



Year 4 Summer Term Knowledge Organiser

What happened to the Mayans?

What should I already know?

- South America is a continent.
- The climate of South America is different to that of the UK.
- Human and physical geographical features of a region in South America.
- Other civilisations include the Egyptians and the Greeks.
- What erosion is and what impact it can have on land.
- The chronology of British history.



1,100BC-The first 'Mayan' settlements begin to appear in Mesoamerica along the Pacific coast.

700BC-Mayan writing begins to develop through the form of hieroglyphs.

600AD-The Mayan population exceeded 5,000,000 people. Excessive farming and deforestation due to overflow from the cities were commonplace and this led to land becoming less fertile.

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

800BC-Instead of foraging, maize farming begins and trade between villages begins.

100BC-450AD-Maya constructs its first pyramids and developing cities. They had many monuments, pyramids and devised a writing and maths.

840AD-The quality of the fields is poor, and this combined with land erosion, leads to a drought.

Today-There are still 7 million indigenous Mayan people living in Central America.

What should I already know?

Non-European Civilisations: Knowledge of other early, ancient civilizations allow children to have comparative perspective on culture.

Key vocabulary

archaeologist - someone who studies the past by exploring old remains

architecture - the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings

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.

climate - the general weather conditions that are typical of a place

continent - a very large area of land that consists of many countries. South America is a continent.

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

deities - a god or goddess

demise - something or someone is their end or death

drought - a long period of time during which no rain falls.

economy - the wealth that a society or country gets from business and industry

erosion - the gradual destruction and removal of rock or soil

fertile - rich in nutrients to support the growth of many plants

hierarchy - a system of organising people into different ranks or levels of importance

indigenous - people or things belong to the country in which they are found

Mayan - of, relating to, or characteristic of the Maya or any of their languages

merchant - a person who buys or sells goods in large quantities

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

Historical skills and enquiry:

- I can place some historical periods in a chronological framework
- I can use historic terms related to the period of study
- I use sources of information in ways that go beyond simple observations to answer questions about the past
- I can use a variety of resources to find out about aspects of life in the past
- I can explain what I have learned in an organised and structured way, using appropriate terminology.
- I can describe the achievements of the earliest civilizations and a deeper knowledge of one of them
- I can use dates to order and place events on a timeline
- I can make comparisons between aspects of periods of history and the present day
- I can understand that the type of information available depends on the period of time studied
- I can give some reasons for some important historical events

Knowledge:

- 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.
- 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.
- Mayan merchants traded many goods including salt, cotton, honey and jade.
- 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.

What does the word Mesoamerica mean?	Start of unit:	End of unit:
South America		
North America		
Central America		
Argentina		

Order these people where they would appear in Mayan hierarchy - Number 1-4	Start of unit:	End of unit:
Warrior		
Farmer		
Priest		
Slave		

A person who believes in many gods is called...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
An atheist		
A polytheist		
An agnostic		
A druid		

Deforestation led to the demise of the Maya people. Why?	Start of unit:	End of unit:
The land became less fertile		
There was nowhere for the animals to live		
It caused pollution		

Mayan cities thrived because they were located near... (Tick two)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
Trade routes		
Monuments		
Temples		
Fertile farmland		

The Mayans exchanged goods between cities. This is called...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
Buying		
Trade		
Selling		
Stealing		

Mayan cities were very similar - they usually contained...	Start of unit:	End of unit:
A marketplace		
A palace		
A temple		
A plaza		

The height of the Mayan civilisation was c. AD 600. This was around the same time as the ----- in Britain.	Start of unit:	End of unit:
Stone Age		
Iron Age		
Roman invasion		
The spread of Christianity		

Drought means... .	Start of unit:	End of unit:

Give an example of how we know the Mayans existed.	Start of unit:	End of unit: