



History Knowledge Organiser: The Ancient Maya



Overview

The Ancient Maya lived in Central America in large cities from about 100BCE to 1000BCE. This was roughly from when the Romans began to move toward Britain until the Normans arrived with the Battle of Hastings in 1066. They are famous for their advanced cities and imposing pyramids

Big questions/ideas

Who were these people?
What makes them so interesting?
Were they very different from us now?
What was Britain like at this time?
Were they very different from us then?
Were they important? What was their legacy?
Can we learn anything from them?
Were they really so blood thirsty and 'savage'?



Chronology

All dates are very approximate

C100BCE	First city states appear
C250CE	Cities continue to grow
C300CE	Lot of cities are centres for trade using e.g. stone and chocolate
C600-900CE	Chichen Itza is an important city
C900CE	Cities begin to decline and people leave them to fall into ruin
C1500CE	When the Spanish arrive the cities are covered by jungle

Skills

Historical enquiry: research using a variety of sources
Analysis: weigh up and conclude in answer to a big question such as
Were they very different from us? Was war the main reason for their decline?

Key vocabulary

archaeologists	people who dig up clues from the past
excavate	to uncover ruins and dig up the clues from the past
Mexico	modern name for country where most Maya lived
empire	when one group of people take over others
astronomy	study of the stars and planets
codex/codices	Handwritten book/s
cenote	underground pool of water
stelae	pillar of stone with carvings
pok a tok	infamous foot and hand ball game

What did they do for us?	Curriculum links and further research
Chocolate! Astronomy – Very accurate charts of the moon Sculpture – Mainly of the human form, highly advanced when compared to similar empires. Architecture – Stepped temples providing a route into understanding their religion Medicine – many natural cures used by the Mayans still in use today Number system – developed independent of Arabic system, more advanced and logical 	 ☐ PE – devise/play a version of the ball game: Pok-a-Tok ☐ Art/DT – Masks / Pyramid structures ☐ Science – astronomy ☐ Geography – compare locations of major world cities ☐ Organisation of society, structure of cities. ☐ DT – chocolate ☐ PSHE – Mayan medicine – natural cures – was their society fair? Escape Room team work activity Great videos from BBC class clips = https://www.bbc.com/teach/class-clips-video/introducing-the-maya-civilisation/znk3cq7