



Knowledge Organiser - History -Year 5

The Mayans - Who were the Maya and what was their legacy?



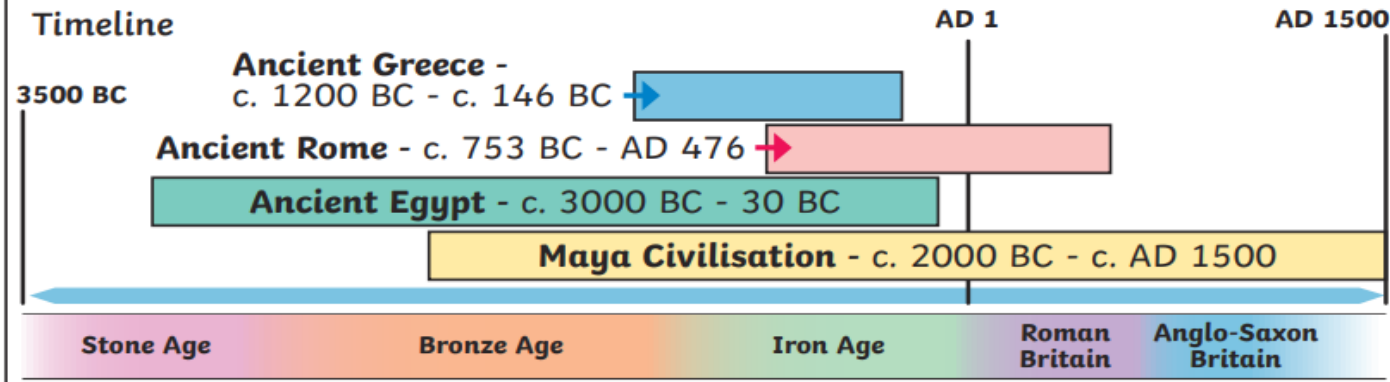
STICKY KNOWLEDGE

The Maya were a Mesoamerican civilisation who lived in Central America. They lived between 2000 BC and 1500 AD.	The Maya ate a variety of different foods including sweet potato, tomatoes and deer. Corn/maize and chocolate were particularly important to them.	Chichen Itza was a sacred city of pyramids and temples which were used as calendars and for rituals. Their construction showed knowledge of astronomy and mathematics.
The Maya were very religious. There were many Mayan gods and each one was responsible for a different aspect of life.	The Mayan writing system consisted of a type of hieroglyphics called logograms.	The Mayan number system consisted of lines and dots to create different numbers. They were one of the first civilisations to use 0.

KEY VOCABULARY

Mesoamerica	The area of Central America where the Maya empire was.
Sacrifice	An act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession as an offering to a deity (god).
Calendar	A chart or series of pages showing the days, weeks, and months of a particular year, or giving particular seasonal information.
hieroglyphics	Symbols or writing that is difficult to understand
polytheistic	Relating to or characterized by belief in or worship of more than one god.
pyramid	A monumental structure with a square or triangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top

Timeline



Map showing the expanse of the Maya Empire between 300CE and 900CE



Maya Life

RULERS		Maya society was formed of many different city-states, each with their own ruler. The King and royal family were believed to be closely related to the gods. It was the job of the rulers to keep the gods happy and to represent them in the human world. Rulers lived in the finest Maya buildings.
ARCHITECTURE		Maya cities were characterised by huge monumental buildings and sculptures. Although the Maya were able to use metal, they preferred to carve into stone. They built elaborate temples, steeped pyramids, observatories and palace complexes. These were very detailed with artistic designs.
FOOD		The Maya ate a wide variety of food. They grew crops such as maize, cacao, avocado and beans. Squash and chilli were also regularly grown. They kept animals such as dogs and turkeys for meat. They were also able to hunt very well, capturing animals like rabbits and deer for food.
CLOTHING		Clothing was normally made from woven cotton or sisal (a fibre made from a local plant). For the rich, quetzal feathers were extremely popular for elaborate headdresses. The Maya also wore jewellery – highland areas provided stones such as jade and ores such as hematite for decoration.
WRITING		Maya writing, also known as Maya glyphs, was one of the earliest forms of writing in the world, and the earliest in Mesoamerica. A series of pictures represented different words and letters. The earliest date back to around 2000BCE.
MATHS		Maya mathematics was highly advanced. The Maya people had a number system which included zero (many ancient civilisations didn't) which meant that complex calculations could be performed quickly and accurately.
RELIGION		The Maya were polytheistic (believed in many gods) and worship influenced most areas of their life. Buildings were constructed and games were played in worship to gods. The gods were bloodthirsty, and the people believed that they needed to make human sacrifices to keep them happy.