MATHEMATICS

The Vigesimal system = base 20
Developed concept of ZERO (shell)/Vertical system of calculation

Ancient Maya Mathematics uses:
- Recording astronomical events (Dresden Codex)
- Calculations (stelae)
- Calendar dates Inscriptions (Kings coming to power)

TIP: use your notebook to practice how to calculate numbers using the Maya system

WRITING

Earliest forms: "The newly found San Bartolo text is the earliest example of Maya writing with firm, scientific dating." Stuart is a professor of Mesoamerican art at the University of Texas at Austin. "It is also tantalizingly close to the earliest dates we have for writing in Mesoamerica as a whole, around 400 to 300 B.C. in Oaxaca. The find simply suggests that the Maya had writing about as early as anyone else in Mesoamerica."

The language of the Inscriptions= Ancient Maya text = some form of Eastern Cholan /Ch'olti = hieroglyphic language – Classic Mayan/31 members of the Maya language defined today
In fact, all writing systems are based on signs representing the sounds of human speech. The number of signs in an unknown script gives a clue as to how it encodes these sounds. We now know that Maya glyphs are a mix of signs for whole words and signs for syllables. They can express all the sounds of spoken Maya.

IMPORTANT BOOK -- What is the Popol Vuh?
is a Maya book of mytho-historical narratives of the Post Classic K'iche' kingdom in Guatemala's western highlands. The title translates as "Book of the Community", "Book of Counsel", or more literally as "Book of the People". Popol Vuh's prominent features are its creation myth, its epic tales of the Hero Twins Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, and its genealogies.

ART – 3 categories = painting + sculpture + architecture

PAINTING

San Bartolo mural one of the best examples of painting found dating to c. 100BC. The painting is about the belief system of the Maya and illustrates various important scenes including (a) birth scene, (b) the Giant Serpent and (c) Maize God's wife

KEY WORDS and TERMS: Vigesimal, BASE 20, Decipherment, Emblem Glyph, Inscriptions, Stucco, Lintel, Plaza, Huano, Stela, incense burner, figurines, courtiers, Popol Vuh
SCULPTURE (7 types of sculpture discussed are)

- **A** Stelae - large stone slab with carvings and inscriptions
- **B** Lintel Lintels - spanning doorways/panels and tablets set in walls
- **C** Altar rounded or rectangular objects with legs
- **D** Ballcourt marker relief carvings showing ball game scenes
- **E** Monumental Stairs giant hieroglyphic stairway
- **F** Wood carving few examples survive (many destroyed by man and nature)
- **G** Stucco mold molded plastered sculpture against a building

Ceramics Art objects made from clay sometimes painted examples = cylinder vessels/vases, lidded dishes, incense burners, and figurines

ARCHITECTURE

The lay-out of the Maya towns and cities, and more particularly of the ceremonial centers where the royal families and courtiers resided, is characterized by the rhythm of immense horizontal stucco floors of plazas often located at various levels, connected by broad and often steep stairs, and surmounted by temple pyramids.

Among the various types of structures =

- Ceremonial platforms (usually less than 4 meters in height).
- Courtyards and palaces.
- Other residential buildings, such as a writers’ house.
- Pyramids, often containing burials in their base or fill, with sanctuaries on top.
- Ball courts

Traditional MAYA house – see left