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The Maya Calendar: The Maya kept time with a combination of several cycles that meshed together to mark the movement of the sun, moon and Venus. The Maya calendar in its final form probably dates from about the 1st century B.C., and may originate with the Olmec civilization. It is extremely accurate, and the calculations of Maya priests were so precise that their calendar correction is 10,000th of a day more exact than the standard calendar the world uses today. Of all the ancient calendar systems, the Maya and other Mesoamerican systems are the most complex and intricate. They used 20-day months, and had two calendar years: the 260-day Sacred Round, or tzolkin, and the 365-day Vague Year, or haab. These two calendars coincided every 52 years. The 52-year period of time was called a "bundle" and meant the same to the Maya as our century does to us. The Sacred Round of 260 days is composed of two smaller cycles: the numbers 1 through 13, coupled with 20 different day names. Each of the day names is represented by a god who carries time across the sky, thus marking the passage of night and day. The day names are Imix, Ik, Akbal, Kan, Chicchan, Cimi, Manik, Lamat, Muluc, Oc, Chuen, Eb, Ben, Ix, Men, Cib, Caban, Eiznab, Cauac, and Ahau. Some of these are animal gods, such as Chuen (the dog), and Ahau (the eagle), and archaeologists have pointed out that the Maya sequence of animals can be matched in similar sequence to the lunar

zodiacs of many East and Southeast Asian civilizations. Writing and Hieroglyphics: The Maya writing system is considered by archaeologists to be the most sophisticated system ever developed in Mesoamerica. The Maya wrote using 800 individual signs or glyphs, paired in columns that read together from left to right and top to bottom. Maya glyphs represented words or syllables that could be combined to form any word or concept in the Mayan language, including numbers, time periods, royal names, titles, dynastic events, and the names of gods, scribes, sculptors, objects, buildings, places, and food. Hieroglyphic inscriptions were either carved in stone and wood on Maya monuments and architecture, or painted on paper, plaster walls and pottery. The unit of the Maya writing system is the glyphic cartouche, which is equivalent to the words and sentences of a modern language. Maya cartouches included at least three or four glyphs and as many as fifty. Each cartouche contained various glyphs, as well as prefixes and suffixes. There is no Maya alphabet. Maya writing is difficult to interpret for a number of reasons. First, glyphs do not represent just sounds or ideas, they can represent both, making it difficult to know how each glyph or cartouche should be read. In addition, many Maya glyphs can have more than one meaning, and many Maya concepts can be written in more than one way. Numbers, for example, can be written with Maya numerical symbols or with the picture of a god associated with that number, or a combination of the two. Some glyphs represent more than one phonetic sound, while also representing an idea. This means that a single idea can be written in many different ways. For example, the

name of the Palenque ruler, Pacal, whose name literally means "Hand-shield", appears sometimes as a picture of a hand-shield, sometimes phonetically as pa-cal-la, and at other times as a combination of picture symbols and phonetics. 更多信息请访问：百考试题外语站点 百考试题外语论坛 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com