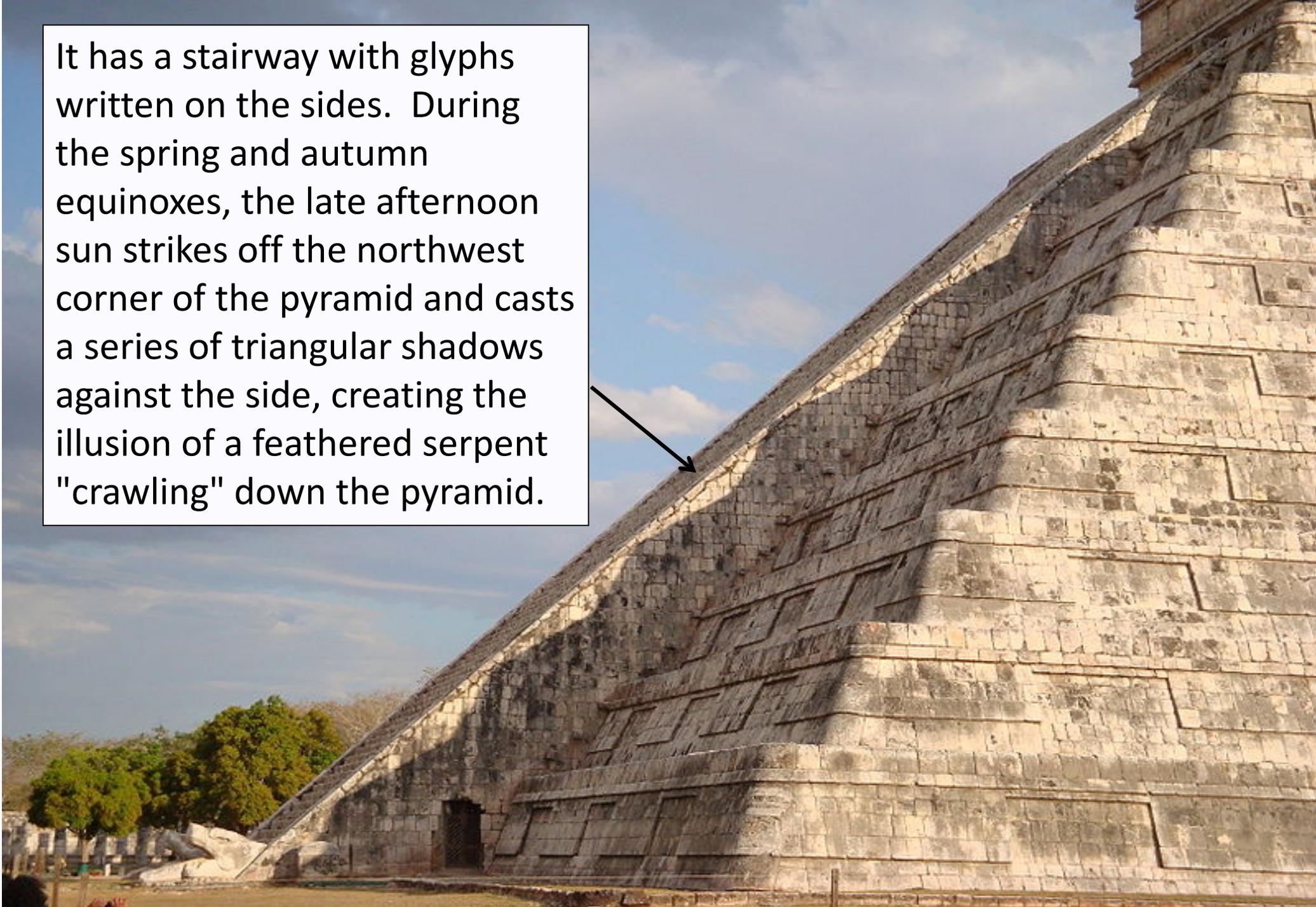


Maya pyramids and temples

El Castillo at Chichen Itza is a temple to the god Kukulcan, a plumed serpent.

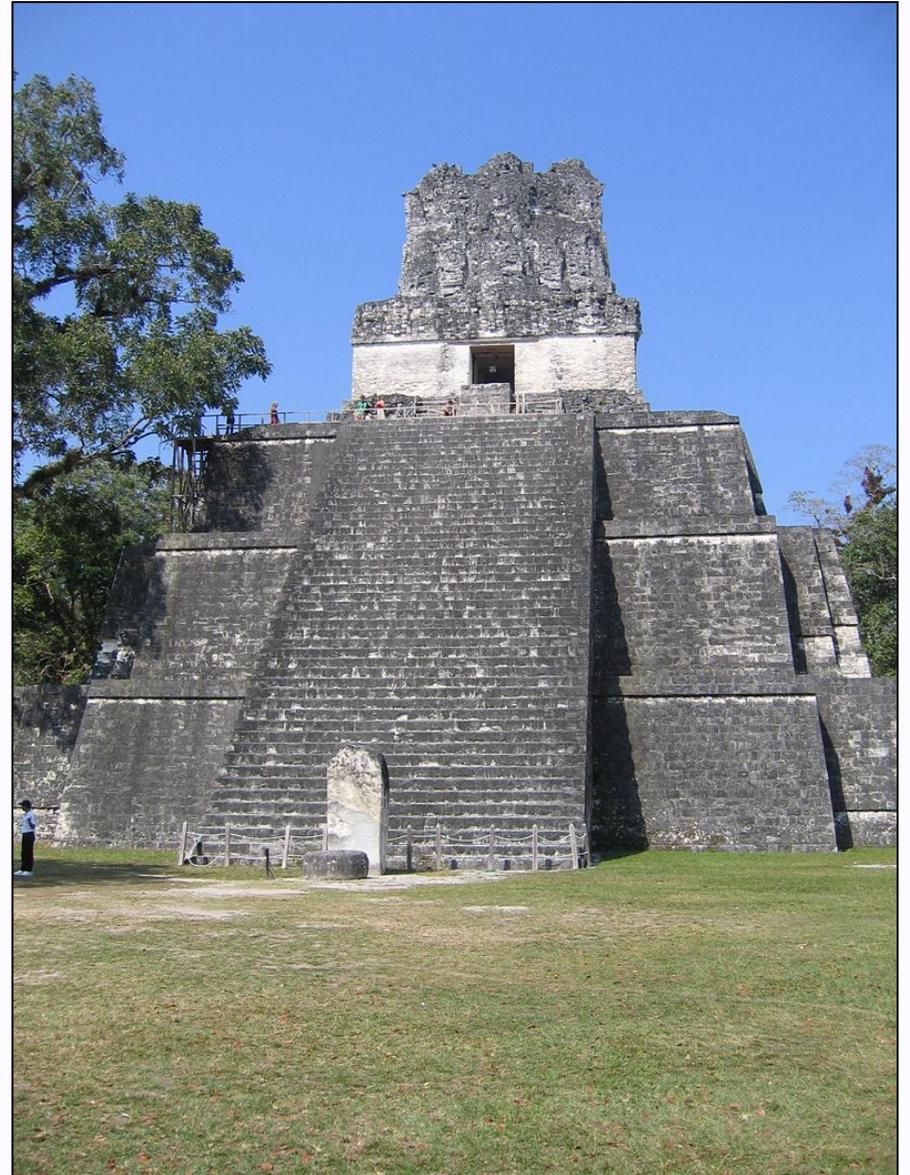


It has a stairway with glyphs written on the sides. During the spring and autumn equinoxes, the late afternoon sun strikes off the northwest corner of the pyramid and casts a series of triangular shadows against the side, creating the illusion of a feathered serpent "crawling" down the pyramid.



El Castillo was a pyramid built to a god and was never intended to be touched by humans.

The Maya also built pyramids that were meant to be climbed by priests so they could make sacrifices to the gods.





Maya palaces were large, multi-storied buildings where the king and royal family lived. They had courtyards, patios, towers and walled gardens to give the family some privacy.

Possible Research Questions

Maya Temples and Palaces

**Who built the temples?
How did they build them?
Where did the stone come from?
How did they get it through the jungle?**



**What was the purpose of the temples?
Who used them?
What did they do?
What did the priest wear?
What role did the Sun play?**

**Who lived in the palaces?
What happened in them?
What were the roofs made of?
Why did they have walled gardens?**



How to make a Maya temple

You will need:

Air drying clay

Clay tools

Roller

Knife

Clay board

You may prefer to make these out of cardboard, in which case you need scissors, tape, card, cartons, etc.



Below are images of elaborate stone carvings of the stairway at Copan. The carvings are to be found all the way up the temple's stairway.



To make a clay temple, roll out the clay into a smooth, flat slab. Cut out a square, 10cm x 10cm. This will be the base of your temple.



Cut out another square. Make this one 9cm x 9cm. Place it on top of the first square.

Cut out another square, 8cm x 8cm and place it on top. Continue cutting out squares and placing them on top. Decrease the length and width by 1 cm each time.



When you have finished, you will need to create the stairway. Press the side of a ruler or clay tool into the middle of one side of the temple to create the steps of the temple.



Draw glyphs into the side of the stairway with a clay tool.

