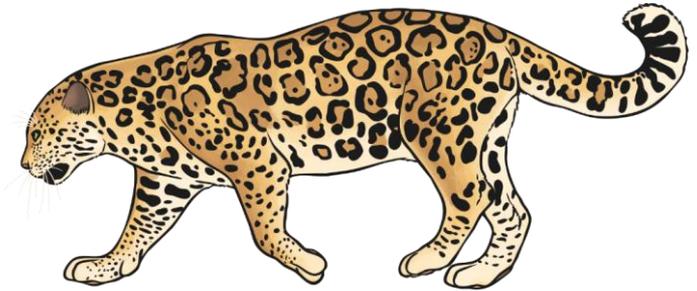
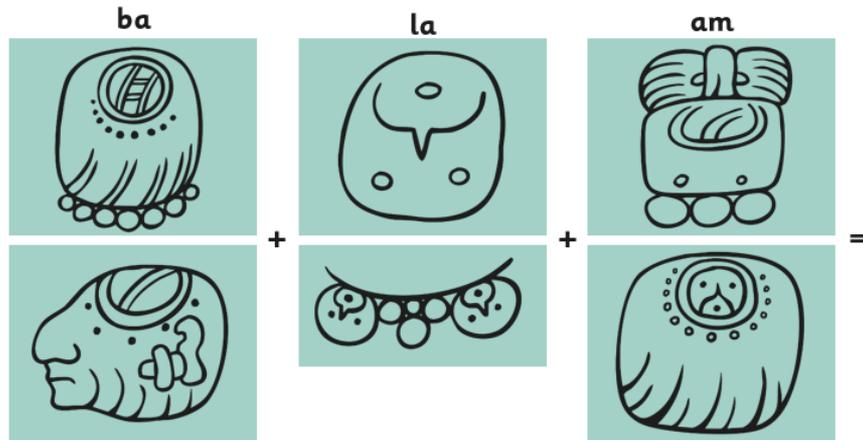
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Activity 2: Draw 2 logograms for activities or objects. Remember to write down the meaning

# Syllabograms

About 150 syllabograms were used in the Maya script and syllables were often represented by more than one glyph. This meant that different people could spell the same words differently depending on which syllabograms they chose to use.

Jaguar – b'alam



**Activity 3: Write your name and create a syllabogram for your name.**

## Quiz time

- 1) What are Maya books called?
- 2) Why are there not many examples of Maya books ?
- 3) What types of objects has Maya writing been found on?
- 4) What are the two different ways Maya writing is shown?
- 5) Why do you think there is a logogram to scatter?
- 6) Why do you think that Maya people used different pictures same syllable?



Write down your own fact.

## Answers

1) What are Maya books called?

Codex or Codices

2) Why are there not many examples of Maya books ?

Spanish Invaders destroyed them

3) What types of objects has Maya writing been found on?

Books, pottery and statues.

4) What are the two different ways Maya writing is shown?

Maya hieroglyphic writing can be made up of syllabograms (representing sounds) which is like our alphabet or logograms (representing whole words).

5) Why do you think there is a logogram to scatter?

Because farming was very important to the people and scattering was used to plant seeds.

6) Why do you think that Maya people used different pictures for the same syllable?

People lived in different areas and it was used locally.