

Art Appreciation



Mayan Temples

Chichen Itza & El Tajin

Today in Art Appreciation we learned about Mayan Temples. We specifically looked at the temples of Chichen Itza and El Tajin. While both of these are located in Mexico, temples of the Mayan Civilization can also be found through out Central America in Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras. They were built both on highlands and lowlands, in jungles, and even coastal regions.

We learned architecturally the temples were designed around the Mayan calendar. They were used not only for religious purposes and worship, but also to follow the Solar year, predict the seasons, and to predict the beginning and end of civilization.

The pyramid of Chichen Itza (shown above) has 4 sides, each containing 91 steps ($91 \times 4 = 364$), then there is a platform on top making the total 365 steps (the length of our solar year). Most of their culture was centered on the observation of the stars and phases of the moon. The Mayans had one of the most advanced calendar systems in the ancient world. Overall they had three calendars, which were used together. One was the long calendar (covering the full length of all time), the sacred or prophetic of 260 days, and the third calendar following the solar year used for planting and harvesting.

The Mayan civilization lived in Southern Mexico and Central America from 250-900 A.D. To this day, scientists cannot agree why the Mayans disappeared from their complex cities in Mesoamerica.

We finished by going over the Mayan Math System, which is a base 20 or Vigesimal system versus our base 10 or Decimal system. Visit this great video we watched on You Tube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybvb7oy_WV0