

Uplands Junior School Knowledge Organiser

Subject: History

Topic: Marvellous Mayans

Year: 5

Historical knowledge

- **Chichen Itza:** Chichen Itza is a well-preserved example of a Mayan city, located in what would have been Mesoamerica. It is a popular tourist destination as it shows a series of Mayan sculptures, pyramids and natural water sources through sinkholes. Many Mayan cities were often found near trade routes and good farmland.
- **Chaac:** Chaac is the Mayan god of rain. The Maya believed that the best way to please their gods was through the sacrifice of animals or humans. If they were experiencing a drought, the belief was that Chaac was punishing them so they would need to sacrifice. Mayans were polytheists, believing in many nature gods or deities.
- **Sacrificing rituals:** Sacrifices would often be through beheading or drownings. They were religious ceremonies that many people would attend.
- **Pok-a-tok:** A religious game that was often refereed by the high priest. The players would have to use their bodies to get a ball through a stone hoop. The losing team would sometimes be used as a sacrifice! A lot of Mayan stories would refer to the game of Pok-a-tok.
- **Headdresses:** Headdresses were a large part of Mayan culture. It was believed that the larger the headdress that someone wore, the more important they were.
- **Pakal the Great:** A King in Mesoamerica whose reign lasted more than 68 years, the longest lasting king in Ancient Maya. He built various intricate temples and was buried with a perfectly preserved jade mask.
- **Society:** Priests were considered the most important people in the Mayan culture. Warriors, craftsmen and traders were next in the hierarchy. Farmers, workers and slaves were at the bottom of the hierarchy.
- **Trade:** Mayan merchants traded many goods including salt, cotton, honey and jade.
- The demise of the Mayan civilisation came about because of a mixture of deforestation, land erosion and drought

Key vocabulary

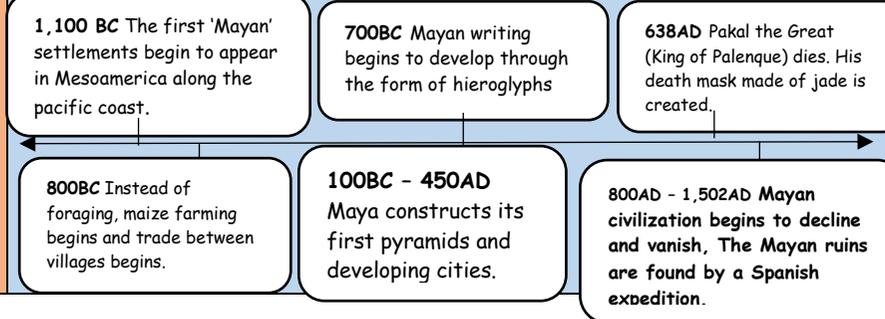
Ahau	A Mayan King
Bloodletting	Cutting a part of the body to release blood. This was usually done to try and communicate with the gods.
Cacao	Bitter chocolate. The Mayans would have used this as a drink it could have also used it for currency too.
Cenote	A natural pit or sinkhole where groundwater can be found. These were sometimes used for sacrificial offerings.
City-States	An independent city that had its own form of government, laws and rules.
Codex	An early type of book held together by some sort of stitching.
Dynasty	The continuation of powerful leaders within the same family over a period of time.
Haab	The 365-day calendar used by farmers to time the planting and harvesting of crops.
Hieroglyphics	A system of writing that used pictures and symbols instead of letters and numbers.
Huipil	The traditional blouse worn by the women of Mayan cultures.
Jade	A green stone often used to make jewellery and other goods.
Maize	The main crop grown by the Mayans.
Peasant	A class of people who had little money or possessions. They generally farmed or worked on farms. They were often thought to be unsophisticated and uneducated.
Popol Vuh	The Mayan book that featured their Creation story about the hero twins.
Pyramid	Mayan pyramids were generally stepped and had flat roofs.
Stela	A person who was able to read and write. Considered important in Mayan culture.
Tzalk'in	The Mayan religious calendar which contained 260 days

Diagrams



- *The Maya civilization was a Mesoamerican civilization; this refers to the region in which the Maya lived, spanning over Southeastern Mexico and Northern Central America.
- *The Maya civilization developed in an area that encompasses southeastern Mexico, all of Guatemala and Belize, and the western portions of Honduras and El Salvador, as well as the Yucatán Peninsula
- * The climate in the Mayan Empire was mostly tropical.

Timeline



Historical skills

- *Begin to identify primary and secondary sources to understand more about the Maya civilization.
- * Study different aspects of different people to explain the culture and religious beliefs of the Maya people.
- * Make comparisons between different times in the past and use evidence to build up a picture of a past event by exploring the significance of particular foods to the Maya people.
- *Use appropriate vocabulary to communicate about the Maya civilisation.
- *Study the Maya Empire using maps and globes.
- *Place the chronology of key events of the Maya civilization on a timeline including BC/AD.
- *Recall, select and organise historical information about a variety of aspects of the Maya civilisation.
- * Use the library and internet for research into Chichen Itza - select relevant sections of information to create a tourist information page.
- * Communicate their knowledge and understanding about the Maya civilization through written explanations, comparisons, analysis and application in a variety of mediums.