

How do we know about the Maya?

What we do today, the way we act, our traditions, our beliefs, our entire civilization, are all the result of what happened in the past—a very long and complicated chain of human events,

achievements and even failures that happened over millions of years. By trying to understand our past, we can sometimes understand more about what we are like today.



My name is Dr Diane Davies, and this is what I do as an archaeologist. I try to reconstruct how people lived a long time ago. It is a lot like being a detective, I use clues that the ancient people have left behind to piece together their lives and I leave no stone unturned - even going through their rubbish!

I bet you are thinking that archaeology sounds fascinating and yes, it is! To many people archaeology conjures up exotic lands, adventures and unraveling mysteries. There is lots of this but there is also dedicated study, living in harsh conditions and at times very, very slow work. One thing an archaeologist should have lots of is patience!

Mythbuster

Archaeologists study ancient human bones, and even sometimes animal bones. But we don't study dinosaurs! People who study dinosaurs are called *palaeontologists*.



It's "Maya" not "Mayan"!

We only say "Mayan" when we talk about their languages. The rest of the time we say "Maya"!



To hear how to say **Maya** point your device here!

Archaeologists use a variety of techniques to find ancient ruins and then when found they make a map of all the structures and excavation starts. Unlike what you might have seen in movies, when an archaeologist excavates, they dig very slowly using careful measurements and take lots of notes, drawings and pictures.



A Maya bowl - tap the object to see the bits and pieces form the original shape of the bowl.

