

Year 6: The Maya KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER



ESSENTIAL MAYA VOCABULARY	
drought	A long period with very little rain.
scribes	People paid to write things down, often as an official record.
conquistador	A conqueror, especially one of the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru
indigenous	Originating or occurring naturally from a particular place.
hieroglyphs	A writing system that uses pictures and symbols instead of letters and words
jaguar	A big cat with yellow fur and black spots.
codex	An ancient handwritten text.
sacrifice	An offering of something as a religious act
priests	A person who is authorised to perform the sacred rites of a religion
invasion	Entering an area by force in order to take over.
calendar	A chart showing the days, weeks and months of a particular year
pyramid	A structure built from stone as a royal tomb
temple	A building devoted to the worship of a god or gods
invasion	Entering an area by force in order to take over.
ritual	A religious ceremony consisting of a series of actions

1100 BC	800 BC	700 BC	400 BC	300 BC	100 BC	AD 450	AD 683	AD 800	AD 1500s
The first hunter gathers settle along the Pacific coast.	Village farming and trade become established.	Maya writing is developed.	Earliest solar calendars carved into stone.	Nobles and kings are included in the Maya social structure.	The first pyramid are built.	The city-state of Tikal dominates part of the central area.	Pakal the Great of Planque dies and is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions.	Sites in the rainforests and tropical areas are abandoned due to drought	The Spanish arrive in South America.

Who Were the Maya?

The Maya are indigenous people of Mexico and Central Americas who were the first Mesoamerican civilisation to develop writing. They are known for their number system and the accuracy of their calendar.

Religion

The Maya worshipped many different gods. They believed that each god had a good side and a bad side, so could both help and hurt them. They Maya would sing, dance and make blood sacrifices to please the gods. They believed that priests could communicate with the gods, so they performed special rituals.

Society

Most Maya lived in stone or thatched homes, but the nobles lived in palaces with beautiful murals and sculptures. The Maya built sewer systems and even developed a running water system.

Maya Numbers

The Maya had a very advanced numerical system made up of three symbols that are thought to come from things they would have counted with, like stones, sticks and shells:

= 0 • = 1 — = 5


They were one of only two civilisations to develop the concept of zero.

Writing

The Maya created a writing system made up of over 800 symbols called glyphs. Some represented a whole word (logograms) and others represented units of sound (syllabograms). These were carved into stone and painted onto pottery. Codices (books made from bark) were written by the Maya scribes.

Architecture

The Maya are known for building pyramids. They built some which had a temple at the top and were meant to be climbed to make sacrifices at the top. Other pyramids were built to specific gods and were not to be touched by humans,




MAKING LINKS TO PREVIOUS LEARNING GOLDEN VOCABULARY

Egyptians	Both civilisations used the same structure of pyramids .
World Religions	Temples are used as places to worship.
The Romans	The Roman invaded Britain looking for riches, land, slaves and metal.
The Aztecs	Both civilisations took part in rituals .

Maya Calendar

As time was very important to the Maya, they made detailed and accurate calendars to chart the movement of the Sun, moon, stars and sometimes the planets. They were used in astronomical calculations, recording important events, the reigns of rulers and their conquests and in divination.



It was a circular calendar made up of interlocking circles which lines up every 52 years.