Collapse of the Mayan Civilization

What were 3 major factors that lead to the collapse of the Mayan Civilization?

- Warfare
- Environmental Collapse
- Drought

How many years did the Mayan Civilization last? – **150 years**

In the 8TH and 9TH centuries alliances broken down, **trade** declined and intense **conflicts** spiral out of control.

As war continued the level of violence and destruction **increased**.

The gorgeous **temples** and **palaces** were destroyed.

Some cities even had **defensive** walls that passed right through the **middle** of them.

Pyramids lay unfinished and kings unburied. Hundreds of thousands of **refugees** poured into the cities from the countryside, swelling their populations.

The Yucatan was a **hostile** environment and the Maya needed to develop smart and costly methods to thrive within it.

Deforestation increased soil erosion where soils were already quite thin.

The final fatal factor was **drought**. Their aqueducts and cisterns still occupied the jungles that have consumed their cities. However the length of the droughts was still too much.

There were 2 major droughts that caused the fall of the Mayan Civilization:

- **40 year** drought between 820 - 860.
- **100** year drought from 1000-1100

Farmers planted seeds of **corn** into the dry dirt year after year, but saw nothing sprout.

The Mayan population that survived the droughts migrated **north**. This period is known as the **Terminal Classic,** or Period of Disaster**.** Their civilization went through a massive shift and had a lot of **political** changes. They got rid of God-Kings and replaced them with ruling **councils**. They dominated the trade routes in the region, especially **salt**. It became the **political** center of the northern lowlands from the 10th to the 13th century.

The Spanish brought over **diseases** like smallpox, influenza, and measles. Within 100 years, **90**% of the native population was gone.

The Spanish conquest of the Maya began in **1528**.

The Mayans attacked **Spanish** camps at night, laid traps for them in the jungle, and deployed rapid hit and run tactics. The Spanish had to invade and conquer each Maya city separately. When they finally established control over one region as soon as they moved to the next it would **rebel**.

The city of Nojpeten was controlled by the **Aztec** people and was located in the middle of a lake in Northern **Guatemala**, surrounded by defensive **walls** and was not overtaken until **1697**. The city was attacked by a large boat with **cannons** and mortars. The people of the city tried to fight back, but were beaten back and **shot** in the water as they tried to swim away.

Today there are **7 million** Maya people living in Guatemala, Southern Mexico, and the Yucatan Peninsula, Belize, El Salvador, and wester Honduras.

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