



Year 5 History Knowledge Organiser: How were the Maya more or less advanced than Britain in 900AD?



Subject Specific Skills

- Understand that a timeline can be divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini)
- Order significant events, movements and dates on a timeline.
- Describe the main changes in a period in history.
- Give reasons why there may be different accounts of history.
- Use documents, printed sources (e.g. archive materials) the Internet, databases, pictures, photographs, music, artefacts, historic buildings, visits to museums and galleries and visits to sites to collect evidence about the past.

Prior Learning

- Children will be aware of what a timeline is and can construct and order events on a timeline.
- Children have studied other early writing systems, number systems and cultures in early civilisations.
- Children have used evidence to find answers about historical events.

Key Individual: Dr Diane Davies



Dr Diane is a Maya archaeologist and honorary research associate of the Institute of Archaeology in London. Little is known about the Maya in the UK and so aside from carrying out research in Guatemala and teaching, Diane is an educational consultant for schools giving workshops to both teachers and children on the Maya. She is also a consultant for television and radio.

Key Vocabulary

artefact - An object that is made by a person, such as a tool or a decoration, especially one that is of historical interest.

calendar - A printed table showing all the days, weeks, and months of the year. These were circular and charted the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets, with 365 days in a year.

civilisation - Human society which is organised.

dynasty - A series of rulers or leaders who are all from the same family, or a period when a country is ruled by them.

hieroglyphics - A system of writing using pictures not words. They used about 800 symbols to create writing often on folded pages forming a book (codex).

maize - Maize, also known as corn, is a cereal grain. Staple food of the Mayans. It was so important they even had a maize god.

Maya - The collective noun for the Mayan people.

sacrifice - According to their religion, Mayans sacrificed other humans and animals in the belief that this would please their gods.

Stelae - stone monuments glorifying Kings and record his deeds.

temple - A building used for the worship of a god or gods in some religions.

worship - To have or show a strong feeling of respect and admiration for God or a god.

Timeline:

Date	Key Event
2000BC	People begin to farm in Belize, Guatemala and Mexico.
1500BC	The Olmec civilization develops, the Maya will take on much of their culture.
1000BC	The Maya begin to form larger settlements.
700BC	Maya writing begins to develop
400BC	First Maya calendars are carved into stone.
100BC	First pyramids are built.
300AD	Cities become centres for trade and Kings begin to rule.
400AD	Many people live in a capital city.
800AD	Building of stepped pyramid of Chichen Itza
900AD	Decline of the Maya cities
1502AD	The Spanish arrive and begin their colonisation of Central America

Maya calendar Time was extremely important to the Maya, they made elaborate and accurate calendars and used them in charting the movements of the sun, moon, stars and even planets. These calendars had a variety of purposes both practical and sacred. They were used in astronomical calculations, recording important events, the reigns of rulers and their conquests and also in divination.

Religion The Maya believed in a large number of nature gods. Some gods were considered more important and powerful than others. They built a number of pyramid style temples to worship these Gods and believed in the power of sacrifice (including humans!) The most famous of these temples could be found in the city of Chichen Itza.

Maya number system Their numerical system was possibly the most advanced at the time.

0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29

Mayan positional number system

