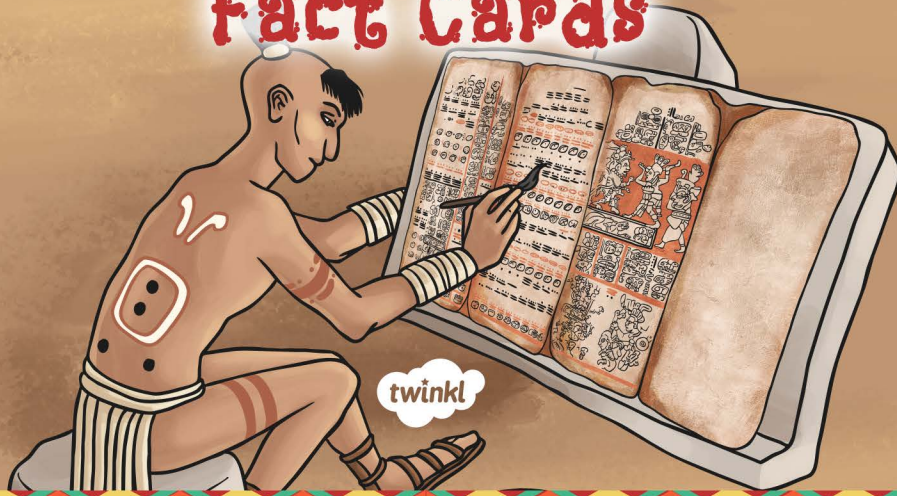


Maya Writing Fact Cards



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The ancient Maya hieroglyphic writing system consisted of a series of signs and symbols called glyphs.



Although most Maya people would be able to read and write some glyphs, it was only the priests and noblemen who would know the whole written language.



Maya scribes wrote books called codices (or a codex if there was only one). These books were written on paper made from the bark of fig trees.



Some glyphs used in Maya hieroglyphic writing are called logograms. Logograms represent a whole word.



CHAN
'sky'



WINIK
'person'



WITZ
'mountain'



K'IN
'sun'



B'ALAM
'jaguar'



K'AK'
'fire'

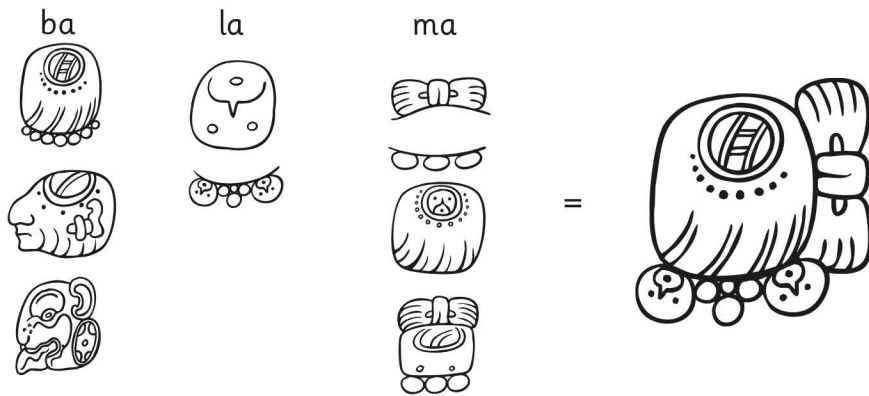


BAK
'bone'

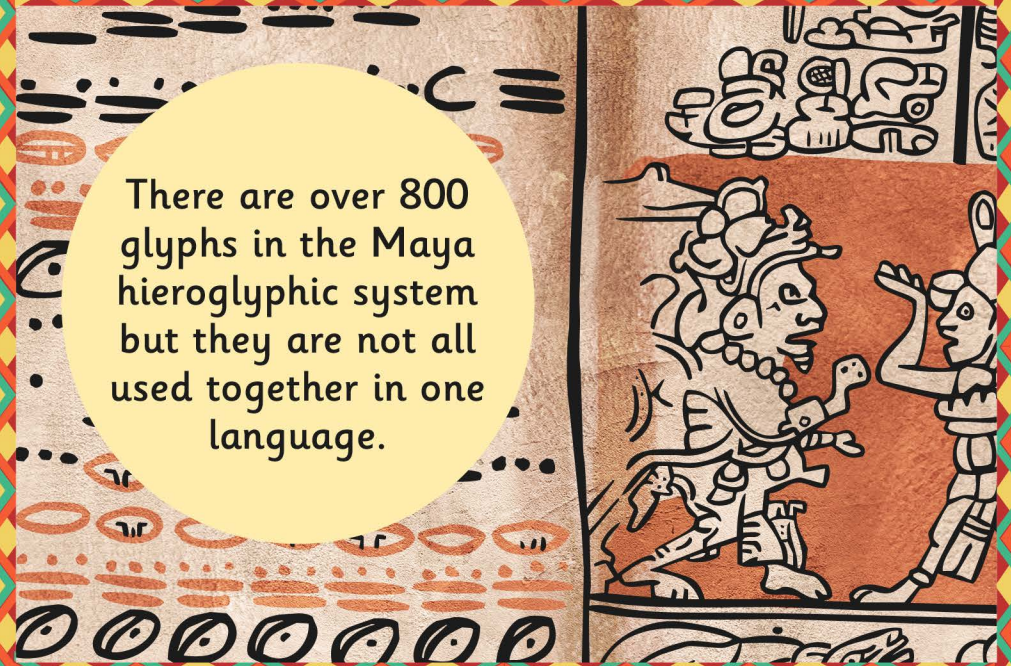


WAY
'spirit'

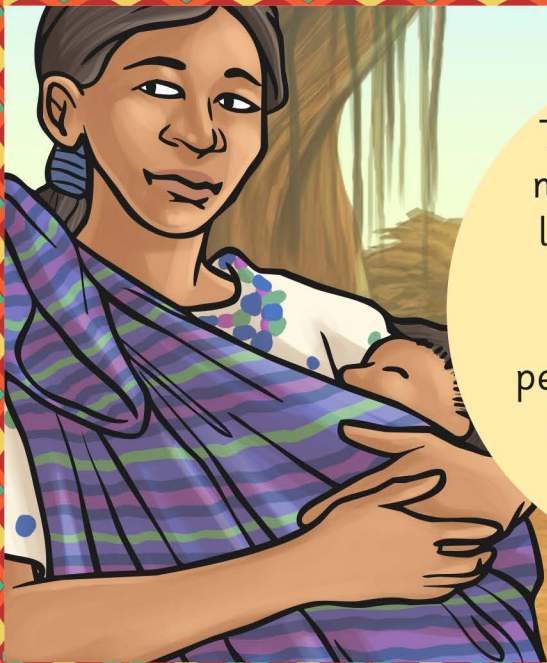
Some glyphs in Maya hieroglyphic writing are called syllabograms. Syllabograms represent a unit of sound.



There are over 800 glyphs in the Maya hieroglyphic system but they are not all used together in one language.



There were a large number of different languages because there were many groups of Maya people who each had their own culture, traditions and language.



Historians believe that speakers of the Ch'olan language invented the Maya glyphs. The Yucatec language also had its own hieroglyphic script.



The ancient Maya people inscribed hieroglyphs onto stone buildings and monuments. They also painted hieroglyphs onto pottery and wrote books containing stories and facts.

