

Knowledge Organiser - Year 5—History: The Maya

Key Question — Who were the Maya and what did they do?



Other Civilisations

Ancient Egypt	Anglo-Saxons	The Viking Age	Roman Empire
3200BC to 332BC	410 AD to 1066AD	793AD to 1066AD	27BC to 476D

Timeline

Date	Key Events
2000BC	Mayan civilisation emerges in Central America
100BC	First city states appear
300AD	Mayan settlements become centres for trade
600AD	Population and spread of Mayan settlements expands.
900AD	Drought is widespread and Mayan centres become less important but some communities thrived until 16th century
1520 AD	Spanish invaders arrive and take over the region.
2021 AD	Some Mayan communities continue to live like the ancient Maya,

Key Concepts

Civilisation	Advanced human community with its own social organisation , agriculture, division of labour, city-states, organised religion, science, technology, a shared written language and some form of government.
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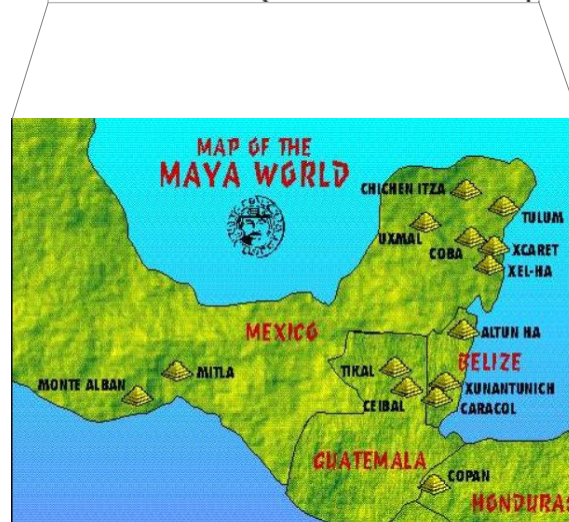
Key Vocabulary

Astronomy	Study of the movement of the stars and planets and how they may affect people.
Agriculture	Farming. Growing crops to eat and raising livestock (animals) to provide food.
City-state	City, villages and land surrounding it ruled by one leader.
Hieroglyph	Picture or symbol to represent a word, syllable or sound in a system of writing.

Why did the Mayan Civilisation decline so badly?

No one knows for sure why the Maya civilisation went into decline. Possible explanations involve the overuse and exhaustion of farming land, prolonged drought, misrule, warfare and disease.

Where in the world was it?



Mayan Society

All Maya shared a common culture and religion, but each city governed itself and had its own noble ruler. These cities never came together to form a single empire.

Mayan Kings were constantly at war with each other, fighting for tribute (gifts) and prisoners to sacrifice to the gods.

The Maya believed they could communicate with their gods through human sacrifice. Self sacrifice was also common.

Mayan Kings were seen as the link between humans and gods.

Key Developments

Agriculture	Irrigated their land to grow crops and achieve large harvests.
Architecture	Built grand, stepped temples at the centre of large cities.
Art	Sculptures, mostly of humans, show high levels of skill.
Astronomy	The Mayans made very accurate charts of the moon.
Food	Chocolate was first created by the Mayans. Maize was a vital crop and used to make tortilla (flat bread) a staple of their diet.
Language	Developed a system of writing using up to 500 hieroglyphs.
Mathematics	Developed sophisticated and logical number system.— (zero!)
Medicine	Many natural cures used by the Mayans are still used today.

Key Places

El Castillo



Tikal



1000 Warriors Columns



Central America	Area between North and South America, with countries including: El Salvador , Belize, Guatemala, Honduras
Chichen Itza	City in Mexico's Yucatan region, that thrived in Mayan times. El Castillo, a pyramid with 91 steps on each of its four sides, remains there today .
Mesoamerica	Area where the Mayans made their home (Modern day Mexico and Central America)