



Y5 History Knowledge Organiser— Ancient Mayans



Key Knowledge

Learn these key facts

The Maya were established by 1100BC

Mayan civilisations existed in the south east of Mexico, Guatemala and Belize as well as parts of Honduras and El Salvador.



Key Vocabulary

Understand these key words

Word

Definition

Ancient civilisation

The first communities that settled in a location that developed in to nations and empires.

Conquest

The control of a place or people through military force.

Terrace

A flat area made on a slope.

Middle World

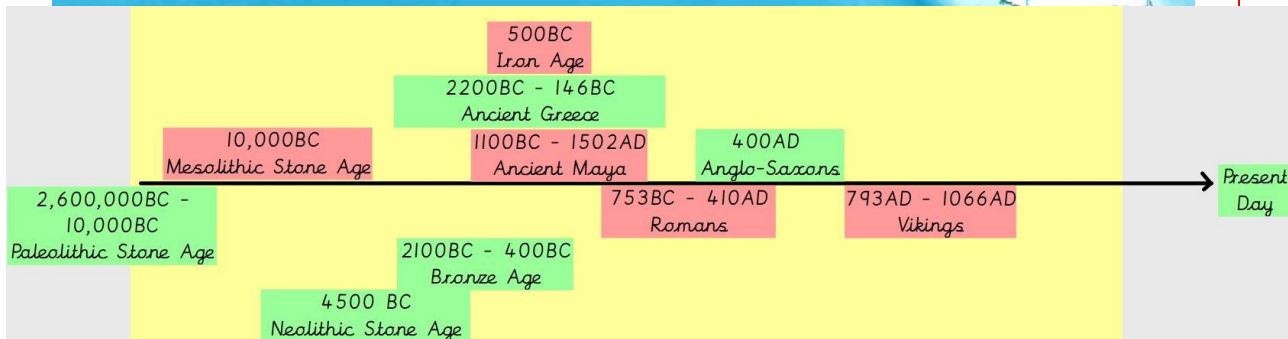
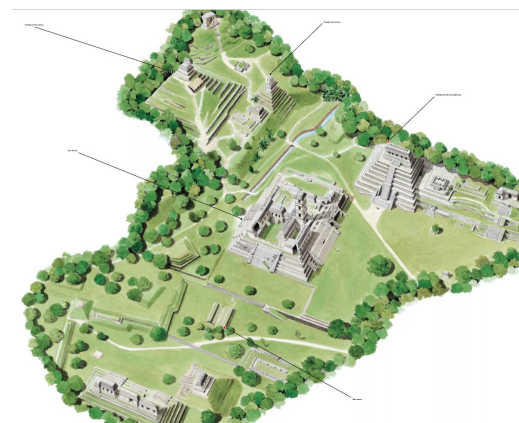
The ground that we live on.

Underworld

Where Mayans went when they died naturally. Underneath the ground and similar to the belief of hell.

Mayan Cities

The civilisation was separated in to different groups that lived independently from one another. Similar to Greek City states.



Farming

Slash and burn farming (shifting) - areas are chopped down and burnt. The ash is high in nutrients, so perfect for growing crops. However, within a few years, the nutrients would be used up and the farmers would have to move elsewhere to let the forest regrow.



Terraced farming—where walls are built to make small flat fields one on top of the other. This creates terraces on steep land.



Raised farming—used on areas of land that would have been too wet to use. Small canals were created by digging out soil from beneath the water and piling up to create small islands.

What happened to the Mayans?



Hernando Cortes conquered the Mayans in the Spanish Conquest.

Most of the civilisation went in to decline.

Key reasons for conquest:

- Wanting power
- Spread religion or rule of living
- Take resources.

Today there are over seven million Maya people, most of whom live in Central America and southern Mexico.



Belief system



The Mayans believed that the world was divided in to three parts: the heaven, the earth (Middle World) and the underworld; these were all connected by a giant World Tree.



Chaac is the god of rain. Mayas believed that this god could strike the clouds with his lightning axe in order to produce thunder and rain.

This represents the **Maize God**. Today, many Maya people believe that humans were made from corn. The Ancient Mayas believed this too.

Itzamná is one of the oldest gods and is believed to have created human beings. It's also believed that he created writing.

K'inich Ahau is the sun god. Some people believe that it's really Itzamná in disguise. K'inich Ahau was associated with the jaguar, rulership, fire and sacrifice.

Kukulcan: a huge serpent covered in feathers. In the dry season he's said to hibernate in lakes and during the wet season, he flies into the sky to release the water he has stored.