

Topic:	Year group	Term: Autumn
Ancient Mayan civilisation	Year 5	8 sessions

Background knowledge

The Maya Empire, centred in the tropical lowlands of what is now Guatemala, reached the peak of its power and influence around the sixth century A.D. The Maya excelled at agriculture, pottery, hieroglyph writing, calendar-making and mathematics, and left behind an astonishing amount of impressive architecture and symbolic artwork. Most of the great stone cities of the Maya were abandoned by A.D. 900, however, and since the 19th century scholars have debated what might have caused this dramatic decline.

What should I already know?

Some knowledge that there have been other civilisations that existed a long time ago, e.g. Ancient Egypt

National Curriculum Objectives / Key Skills	The Journey
Study of a non-European society. Change and continuity: I can see simple changes between beginning and end of a very long period e.g. the rise and fall of the Mayan empire Characteristic features: I can understand some of the key characteristics of the period being studied and can spot anachronisms e.g. <i>They wouldn't have had these things in those days, such as tractors in Ancient Egypt.</i> I am secure in understanding the main differences between today and the period being studied. I can show an understanding of the main ideas associated with that society. (I tend to describe rather than explain and tend to speak about the society as if everyone felt the same).	1. Why do we study the Maya? (Keystage History) 2. Explore reasons why the Maya empire grew. (Keystage History) 3. What was everyday life in Mayan civilisation? (Keystage History) 4. Find out about Maya religion and beliefs. (PlanBee) 5. What was life like for the Mayan people 1,000 years ago? (Keystage History) 6. If the Maya were so civilised why then did they carry out human sacrifice? (Keystage History) 7. Ask and answer our own questions about the Maya. 8. Why did the Mayan empire decline? (Keystage History/Planbee)

I can explain beliefs and attitudes in terms of why people might have had those ideas. Enquiry: I can extract simple information from text/pictures/objects showing basic comprehension. I can make simple deductions about what text means based on what is included. I can start combining information from more than one source e.g. with video, oral, pictorial evidence.	
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Comparisons/links with other topics:

How similar was every day in life in the Maya compared to every day life in Ancient Egypt?

What was similar and different between Mayan beliefs and Ancient Egyptian beliefs?

Possible answer: The Maya, like the Egyptians, believed in a variety of Gods. Egyptian pyramids were used as tombs to embalm and bury leaders. Mayans used their structures as temples and places of worship. There are a lot of similarities in the structure of these pyramids, even though they are seemingly unrelated. Both the Mayans and Egyptians used hieroglyphics as a form of written language. Even though each civilisation had their structures, both were created on stone, except paper and jewellery in the case of the Egyptians. The hieroglyphics of each are read differently. Egyptian glyphs are read from right to left and Mayan glyphs from left to right.

Outcomes

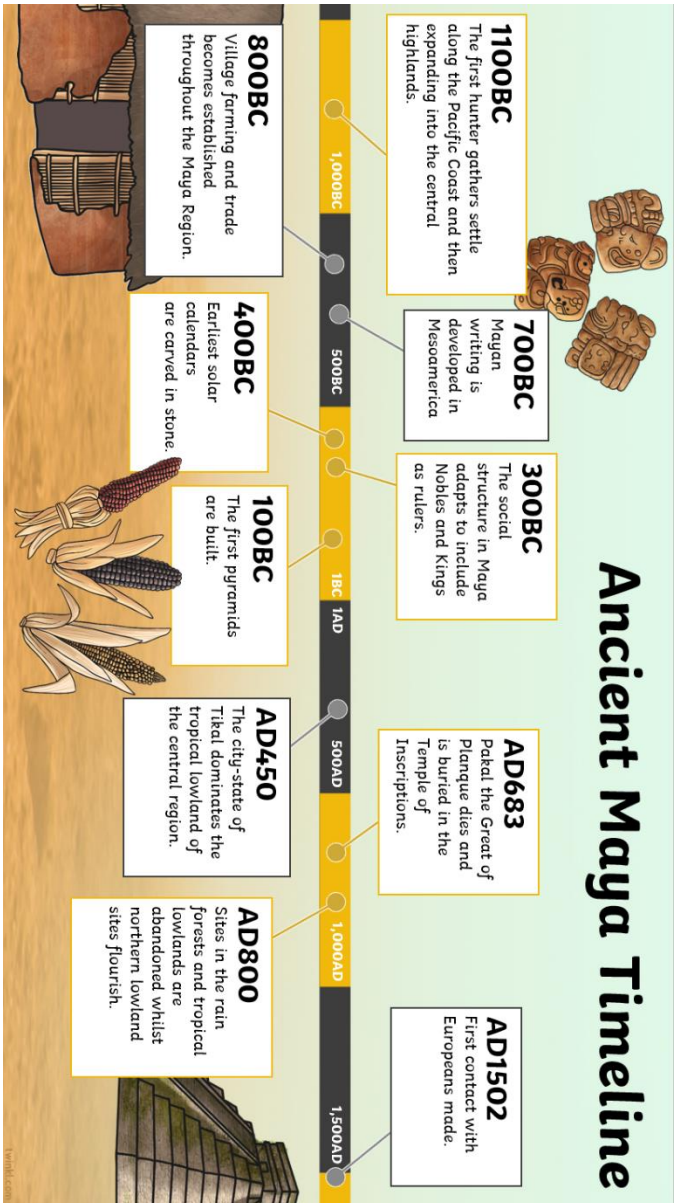
An overview of what children will know / can do

Working towards: Pupils will know the Mayan civilisation existed a long time ago. Pupils will know a few of the achievements of the Mayans. Pupils may be able to explain some aspects of how the Mayans lived and know that the Mayan civilisation eventually ceased to exist.

Expected: Pupils will be able to place the Mayan civilisation on a timeline and locate where the Mayan civilisation was located on a map. Pupils will understand the achievements of the Mayans and will also be able to explain how the Mayans lived, with some reference to sources of information they have studied. They will have theories as to why the Mayan civilisation came to decline.

Exceeding: Pupils will know a range of achievements of the Mayans and can suggest ways that these achievements influence events today. They can recall a number of primary and

secondary sources that helped them understand the Mayan way of life and discuss their own and others theories of why the Mayan civilisation started to decline.

Key Vocabulary	Timeline / Diagrams
Mesoamerica: The area of Mexico and Central America before the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. Sacred year: Yearly calendar of 260 days; also called the tzolkin. Vague year: Yearly calendar of 365 days; also called the haab. Glyphs: Symbols used in Mayan hieroglyphs. Codices: Books (codex for a single book) Itzamna: The most important Mayan god, who created Earth. Chacs: Named after the Rain God Chac, these were men who assisted the priest in the sacrifice. El Mirador: One of the first of the large city-states.	 Ancient Maya Timeline 1100BC: The first hunter gathers settle along the Pacific Coast and then expanding into the central highlands. 800BC: Village farming and trade becomes established throughout the Maya Region. 700BC: Mayan writing is developed in Mesoamerica. 400BC: Earliest solar calendars are carved in stone. 300BC: The social structure in Maya adapts to include Nobles and Kings as rulers. 100BC: The first pyramids are built. 1BC / AD: The city-state of Tikal dominates the tropical lowland of the central region. AD450: Sites in the rain forests and tropical lowlands are abandoned whilst northern lowland sites flourish. AD683: Pakal the Great of Palenque dies and is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions. AD1502: First contact with Europeans made.

Key people / places

King Pakal: King Pakal helped Palenque to become a powerful city, which was because of change in military fortunes and political stability. Growth and peace of the city was because of the Palenque's military and the victories of battles were very important. Pakal married to Lady Tz'akb'u Ajaw in 626. Pakal had the royal palace rebuilt and along with it he made new buildings in the city. In 654 there was a defeat that had Palenque's patron deities thrown down. King Pakal recovered Palenque and unfortunately later died in 683. He was buried in a temple in which, Pakal, had prepared very royal.

Yik'in Chan K'awiil (Ruler of Tikal A.D 734-751): When Yik'in was in the throne he became known as one of Tikal's greatest kings because he went in his father's footsteps. Yik'in was able to destroy the power of Calakmul and take Tikal's power back. He won many battles from different cities such as Calakumul in 736, Waka in 743, and Naranjo in 744. Yik'in had many palaces built, along with architecture.

Assessment questions / outcomes

- Why were the Maya such a significant society?
- What were some of the reasons for the growth of the Mayan empire?
- How was Mayan society organised?
- Name some of the 'every day' things that Mayans would do.
- What gods or beliefs did the Mayans have?
- What was discovered in Pacal? What does it tell us about the Mayans?
- What did Mayan writing look like?
- Why did the Mayans carry out human sacrifices?
- What tools did the Mayans use?
- What websites did you use to find your answers? Did different websites tell you different things? Why might this be?
- Why did the Mayan empire begin to decline?