

Cohesion between paragraphs

Note the use of two cohesive devices (pronouns and repetition of a key noun or use of a synonym) to create logical flow and development

Over many centuries, the Mayan culture developed in the tropical jungles of what are now parts of Mexico, Honduras, Belize and Guatemala. By the seventh century, the Mayas had built a number of cities with magnificent temples, palaces and public buildings and large permanent populations. The cities appear to have been in competition with one another, and war among them was frequent. It is estimated that the largest of these cities, Tikal, had a permanent population of between thirty thousand and fifty thousand and that the total Mayan population could have been 5 million.

To support **such a population**, the Mayas also developed a complex agricultural system. They cleared the tropical forest from the hillside and made extensive use of terracing to control the inevitable soil erosion on the new farmland. In addition, in the swampy lowland, they constructed extensive systems of drainage ditches and used the material from the ditches to form raised fields protected from flooding, where cotton and food crops could be grown.

This vast system of intensive agriculture was the basis for all the achievements of the Mayan civilisation. However, when too much was demanded of it, the system could not withstand the strain. In the end, it collapsed. The process seems to have begun after the year 600, at a time when the population increased rapidly to meet the rulers' growing demands for construction workers and soldiers. To satisfy the need of the growing population for food, fuel, and land, the Mayas cut down more and more of the tropical forests on hillsides. Although the soil in the forest areas is fertile, much of it was, and still is, extremely vulnerable to erosion by wind and rain. Probably soil erosion caused by the extensive deforestation began to reduce the crop harvests from the hillside fields. The soil that had been washed down from the hills increased the amount of silt in the lowland rivers and drainage ditches. As a result, water levels rose and began to flood the raised fields, thus reducing the harvests still further.

As a result of the **deterioration** of the artificial environment created by the Mayas, food production dropped dangerously low. The consequences were disastrous. The first signs...