

Maya – Temples, calendars and chocolate – Knowledge Organiser Years 5 & 6

Summary

The Maya were an ancient civilisation who lived in Mesoamerica (now Central America) between approximately 2000 BC and 900 AD. They are known for being the first Mesoamericans to develop writing. They were a sophisticated and advanced culture in which they lived in city states. The Mayan people built spectacular monuments and stepped pyramids, where some (e.g. El Castillo, Chichen Itza) are world tourist destinations today. They are also well-known for their advanced maths and calendars. Maya cities became abandoned around 900 AD: nobody knows why.

Maya Vocabulary

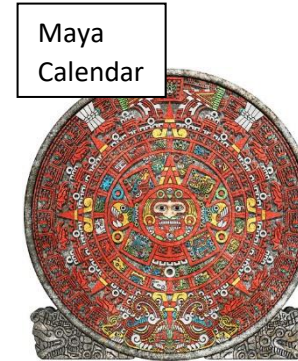
Artefact – an object that is made by a person, such as a tool or a decoration, of historical interest
Codex – The Maya book
Calendar – a printed table showing all of the days, weeks and months of the year
Hieroglyphics – a system of writing using pictures
Civilisation – human society which is organised
Dynasty – a series of rulers or leaders who are all from the same family, or a period when a country is ruled by them
Kingdom – a place ruled by a king, queen or an important person
Empire – an extensive group of cities ruled over by a single person
Maize – also known as corn, it is a cereal grain
Chocolatl - a spicy drink made from cocoa beans
Sacrifice – a religious activity involving the killing of animals or people by priests to keep the gods happy
Rituals – tasks performed by the Maya to keep the gods happy
Temple – a building used for the worship of a god or gods in some religions
Tomb – a large stone structure or underground room where someone is buried



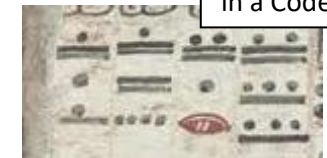
Maya Maize god



Part of a Maya Codex



Maya Calendar



Maya numbers in a Codex



Chichen Itza, the Maya capital city, as it looks today

El Castillo Temple, Chichen Itza



Class novels:
The Curse of the Maya: A truth-seekers' story by Johnny Pearce and Andy Loneragan; **The Hero Twins: Against the Lords of Death** by Jolley Dan and Witt David

Recommended books:
The Chocolate Tree: A Mayan folktale (Linda Lowery and Richard Keep), **Middeworld** (J&P Voelkel), **Rain Player** (David Wisniewski), **The corn grows ripe** (Dorothy Rhoads)

Timeline	1100 BC Hunter gatherers settle along the Pacific coast.	1100 BC Settlements begin to appear.	700 BC Maya writing is developed.	400 BC First Maya calendars carved in stone.	100 BC First Maya Pyramids are built.	900-1200 AD El Castillo is built.	925 AD Chichen Itza is the most powerful city.	1502 AD First contact with Europeans.
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Rainforests – Knowledge Organiser Years 5 and 6

Geography



Many of the world's rainforests are in south and central America. There are also some rainforests in south east Asia and Australasia

Questions to consider:

What is so special about a rainforest and how does it differ from other areas you know about? How has the Amazon rainforest changed due to human activity? What are the human and physical features of a rainforest?

Key Vocabulary:

Deforestation – the destruction of trees over large areas

Ecosystem – A community of plants and animals that depend on each other to survive

Endangered – a species that has been categorised as very likely to become extinct

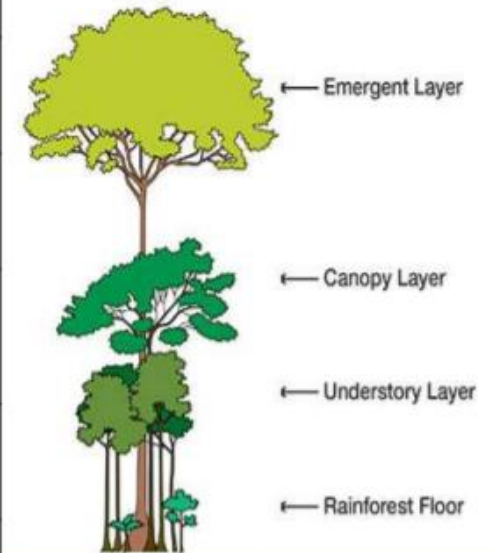
Extinction – the extinction of a species of animal or plant is the death of all its remaining living members

Biodiversity – variety of plant and animal life in a particular habitat a high level of which is usually considered to be important

Climate – the weather and temperature found in a particular area

Humidity – the level of moisture in the air

Rainforest Layers



Emergent layer -- the tops of trees that poke up above the rainforest canopy. It is very sunny here and is home to birds, butterflies and bats.

Canopy layer – a dense layer of trees overlapping each other. Home to most animals in rainforests.

Understorey layer -- a tangle of shrubs, young trees and vines. It is hot and damp here and the air is very still.

Rainforest Floor – mainly consisting of fallen leaves, fruit etc. that decomposes as food for trees.

