

# Year 3 History: The Mayans

## Summer 1 2020

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# Lesson 1: Introducing the Mayans

- Aim: To discover facts about the Maya civilisation and explain who the Maya people were and when and where in the world they lived.

## Success Criteria

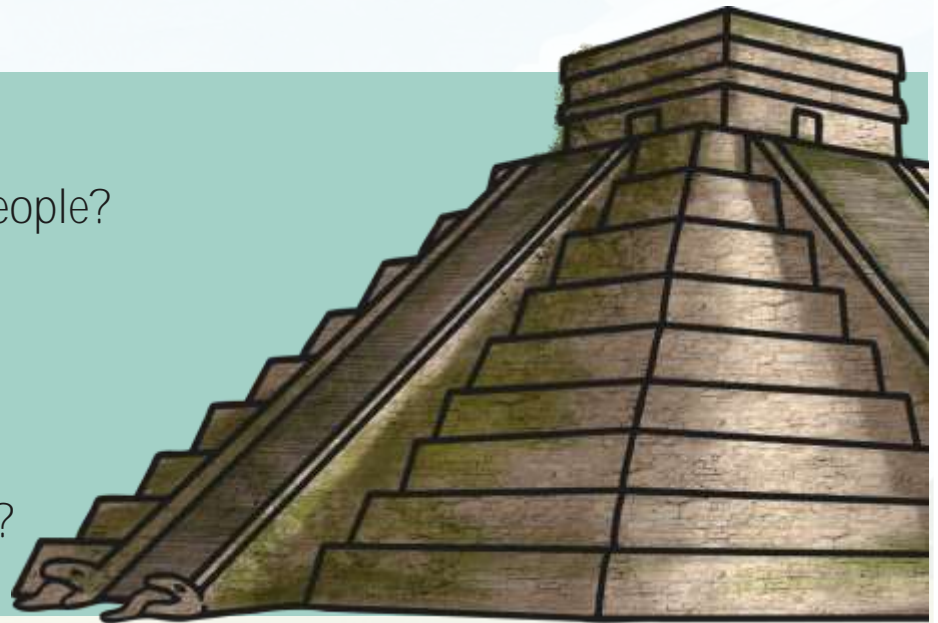
- I can recall relevant facts about the Maya civilisation.
- I can use a timeline to order events.
- I can label a map to show where the Maya lived and where some main cities were.

# Introducing the Maya

What do you already know about the ancient Maya civilisation? Consider the following questions and jot down any information you can.

## Questions

1. Who were the ancient Maya people?
2. When did they live?
3. Where did they live?
4. How did they live?
5. What do we know about them?



Now think about what you would like to learn about the Maya.

Record your thoughts and questions.



# Maya People

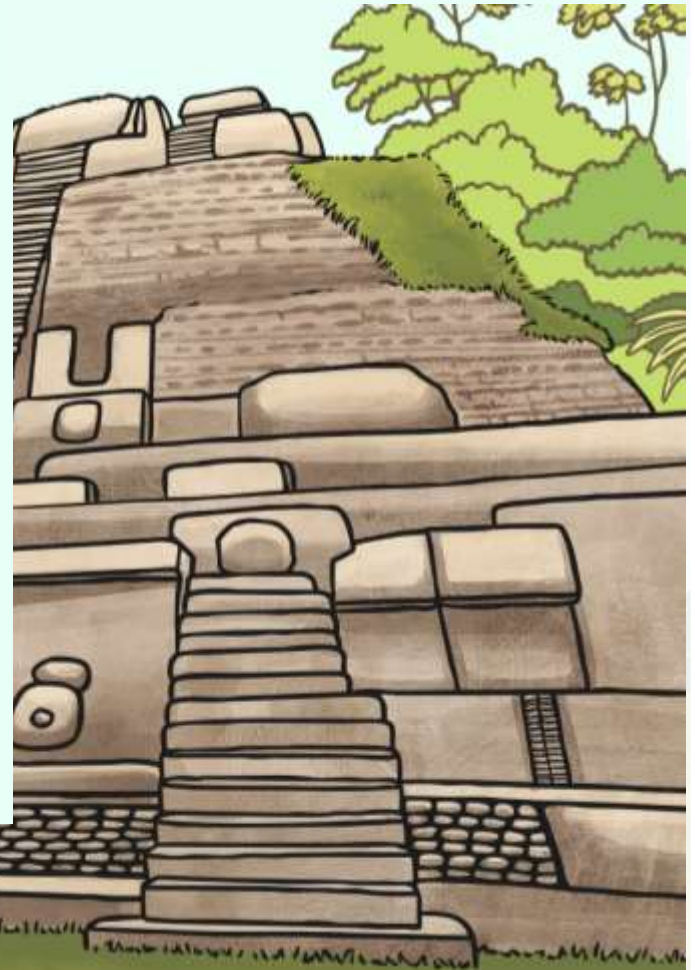
The ancient Maya people were quite a sophisticated bunch! They developed a writing and number system; studied and charted the stars and planets; invented three complex calendars to keep track of time; built impressive temples, palaces, monuments and cities; skilfully farmed the land and established a complex political system.

The ancient Maya were a clever, deeply religious people who valued intelligence and learning. This helps to explain how and why they were able to develop a complex, thriving civilisation which began over 2000 years ago.



# The Ancient Maya Place in Time

- The Maya civilisation came into being around 2000 BC and cities such as El Mirador became large and powerful from 300 BC onwards.
- By around AD 900, cities in the rainforest were abandoned and people moved up north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatan. This was because there was an extensive drought in the area that lasted a long time and people needed to move out of the rainforest.
- Cities like Chichen Itza were still thriving in AD 1000 and the Maya civilisation was still in existence in AD 1500.
- It was due to the arrival of the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that their ancient cities fell to ruin.





# Timeline activity

Draw a timeline and order the following events from earliest to most recent:

**900-300 BC**



The first hunter gatherers settle on the Pacific coast.

**800 BC**



Village farming and trade becomes established.

**700 BC**



Mayan writing is developed in Mesoamerica.

**400 BC**



Earliest solar calendars are invented.

**300 BC**



The social structure adapts to include Kings

**100 BC**



The first pyramids are built.

**450 BC**



Tikal dominates the tropical lowland of central regions.

**638 BC**



Pakal the Great of Palenque dies.

**800 BC**



Sites in the rainforest are abandoned.

**1,502 BC**



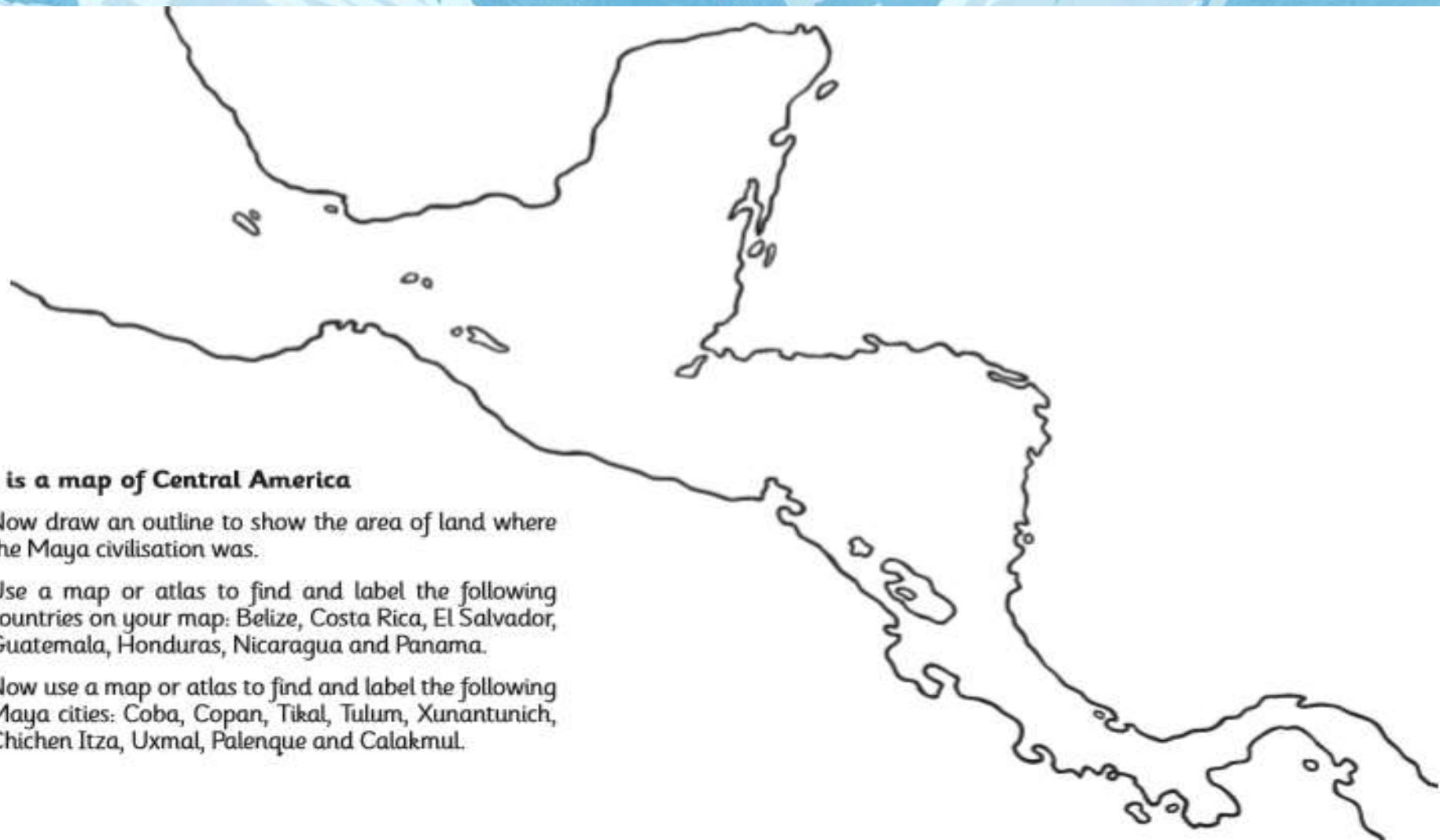
First contact with Europeans made.

# Central America

Central America consists of seven countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

Can you find and label these on the Maya map on the next slide?





**This is a map of Central America**

- Now draw an outline to show the area of land where the Maya civilisation was.
- Use a map or atlas to find and label the following countries on your map: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.
- Now use a map or atlas to find and label the following Maya cities: Coba, Copan, Tikal, Tulum, Xunantunich, Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Palenque and Calakmul.



# Mesoamerica

‘Mesoamerica’ refers to an area where a number of societies had been formed before the Spanish arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It covers Mexico and the northern parts of Central America. ‘Mesoamerica’ can also refer to the culture of the people who lived there. The Maya lived in the south east of this area.



# The Location of the Maya

Today, the area the Maya used to live in spreads over 5 countries: Mexico (southern Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula), Belize, Guatemala, a small area of west Honduras and the very north of El Salvador.



# Maya Cities



Use your map or atlas to outline the area of land where the Maya used to live.

Can you use a map or atlas to find and label the countries listed on your activity sheet?

Then find the location of the following ancient Maya cities and mark them on your map too. You could use a key or draw arrows and label them.

Xunantunich  
Chichen Itza  
Uxmal  
Palenque  
Calakmul



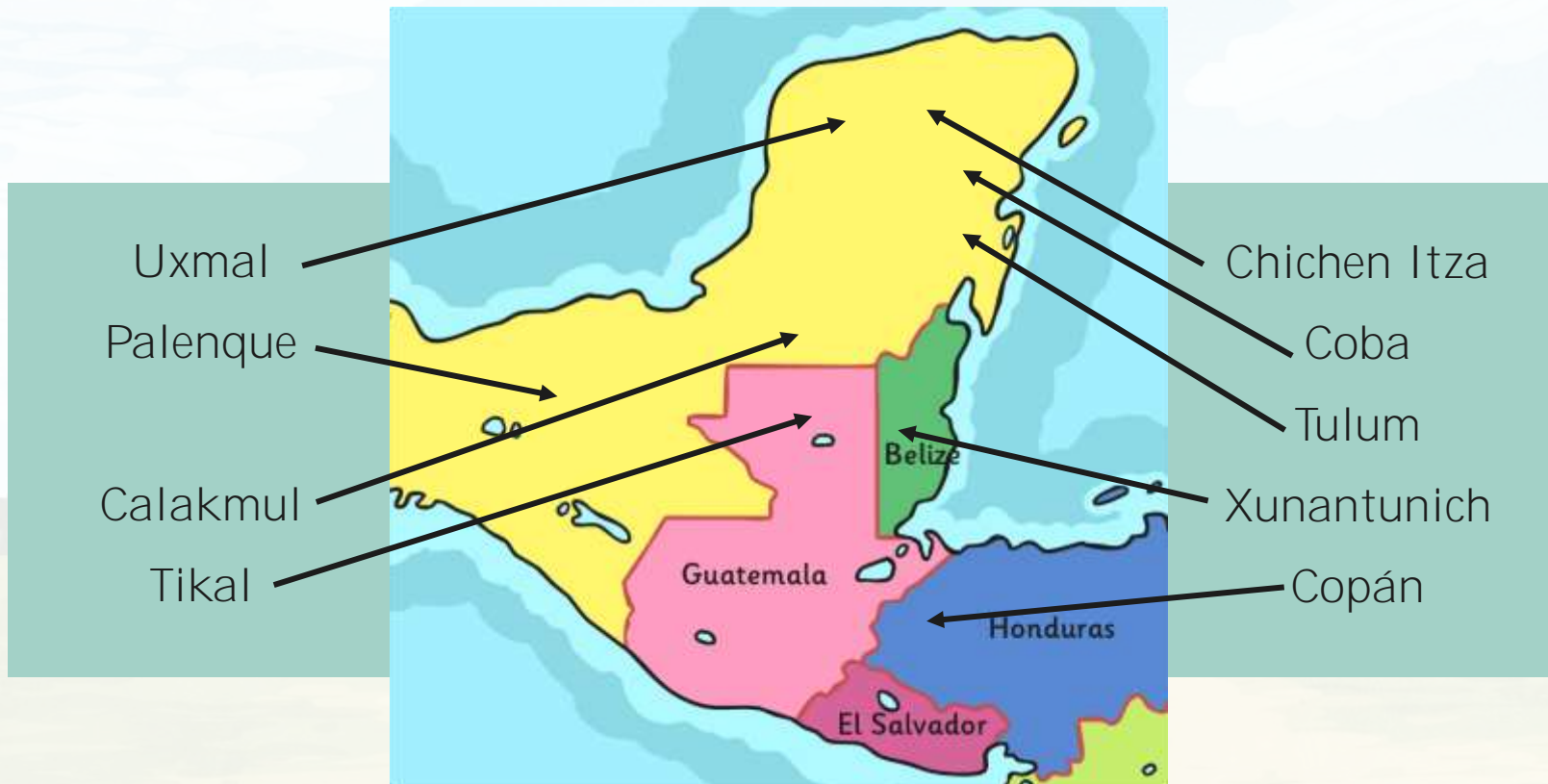
Coba  
Copán  
Tikal  
Tulum



# Cities Revealed



Some of these ancient Maya cities were almost 1000km apart yet they shared the same culture and way of life.



# Lesson 2 Gods and Religion

- Aim: To explain the religious beliefs of the Maya people, understand how they worshipped, name some of the main gods and know what they represented to the people.

## Success Criteria

- I can answer questions to show I understand the important aspects of Maya religion.
- I can create a fact file containing information about Maya gods.

# A Central Belief System

Religion was an integral part of the ancient Maya culture, intertwined with all other aspects of society.

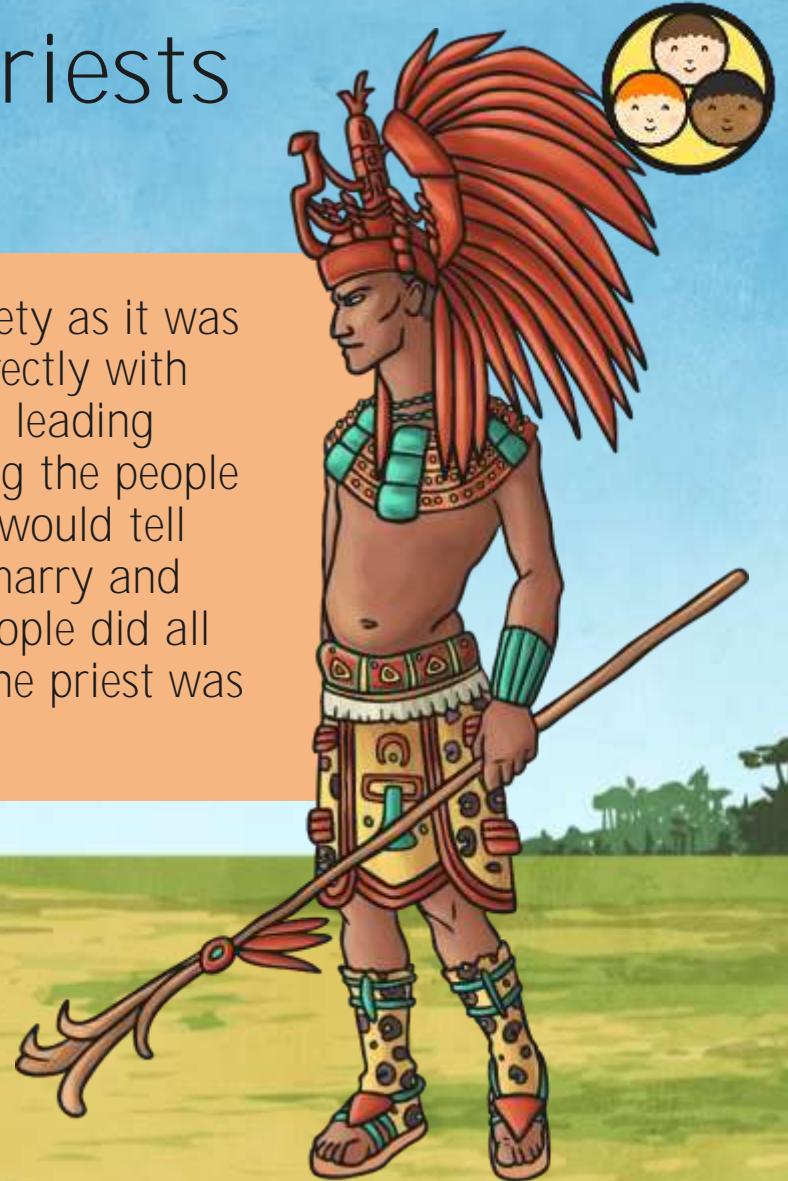
The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that they could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods to demonstrate their respect and loyalty.





# Maya Priests

Priests were very important in Maya society as it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods. The priests were responsible for leading rituals of worship and sacrifice, and telling the people what the gods wanted them to do. They would tell the people when to plant crops, who to marry and what sacrifices they should make. The people did all these things because they believed that the priest was speaking the wishes of the gods.



# Festivals

During festivals, the priests would dance, sing, bang drums and make lots of noise on the steps of the temples while wearing brightly coloured clothing and headdresses containing the feathers of exotic birds. This ritual dance was thought to scare away demons and demonstrate the priest's power and authority to the gods.

## Questions

1. Would you like to have been a Maya priest? Why/why not?
2. Do you think people ever refused to do what the priest said? What do you think happened to them if they did not follow orders?





# Maya Gods

The Maya people worshipped a number of different gods, many of whom had overlapping roles and names. Some had human form, some took the form of an animal and some were a phenomena of nature.

Historians have discovered a lot about the Maya gods from carvings and codices (Maya books).

Read the information about some Maya gods on the following slides.

**Take notes on the gods' names and** meanings, appearances and other facts/features so you can write a Maya Gods Fact File of your own.



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# Maya Gods

## Itzamna

One of the creator gods.

Inventor of writing.

Patron of learning.

Portrayed in human form  
as an old man with no  
teeth and a large nose.



# Maya Gods

## Ix Chel

Wife of Itzamna.

Goddess of childbirth,  
healing, weaving and the  
Moon.

Portrayed in human form  
wearing a headdress of  
snakes entangled in her hair,  
and toes and fingers that  
looked like jaguar claws.

Capable of causing floods  
and destruction.

The mother of many gods.



# Maya Gods

## Maize God

Yumil Kaxob

From his head sprouted an ear of maize.

Was important because the diet of the Maya was 80% maize and they relied on the harvest being successful.

Also important because humans were created from maize dough by the gods.





# Maya Gods

## Chac

Brought the rain needed to make crops grow.

Created storms, thunder and lightning.

Caused wars and human sacrifice.

Portrayed as a human with a curling snout and reptile fangs.



# Maya Gods

## Kimi

Death god.

Portrayed as a human with a skeletal nose, jaw and spine along with a body covered in hideous spots.





# God Fact Files



Using the information you have learnt, your challenge is to create a fact file about the Maya gods.

Make sure your information is clear and accurate and the pictures are bright and colourful.

Information to include:

- The name of the god
- A picture of the god
- What are they the god of?
- Appearance
- Interesting facts

# Lesson 3: The Mayan number system

- Aim: To understand how the Maya number system works.

## Success Criteria

- I can read numbers using the Maya symbols for 0, 1 and 5.
- I can compare the Maya number system to our number system.

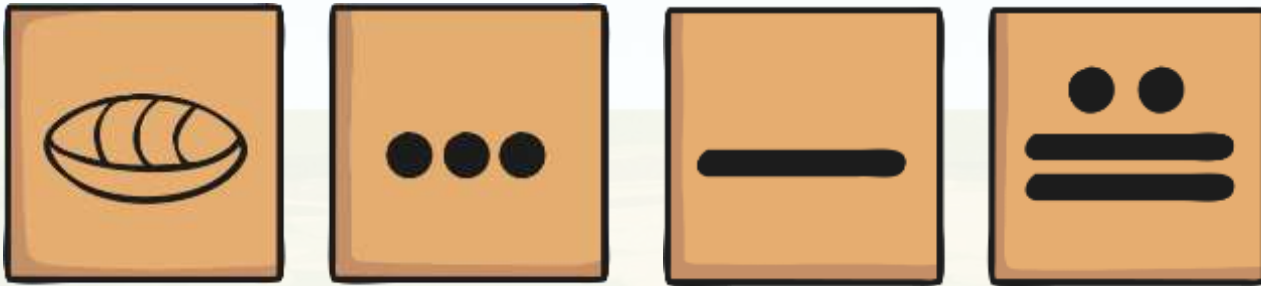


# The Maya and Numbers

The Maya had a good understanding of numbers and they developed a complex number and counting system which was advanced for their time.

They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero and this allowed them to develop a place value system where a zero could act as a place holder in large numbers. This enabled the Maya people to distinguish between numbers like 23 and 203, where the placement of the zero determines the value of the digit 2 as 200. This is a very important concept which many civilisations did not understand until much later than the Maya.

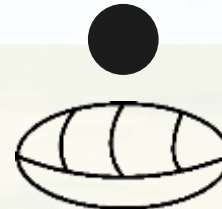
The Maya people used symbols to represent their numbers. Let's have a look at how it worked.



# Number Symbols

The Maya people used just three symbols in their number system. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with such as pebbles, sticks and shells.

Look at the following Maya numbers. Can you work out what numbers the symbols represent and how the system works?






# Number Symbols

Answers:

 $= 7$

 $= 18$

 $= 11$

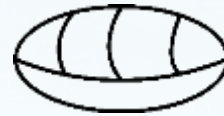
 $= 20$

# Shells, Sticks and Pebbles



## Questions

1. Did you figure it out?
2. What have you learnt about the way the numbers are written?
3. What other Maya numbers can you write?
4. How is the Maya number system similar and different to our own?



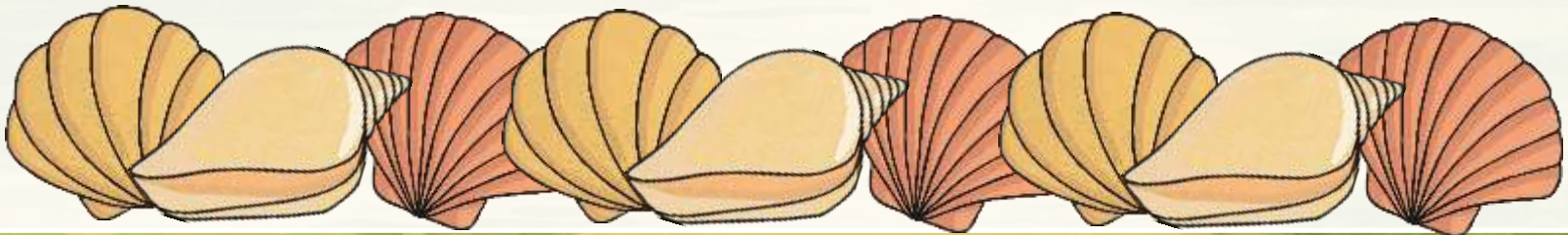
= 0



= 1



= 5

















# Maya Numbers


1	●
2	● ●
3	● ● ●
4	● ● ● ●
5	—
6	● —
7	● ● —
8	● ● ● —
9	● ● ● ● —
10	==

11	● ==
12	● ● ==
13	● ● ● ==
14	● ● ● ● ==
15	===
16	● ===
17	● ● ===
18	● ● ● ===
19	● ● ● ● ===

# Maya Number System Activity

Use the information you have learnt about the Maya number system to help you work out the numbers:




		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



Add up the value of each symbol.  
 $1 + 1 = 2$   
 $5 + 5 + 5 = 15$













Then simply combine the two totals!

$5 + 5 + 5 + 1 + 1 = ?$

Key	
	0
	1
	5



# Answers:

 <input type="text" value="6"/>	 <input type="text" value="9"/>	 <input type="text" value="17"/>
 <input type="text" value="8"/>	 <input type="text" value="7"/>	 <input type="text" value="11"/>
 <input type="text" value="13"/>	 <input type="text" value="2"/>	 <input type="text" value="18"/>
 <input type="text" value="16"/>	 <input type="text" value="19"/>	 <input type="text" value="4"/>

# Larger Maya Numbers

20		30	
21		31	
22		32	
23		33	
24		34	
25		35	
26		36	
27		37	
28		38	
29		39	

The Maya people used a base 20 number system, so after number 19 multiples of 20 were written above the bottom number. This is called a vigesimal positional number system.



# Lesson 4: Exploration and Discovery

- Aim: To identify and use a range of evidence sources to help me understand more about the Maya civilisation.

## Success Criteria

- I can identify at least three sources of evidence about the Maya and explain what they tell me.
- I can examine a historical picture and answer questions about an aspect of the Maya civilisation.

# Understanding History

Consider the following questions:

1. How do we know about the history of the world?
2. Who finds out?
3. Where does this information come from?
4. How accurate do you think our interpretation of the past is?
5. How do we know about the ancient Maya?



# Using Sources of Evidence

In order to paint an accurate picture of life in ancient Maya, historians have to use a range of evidence sources to piece together a number of details, a bit like doing a jigsaw puzzle with each new piece of the puzzle revealing more information.

Sources of evidence can be primary sources or secondary sources:

Primary sources come directly from the time of the event e.g. a photograph or an artefact.



Secondary sources are created after the event and are often created using primary sources e.g. a textbook.





# Which are primary and which are secondary sources?

Archaeological:  
actual remains  
from the past dug  
up, analysed and  
interpreted.



Written: evidence  
from written  
records either from  
the time or  
recorded later.



Maps:  
written at  
the time or  
created  
later.



Artwork: e.g.  
paintings or  
sculptures, either  
from the time or  
later in history.



Letters and diaries:  
e.g. explorers or  
archaeologists  
documenting their  
findings.



Films and  
documentaries:  
created to piece together  
information about the  
past or to tell a story.



Stories, myths  
and legends:  
either written at  
the time or later in  
history.



# Maya Explorers

American explorer and travel writer, John Lloyd Stephens and British artist, Frederick Catherwood are credited with re-igniting interest in the ancient Maya civilisation from 1839 onwards.

The ruins and lost cities of Mesoamerica had been explored and recorded earlier in history, but detailed documentation by Catherwood brought attention back to the Maya and their fascinating civilisation.

Numerous archaeological expeditions of the Maya region were launched following the work of Stephens and Catherwood.



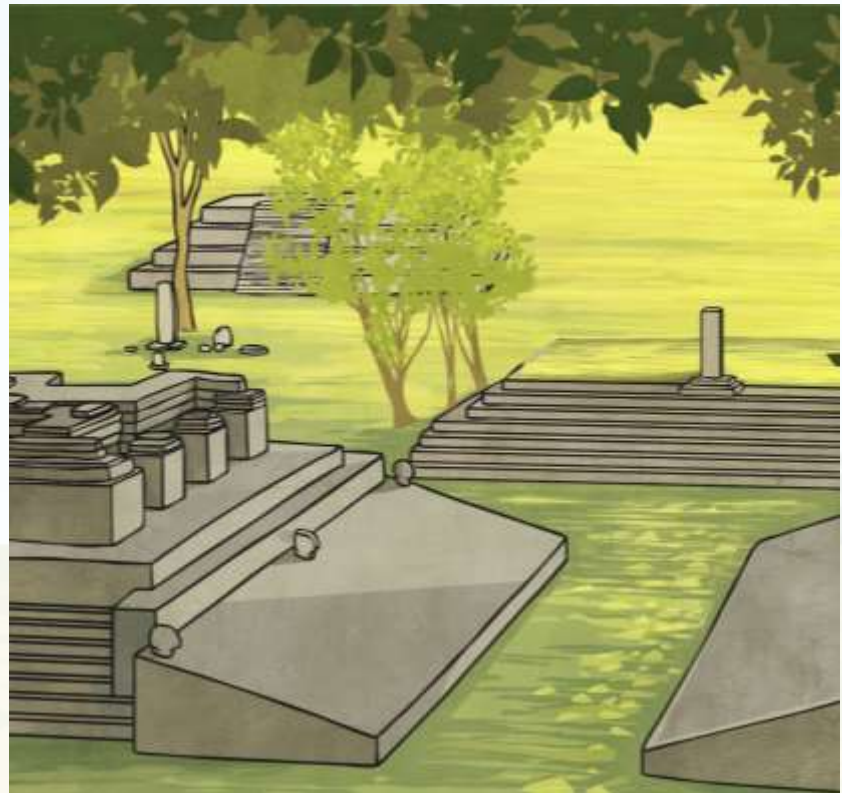


# Copan

The Maya city of Copan was the first to be explored by Stephens and Catherwood in 1839. In 1841, they published a book called *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán* which detailed their findings in Copan and other places. The book contained maps, detailed drawings by Catherwood and text by Stephens.

## Copan Facts:

- Copan is in West Honduras near its border with Guatemala.
- Some of the most detailed architecture and artwork of the ancient Maya was discovered in Copan.
- Copan first began to thrive under the rule of a warrior prince who declared himself as the King of Copan in AD 426. he was called K'inich Yax K'uk Mo', which means Blue-Green Quetzal Makaw.
- One of Copan's kings was called 18 rabbit!

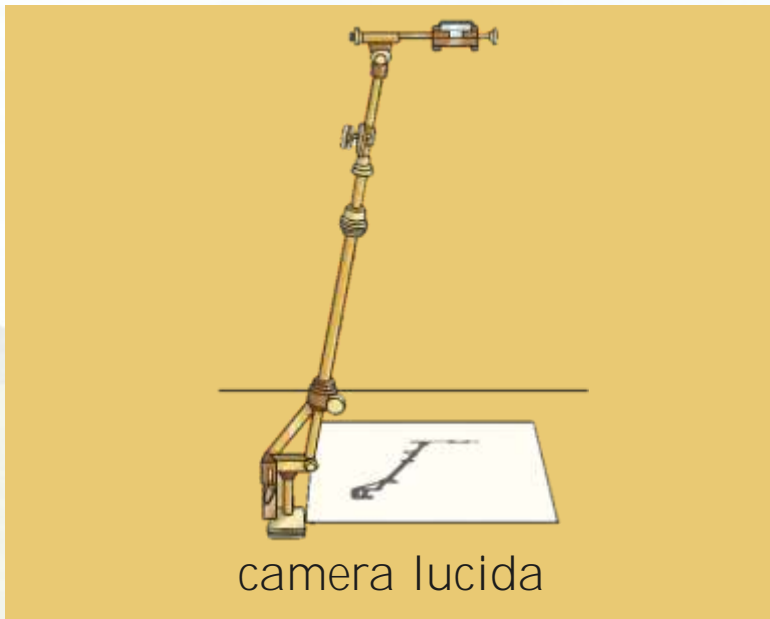




# Catherwood's Drawings of Copan

Frederick Catherwood produced many detailed drawings of what he and Stephens had discovered in Copan. He used a camera lucida which uses mirrors and prisms to superimpose the image to be drawn around. This helps to produce drawings that are accurate in proportion and perspective.

Several years later, Catherwood used a technique called lithography to produce prints of his work.



# Idol at Copan

This stone statue is more than three metres high and dates back to around AD 720.

It is thought to be one of **Copan's** most famous rulers, King Waxaklajun Ub'aah K'awiil, in the guise of a maize god.





# Pyramidal Building and Fragments of Sculpture at Copan

The remains of the **sculptures weren't** found in exactly this location in front of the pyramid, but Catherwood did some more drawings back in London, he used the sketches he had made to draw new compositions.





# Historical Picture Study

Choose a picture from one of the following slides and answer the questions:

- What is in the picture?
- What details can you see when you look closely?
- Why do you think it was built?
- What do you think it is made of?
- How do you think it was made?
- Now draw your own version of the picture.



**Idol**  
Copán





**Pyramidal Building and Fragments of Sculpture**  
Copán





**The Most Visited Maya Archaeological Site**  
Chichen Itza

# Lesson 5: Maya writing system

- Aim: To explain what the Maya writing system consists of, how words are constructed and what codices are.

## Success Criteria

- I can identify and draw logograms.
- I can answer questions about the Maya writing system and codices.

# Maya Hieroglyphs

Maya hieroglyphic writing can be made up of syllabograms (representing sounds) or logograms (representing whole words).

Logograms often resemble the thing that they represent, so it is easy for us to see what they mean, but others are more tricky.

Look closely at these logograms. Can you match them to their meanings?



to grab

fire

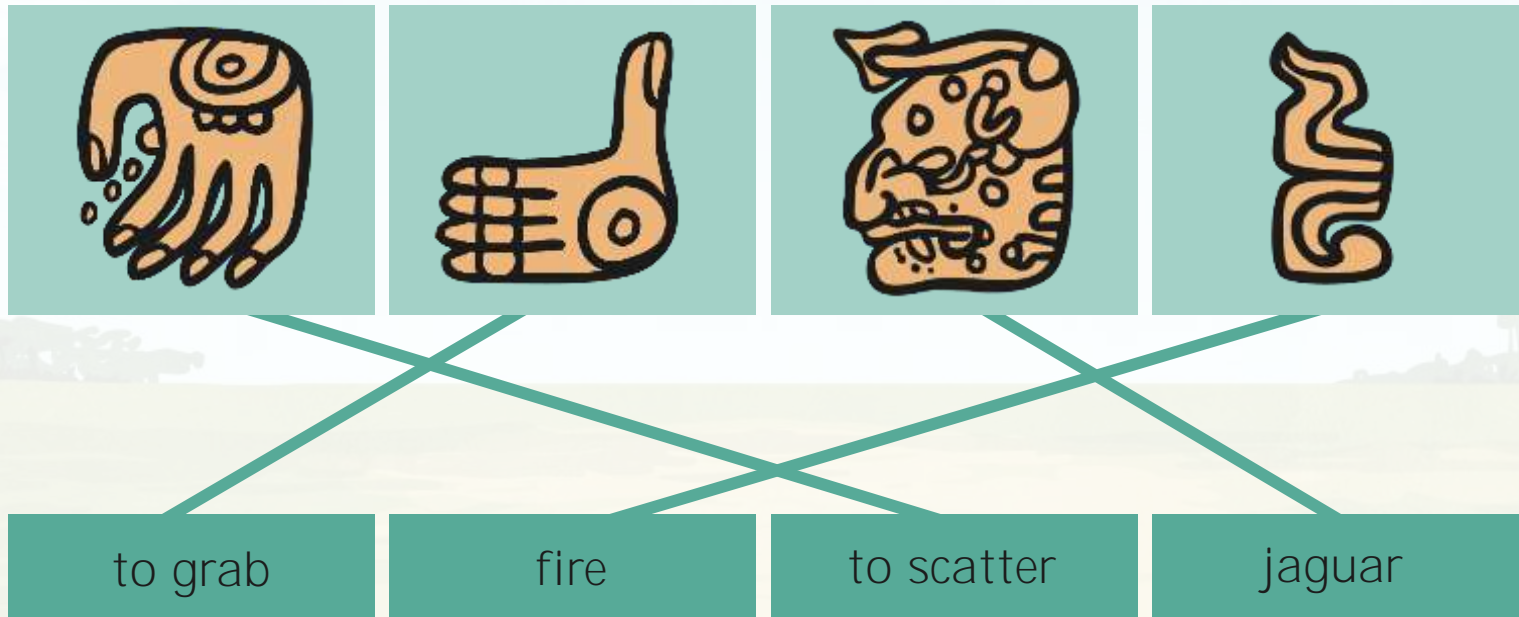
to scatter

jaguar



# Maya Hieroglyphs

Answers:





**chan**  
'sky'



**winik**  
'person'



**witz**  
'mountain'



**k'in**  
'sun'



**b'alam**  
'jaguar'



**k'ak'**  
'fire'



**bak**  
'bone'



**way**  
'spirit'



**juun**  
'book'



**ja'**  
'water'



**ajaw**  
'lord'



**muyal**  
'cloud'



**ix**  
'woman'



**ch'am**  
'to grab'



**k'uk'**  
'quetzal'



**chan**  
'snake'



**ch'ul**  
'holy'



**chok**  
'to scatter'



**jaab**  
'year'



**yax**  
'blue/green'



**pakal**  
'shield'



**tok**  
'flint'



**naj**  
'house'



**k'al**  
'twenty'

# Logograms

1. Can you draw one of the Maya Logograms and write down its meaning?
2. Now design your own Maya style logogram. Can you describe your design?

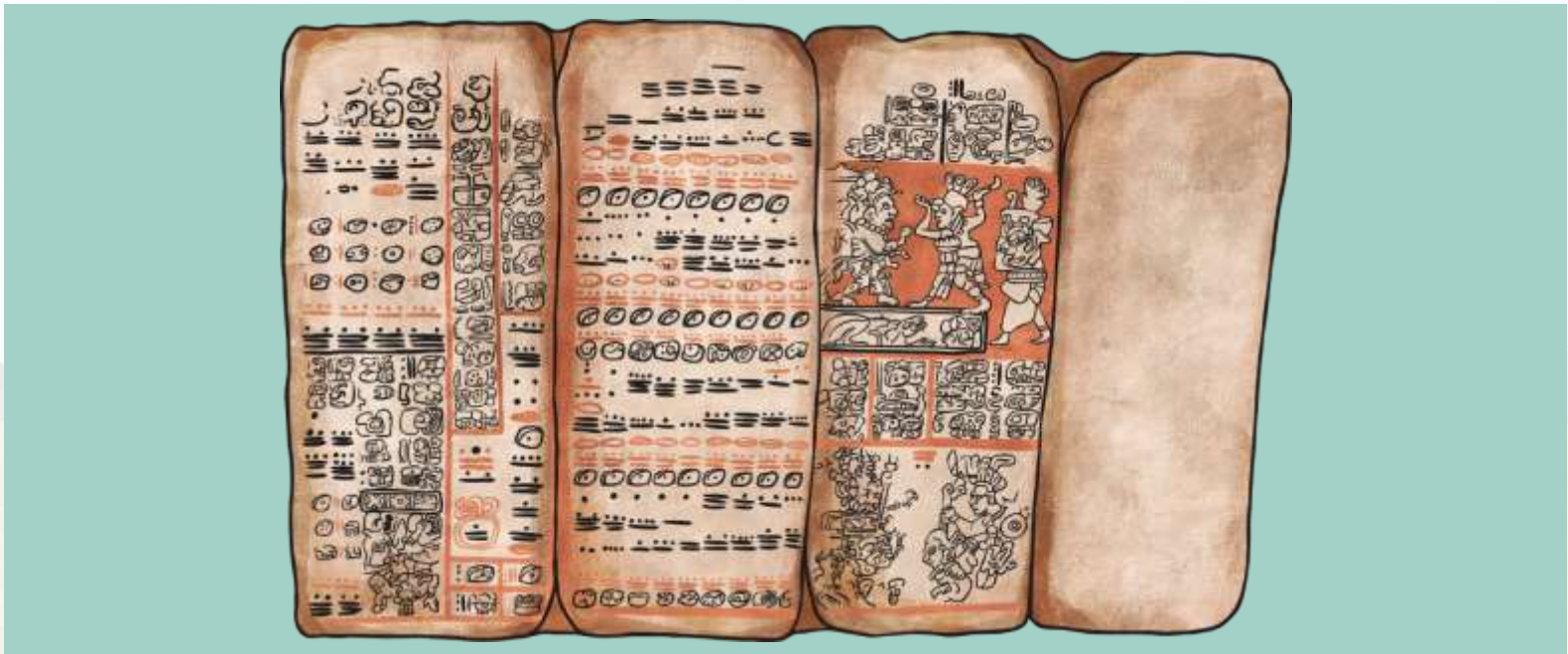


# Codices

The Maya people also wrote books made of the bark from fig trees. One book is called a codex and the plural is codices.

The codices were written by professional scribes and contained information about astronomy, gods, war and history.

Rather than having separate pages, the codices unfolded.



# Maya Writing Comprehension

The Maya were one of the five ancient civilisations to develop a writing script. The earliest Maya writing was found in Guatemala and dates to as far back as 300 BC.

The Maya people used signs or symbols called hieroglyphs or glyphs for short. Maya writing was written in columns and then read in a zig-zag way, like this:





There was not one single Mayan language and there are over 800 Maya glyphs.

Examples of Maya writing have been found carved in wood, on pottery, on stone monuments and in codices (books). Their temples were also carved with writing.

Codices were Maya books written by priests and clever people. In 1562, Diego de Landa (a priest - religious man) ordered the burning of many Maya codices as he believed they were a work of the devil. The Spanish also burned hundreds of other documents as well.

Landa's records on Maya writing were useful in helping us to understand their writing system. He wrote a guide to some of the glyphs which became known as Landa's alphabet. In the 1950's, a Russian man called Yuri Valentinovich Knorosov discovered that a lot of the Maya writing was based on sounds. This has really helped us to understand the Maya writing a lot better.





# Codices

There are four known codices left today, Grolier, Madrid, Paris and Dresden.

**The Paris Codex:** The Paris Codex was found in Paris and contains important information about the Maya astronomical signs (similar to zodiac signs). The Paris Codex is kept at the National Library of Paris in France.

**The Dresden Codex:** The Dresden Codex was found in Vienna, Austria, in 1759. It is the most complete of the three codices.

**The Grolier Codex:** The Grolier Codex was displayed at the Grolier Club in New York. Some historians argue that it is fake, although the fig bark paper it is written on is real.

# The Madrid Codex

The Madrid Codex measures 22 feet in length. It is painted on both sides and contains information about religious beliefs and rituals. It is now kept in the Museo de America in Madrid.





# Comprehension Questions

1. What were the earliest examples of Maya writing found?
2. What is the name of the symbols the Maya people used to write with?
3. Where has Maya writing been found?
4. Who was Diego de Landa?
5. How did the Russian man, Yuri Valentinovich Knorosov help us to understand Maya writing better?
6. Which places do some of the Maya codices get their names from?
7. Which codex is most complete?
8. Which codex might not be real?
9. Now think of your own question to ask your parent/carer. Make sure you know the answer!

# Answers:

1. The earliest examples of Maya writing were found in Guatemala.
2. The name of the symbols the Maya people used to write with were called hieroglyphs or glyphs for short.
3. Maya writing has been found carved in wood, on pottery, on stone monuments and in codices (books). They have also been found carved in temples.
4. Diego de Landa was a priest who ordered the burning of many Maya codices (books).
5. Yuri Valentinovich Knorosov helped us to understand Maya writing better because he discovered that a lot of the Maya writing was based on sounds.
6. Some of the Maya codices get their names from these places; Grolier, after the Grolier club in New York, Madrid, Paris and Dresden.
7. The Dresden Codex is the most complete.
8. The Grolier Codex may not be real.



# Lesson 6: Mayan food

- Aim: To describe a range of foods that were eaten by the ancient Maya people and explain why certain foods were particularly significant.

## Success Criteria

- I can create a list of foods that the ancient Maya people would have eaten.
- I can describe why corn is significant and precious to the ancient Maya people.
- I can describe why chocolate is significant and precious to the ancient Maya people.

# Maya Foods

Maize or corn was the main food of the Maya people and made up to 80% of their diet. Examples of other foods eaten include:



avocado



cassava



chilli peppers



cacao



honey



jicama



maize



papaya



pumpkins



squash



sweet potato



tomatoes

## Fact

They would plant beans next to the maize so that the vines would wrap around the growing maize stalks.

## Fact

The Maya people ate out of bowls made of pottery.

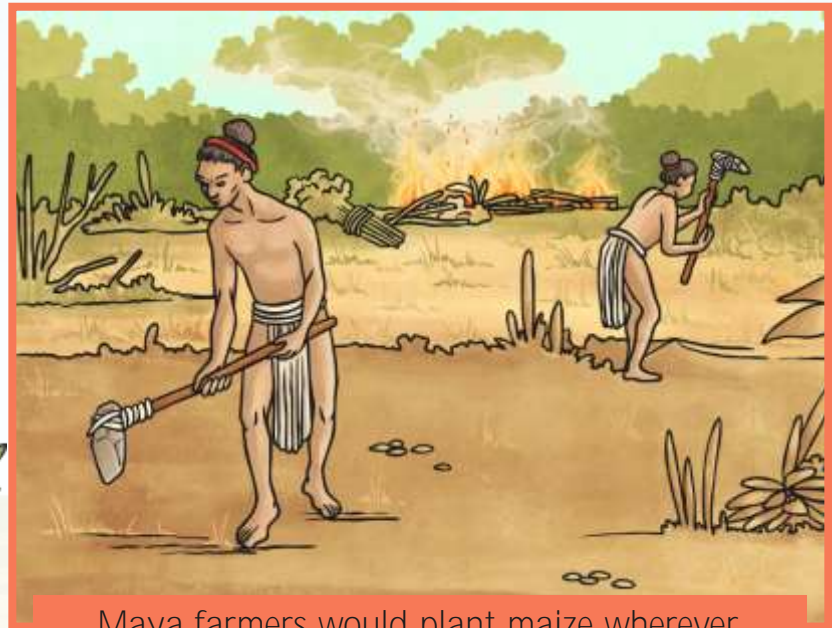


# Maize

Maize was a very important crop, and formed up to 80% of their diet.

To plant the maize, holes would be made in the soil with a sharp bladed, wooden digging stick called a dibble. The soil was very dry and if the May rains didn't come, a whole year's crop would be lost.

For thousands of years, the Maya worshipped the maize god. They believed that the first humans were made by the gods from maize dough! Because of this, when suffering from severe illness, they would eat nothing but corn.



Maya farmers would plant maize wherever they could. Maize is more commonly known as corn.



# Chocaholics!

Cacao trees sprout cacao pods directly from their trunks. The pods are then opened to reveal the cacao beans inside. The Maya were using these beans to make a chocolatey drink from as far back as the fourth century AD. However, it was not the sweet, chocolately flavour we crave today, but a more bitter tasting version, often laced with chilli or vanilla and other spices.



The drink was enjoyed by the rich and noble members of society, and the cacao beans were highly valued. They were even used as a form of currency later on in Maya history.

The Maya word for chocolate is Kakaw.



The Maya used chocolate in religious ceremonies, and they also mixed them with herbs to make medicines.

# Corn Vs Chocolate

Chocolate and corn were both very significant and precious foods in ancient Maya, but which do you think was the most important? Can you work out which of these statements are describing corn or chocolate and sort them into a table like the one on the next page?

The Maya people believed that the first humans were made out of this.	The Maya people believed that this plant was found in a mountain by the gods.
This food could be made into a hot drink called atole, eaten like a porridge called pozole or made into tortillas.	The silky strands of this plant were used to make a tonic to help keep the bladder and kidneys healthy.
This food was often mixed with herbs and used in medicines.	This food was the main part of the Maya diet.
The beans of this plant were used as a form of currency (money).	The rich and noble members of society enjoyed this food made into a hot drink.



Corn	Chocolate

Which food do you think was most important in ancient Maya overall? Why?



# Maya Recipes

On the next page are some Maya recipes for you to try. Make sure you wash your hands and ask an adult to help you!

# Maya Corn Tortillas

twinkl

The ancient Maya people enjoyed making and eating delicious corn tortillas.

## Ingredients (Makes 20)

150g of cornmeal (Masa Harina)  
100g cold water  
Pinch of salt  
1 tablespoon of olive oil

## Equipment

Large mixing bowl  
Cling film  
Rolling pin  
Frying pan



**Step 1.** Mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl to form a dough.



**Step 2.** Divide the dough into 20 small balls. Return the balls to the bowl, cover with cling film and stand in the fridge for 10 minutes.



**Step 3.** Flatten the balls between your hands or roll into flat rounds to an approximate depth of 3mm.



**Step 4.** Cook the tortillas in a lightly oiled frying pan for approximately one minute each side over a high heat.



**Step 5.** Serve and enjoy!

# Ancient Maya Hot Chocolate

twinkl

Only the rich and noble members of Maya society drank this chocolately treat. Is your palate distinguished enough to appreciate its rich, wholesome flavour?

## Ingredients (Makes 2 small servings)

3 tablespoons of instant hot chocolate powder  
250ml of milk  
1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon  
A pinch of chilli powder

## Equipment

Small jug  
Spoon (teaspoon and tablespoon)  
Pan for boiling milk



**Step 1.** Mix the cocoa, cinnamon and chilli together in a small jug.



**Step 2.** Heat the milk slowly in a small pan on the stove (or in a microwave) until it is bubbly and frothy.



**Step 3.** Pour the milk into the jug containing the cocoa and spices and stir well.

**Step 4.** Serve and enjoy!



## Top Tip!

If you want to make your hot chocolate more authentic, then use cacao (dark chocolate) and pour it back and forth between two mugs to make it frothy. Depictions on vases show us that this is what the ancient Maya did!



# DT: Mayan Masks

- Aim: To explain the features and purposes of Maya masks.
- Aim: To design and make a Maya mask.

## Success Criteria

- I can explain how Maya masks were used.
- I can locate the Maya civilisation in time and place.
- I can design and make a Maya mask.



# What Were Masks Used For?

Masks played a central role in Maya culture. They were made for a variety of occasions and purposes. In fact, they were even used to decorate temples.



# Event Masks

Masks were often inspired by animals; they were vibrant and colourful.

The Mayas believed that animals represented the spirits. For example, many Maya often associated strong kings with jaguars.

Event masks were usually made out of cedar wood.





# Death Masks

Mayas were buried with a death mask, which was intended to protect the wearer on their journey to the afterlife.



The death mask of King Pakal is one of the most famous Maya artefacts. Pakal ruled the city of Palenque for 68 years. During this time, the city became very wealthy.

Each mask was made by hand and inspired by the maker's own imagination. Jade, a precious stone, was used because it symbolised the soul.



# Design a Mask

Your task is to design a Maya mask. Decide whether you want to design an event mask or a death mask. Use the template to develop your design.



Think about how you will make your mask.  
Which materials will you need?

Now print this mask or  
draw your own on  
cardboard and cut out.  
Use materials to  
decorate your mask.

