



KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

HISTORY: MAYANS

Y5 SUMMER TERM

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS:	
DATE	WHAT HAPPENED
2000 BC	Mayan civilisation starts in Mesoamerica
500 BC	Maya develops own hieroglyphics
100 BC	Develop stone buildings
400 CE	Divided in States
900 CE	Collapse of Maya

KEY VOCABULARY:	
WORDS	MEANING
Archaeologist	someone who digs up remains of old societies
Base 20	a maths system based on 20, not 10 like we use
Codex	the Mayan book
Creation myth	a story which explains the beginning of the world
Hieroglyphs	writing that is made of pictures
Rain forest	an area of forest that contains many tall trees, has high temperatures and lots of rain
Sacrifice	an offering to keep the gods happy
Stelae	stones or wooden posts which have writing on
Interpretation	one person's point of view based on evidence

KEY KNOWLEDGE:
QUESTION 1: How do Mayans live today?
ANSWER Modern day Mayans still live within the boundaries of the old empire in Central America. The region that makes up this area now consists of: Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. They number nearly 7 million.
QUESTION 2: How do Mayans worship God?
ANSWER The Mayan religion involved several aspects of nature, astronomy and rituals. Most Gods represented is form of nature, for example: Sun God or Maize God. They believed their Gods could help or hurt them.
QUESTION 3: What is the Mayan Creation Story?
ANSWER Mayans believe that the world started from nothing. They believed that 6 deities helped the Heart of the Sky to create the Earth. They believe that a tree was then planted to segregate sky and earth reaching up to the Mayan Upper World. Next the plants were created and then animals. After this, humans were formed from mud but were bad so were destroyed in a flood. Then they tried again forming humans from wood but they could not worship so were destroyed. The sun and moon were next created and then the current humans were created using the corn.
QUESTION 4: How advanced was Mayan society?
ANSWER The Maya developed Sciences beyond the accomplishments of the Western World for a long time. Their feats in astronomy, maths and writing were advanced. In Maths, they created the number 0, this was 1700 years before the Europeans. They also were advanced in tool making and technology forming grand high rise structures close to cement in 300 BC.



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QUESTION 5: Why did Ancient Mayan cities (which had been deserted) stay hidden so long?

ANSWER

Their cities remained hidden as they were often built in remote jungle climates, in inhospitable mountains away from rivers because they worshipped the stars and lined them up with constellations.

QUESTION 6: What happened to the Maya around 900 AD

ANSWER

People are unsure of why the Mayans were largely wiped out. Guesses range from disease, natural disasters to climate change.

KEY PLACES:

NAME	WHAT HAPPENED THERE
El Miradorr	City with 100,000 residents. Archaeologists have found 3 large temple pyramids
Kaminaljuyn	City in Guatemala Highlands occupied from 1200 BC – 900 AD
Tikal	One of the most powerful city states. Had 6 large pyramids – 70.000 inhabitants
Chichen Hza	The dormant city state and a UNESCO World Heritage Site

SUGGESTED WEBSITES TO FIND OUT MORE:

www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zsdrqty

www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/mayans