

St. Austin's RC Primary School - History

Topic: The Mayan Civilisation

Year: 5

What should I already know?

- Other ancient **civilisations** including the Egyptians and the Greeks.
- At this time England was divided between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings.
- Inventions from ancient civilisations may still be relevant today.

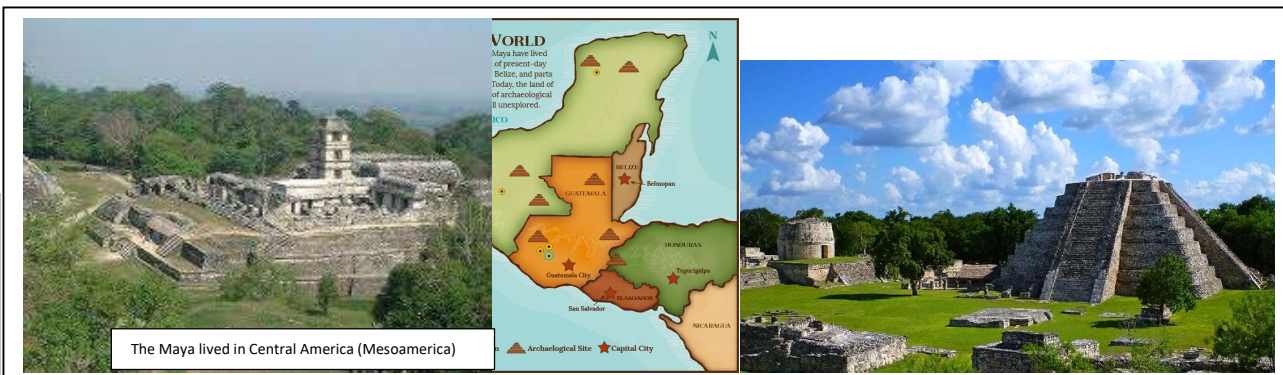
Vocabulary

archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains
architecture	the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings
Chichen Itza	a village in Mexico: site of important Mayan ruins.
chronology	the order of events in time
circa	Latin meaning 'around'. c. 800 BC means around 800 BC.
civilisation	a human society with its own social organisation and culture .
culture	activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilisation
deforestation	if an area is deforested, all the trees there are cut down
deity	a god or goddess
drought	a long period of time during which no rain falls.
economy	the wealth that a society or country gets from business and industry
hierarchy	a system of organising people into different ranks or levels of importance, for example in society
indigenous	people or things belong to the country in which they are found
Mayan	of or relating to the Maya or any of their languages (adjective)
merchant	a person who buys or sells goods in large quantities
plaza	an open square in a city.
polytheists	the worship of or belief in more than one god
society	people in general, thought of as a large organized group
trade	the activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services



Mayan Society

- **Mayan** cities had similar layouts to each other. They would have a palace for the ruler, a **plaza** for the marketplaces and temples, in the form of pyramids.
- **Mayan** cities were often found near **trade** routes and good farmland.
- **Mayan merchants traded** many goods including salt, cotton, honey and jade.
- Mayans were **polytheists**, believing in many nature gods or **deities**.
- 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**.
- The **Mayan** calendar (Tzolkin) consisted of 260 days and 13 months.
- The **demise** of the **Mayan** civilisation came about because of a mixture of **deforestation**, land **erosion** and **drought**.



Ball game and story

The Maya lived in Central America (Mesoamerica)

c. AD 250: By this stage, the Mayan had established many cities, monuments and pyramids. They had devised systems for writing and mathematics.

c. AD 840: Poor quality fields, combined with land erosion, leads to drought.

Today there are still around **7 million** indigenous Mayan people living in Central America.

c. AD 600: The Mayan population exceeded 5million. Excessive farming and **deforestation** due to overflow from the cities were commonplace and this led to land becoming less **fertile**.

c. AD 900: Many Mayan cities are deserted due to deforestation, drought and war.

What was happening in Britain at this time?