

Maya Key Terms

Archaeologists- an anthropologist who studies prehistoric people and their culture

Artisans- craftsman: a skilled worker who practices some trade or handicraft

Bacabs- the generic Yucatec name for each of the four pre-Spanish, aged Maya deities of the interior of the earth and its water deposits. The Bacabs "were four brothers whom God placed, when he created the world, at the four points of it, holding up the sky so that it should not fall. [...] They escaped when the world was destroyed by the deluge" (Landa, in Tozzer 1941: 135-136). Their names were Hobnil, Cantzicnal, Saccimi, and Hosanek. Each ruled one of the directions and the associated Year Bearer day (one of four New Year days). The four brothers were intimately associated with the four [Chaacs](#), or rain deities, and the Pauahtuns, or wind deities, who were equally associated with the four directions.

Bloodletting- The archaic practice of treating illness by removing some blood, believed to be tainted, from the stricken person;

Bureaucrats- a member of a bureaucracy, usually within an institution of the government; bureaucracy - government based on a specialized set of offices usually hierarchically organized.

Deities- The essential nature of a god, divinity; A powerful entity that possesses numerous miraculous powers (e.g. a god or goddess)

Mesoamerica- is a [region](#) and [culture area](#) in the [Americas](#), extending approximately from central [Mexico](#) to [Honduras](#) and [Nicaragua](#), within which a number of [pre-Columbian societies](#) flourished before the [Spanish colonization of the Americas](#) in the 15th and 16th centuries.



Noble class- of or belonging to or constituting the hereditary aristocracy especially as derived from feudal times; "of noble birth"

Ritual- a set of actions often thought to have symbolic value, the performance of which is usually prescribed by a religion or by the traditions of a community by religious or political laws because of the perceived efficacy of those actions

Sacrifice- the act of killing (an animal or person) in order to propitiate a deity, make a sacrifice of; in religious rituals

Soil exhaustion- Too many crops are grown on the same area of land. Nutrients are exhausted. Vegetation will no longer grow

Underworld- the world of the dead;

Xibalba- In [Maya mythology](#) , roughly translated as "Place of fear", is the name of the [underworld](#), ruled by Mayan [spirits](#) of [disease](#) and [death](#)

Yucatan- a state of Mexico on the northern part of the Yucatan Peninsula, a peninsula in Central America extending into the Gulf of Mexico between the Bay of Campeche and the Caribbean Sea