

## WALT understand Mayan ideas of geography

### The World Tree

The Mayas believed in a world of three layers: Heaven, the middle world, and underworld

Its roots were in the underworld, its trunk in the middle world, and its branches in the highest layer of the other world. The tree represents the Milky Way.



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To the Maya, the universe created in this order:

First came the earth and the seas, then animals.

Then there were experimental people of mud who were destroyed because they could not stand up or worship properly.

The next people were made of wood, but they came to an end because they were willful and did not worship properly.

Finally, because the gods built with corn, a successful human was made.

The Milky Way itself was celebrated by the Maya. They called it the World Tree, which was represented by a tall and majestic flowering tree, the Ceiba.

The Milky Way was also called the Wakah Chan. Wak means "Six" or "Erect". Chan or K'an means "Four", "Serpent" or "Sky".

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The Milky Way rose up from the horizon and climbed overhead into the North. The star clouds that form the Milky Way were seen as a place where all life began.

A major element of the World Tree include the Kawak Monster, a giant head with a kin (symbol) in its forehead. This monster was also a mountain or witz monster. A bowl on its head contains a flint blade representing sacrifice, and the Kimi glyph that represents death.

On top of the World Tree we find a bird that has been called, the Principal Bird deity, or Itzam Ye. During the months of winter, when the so-called "Winter" Milky Way dominates the sky, it was called the "White Boned Serpent."