

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MAYA CHILD

Information sheet - use these facts to help you create a believable diary entry.

Important to remember

There was no single “typical” Maya childhood. Life could be very different depending on a child's family, job, wealth, city and time period.

For this activity, imagine you are a child from a farming or craft family living near a busy Maya city during the Classic Period (about AD 250-900).

HOME & FAMILY

Many families lived in simple homes made using materials such as wood, packed earth or stone, often with thatched roofs. Several family members might share the same living area. Children were expected to help their families as they grew older.

CLOTHES & CRAFTS

People made cloth by spinning and weaving fibres such as cotton. Clothes varied according to wealth and role. Families also made or traded pottery, baskets, tools and other useful objects.

LEARNING & WORK

Children learned many skills from adults in their family. Some boys from noble families received specialist training, while scribes and craftspeople learned highly skilled work. Most children learned the practical jobs needed by their household.

FOOD & FARMING

Maize was a staple food. Beans, squash and chillies were also common crops. A child in a farming family might help carry water, gather food, scare animals away from crops or help prepare maize for meals.

MARKETS & TRADE

Markets could be busy places where people exchanged food, cloth, pottery, salt and tools. Traders brought goods from other areas, so a visit to the market could be full of unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells.

BELIEFS & CEREMONIES

Religion was woven into Maya life. Temples, rulers, priests, ceremonies and festivals were important in many communities. People worshipped many gods connected with the natural world, including rain and maize.

A possible day

DAWN

Wake with the light. Help prepare food or fetch water.

MORNING

Help with crops, animals, crafts or household work.

MIDDAY

Eat a simple meal. Visit the market or continue jobs.

EVENING

Share food with family. Hear stories, talk about the day or prepare for a ceremony.

Useful vocabulary

maize • plaza • market • woven • cacao • trader • temple • crops • pottery • ceremony • humid • bustling • exhausted • proud • curious

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Diary planning sheet - plan first, then write your diary in your Home Learning book.

Your job: Write in the first person as if you are a Maya child. Tell the reader what happened during one day, what you noticed and how you felt.

Where do you live?	Near a city? In a farming settlement? Who is in your family? _____ _____
Morning	What wakes you? What job do you help with? What can you see, hear or smell? _____ _____
Middle of the day	Do you work, visit the market, prepare food or see something unusual? _____ _____
Afternoon / evening	What happens later? Is there a family meal, game, market trip or ceremony? _____ _____
Thoughts and feelings	What are you proud of, worried about, excited by or tired from? _____ _____

Sentence starters if you need them

At sunrise, I woke to...	Before the heat became too strong, I...	Later that morning...
As I walked through the busy market...	By the time the Sun began to set...	I could not stop thinking about...

Success Checklist

- ☐ I wrote in the first person (I, me, my).
- ☐ I organised events in time order.
- ☐ I used facts from the information sheet.
- ☐ I described thoughts and feelings.
- ☐ I used accurate capital letters and punctuation.

Extra challenge: include fronted adverbials, expanded noun phrases and a range of conjunctions.