



Knowledge Organiser for Year 5 & 6

The Mayans

Key questions:

- Can you identify Mayan and tribal art, particularly the techniques used in Mayan masks?
- Can you identify, investigate and compare the Mayan temples and architecture and recreate one of the famous structures?
- Can you understand the difference between MEDCs and LEDCs and understand the production and distribution of natural resources to generate economic growth?
- Can you identify how climate affects product production?
- Can you place the Mayans on a timeline, identifying key information?
- Can you identify the contribution that the Ancient Maya had on the modern world, understanding that they were considered an advanced society?
- Can you compare the Mayan civilisation to other historical societies, considering their similarities and differences?

Key dates

2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to an extensive drought. People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.
AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.
AD 1500s	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.
AD 1839	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood explore Copán and extensively document what they find, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation. They go on to document other Maya cities, including Chichén Itzá.
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

Did you know...?

- The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that the gods could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods.
- The Maya people believed that the earth, which they called the Middleworld, was large and flat and resting on the back of a creature, such as a turtle or crocodile.
- The Maya writing system, used to write several different Maya languages, was made up of over 800 symbols called glyphs.
- Maize was a very important crop that formed up to 80% of the Maya people's diets. They believed that the first humans were made from maize dough by the gods.

Key vocabulary or people

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decades • Centuries • Kalkulan • Tikal • Dynasty • Maize • Codex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennium • Empire • Civilisation • Hieroglyphics • Stela • Scribe • Blood letting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pok-o-Tok • Sacrifice • Harvest • Warrior • Cenote • Ah Kin Mai • Chac 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village • City • Jungle • Cacao • etching
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