

Edenfield C of E Primary School- History**Topic: The Maya****Year: 4****Strand: Non-European Society****What should I already know?**

- A civilisation is a large group of people who share certain advanced ways of living.
- Pyramids were built to become tombs for important people in society.
- Other civilisations include the Ancient Egyptians

What will I know by the end of the unit?

Who were the Maya?

- The Maya were a group of people from modern-day Central America in places like Mexico and Guatemala.
- They were an advanced people with sophisticated ideas. They had their own calendar and were very knowledgeable about astronomy.

Why were the Maya so successful?

- They invented ingenious ways to farm and developed a unique terraced system which is still used in many parts of the world today.
- They came up with clever ways to irrigate crops to ensure they had plenty of food.

What were city-states?

- Chichen Itza is perhaps one of the most famous city-states of that time.
- A city state was an area controlled by a king and became responsible for trade with other city-states in the region. The Maya did not rule a country as such and instead adopted city-states which were areas of great trade and commerce.
- After about the year AD830, very little new construction took place at Chichen Itza. This is most likely due to the drought experienced in the area.
- Many city-states were abandoned after this date.

•

What were some Maya customs?

- The Maya farmed on land they terraced and made fertile.
- Their staple diet was maize and even worshipped Maize as a god.
- They drank chocolate but not as we know it. It was flavoured with chilli peppers and was unsweetened.
- The Maya took part in human sacrifices to the gods.
- The Maya played unique ball games like Pok-a-Tok.

How was Maya society organised?

- They Maya had a complex hierarchy system which meant that the most important people were at the top of society e.g. leaders, priests and the least important people were farmers and merchants.
- The Maya worshipped many Gods and made sacrifices of blood to honour and respect them.
-

How do we know so much about the Maya?

- Historians have discovered many interesting discoveries such as the Tomb of Pakal and found a funeral mask which revealed a lot about Maya hierarchy.
- They Maya had an advanced number and writing system which revealed what was most important to them.

Key Dates/Timeline

Vocabulary

Cenote	Sink hole formed by a collapse of rock into which Maya threw offerings.
Codex	Collection of manuscripts held together into early form of book
Glyph	Written symbol used to present spoken words.
Hieroglyph	System of writing used by Ancient Mayas made up of symbols that stand for words or symbols.
Jadeite	Green stone used to make wonderful jewels.
Obsidian	Black glassy rock formed when volcanic lava cools.
Quetzal	Colourful tropical bird very important to the Maya.
Ritual	Act that is always performed in some way as part of a religious ceremony.
Slash and Burn	Way of clearing farmland by slashing away most vegetation then burning the rest.
Stelae	Upright stone slabs or pillars with inscriptions and designs.
Irrigation	A way of watering farmland to ensure crops grow.
Hierarchy	A political system where there is a clear distinction between who is more important than others.
Chichen Itza	A famous settlement inhabited by the Maya.
Sophisticated	A word used to describe how advanced something or someone was.

Date	Event	Description
2000 BC	Maya start to develop religious ideas	This is before the Classical Period.
500 BC	First settlements are built	The Maya begin to build city-like states.
250 BC	Pakal builds Palenque pyramids	Pakal is a famous ruler who ruled successfully growing the Maya empire.
650 AD	Chichen Itza becomes a strong city state.	Evidence of ball courts were found in Chichen Itza.
900 AD	Tikal, Copan and Palenque abandoned.	Possible drought or disease caused the Maya to abandon their cities.
1500 AD	The Spanish Conquest	The Spanish arrived in South America and invaded many of the Maya settlements.
1952 AD	Discoveries made	Tomb of Pakal is discovered inside a pyramid.