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### Key Vocabulary

cacao beans	Were used to make a bitter chocolatey drink that was enjoyed by the rich and used for medicines
civilisation	An organised society with its own culture and way of life existing in a particular period of time
codices	Ancient handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina
drought	A long period with very little rain.
jaguar	A big cat heavier than a leopard with yellowish fur and black spots. Gods of Death also looked like jaguars.
maize	Maize was a very important crop that formed up to 80% of the Maya people's diet
pok-a-tok	A ball game that ancient Maya played. It was a cross between football and basketball only much more difficult
Popol Vuh	Sacred 'Mayan Bible' which narrates the Maya creation myths and describes the early Maya dynasties.
ritual	A ceremony, often religious, with set actions performed in a set order
scribes	People who were paid to write things down

### Timeline

2000BC	300BC	900AD	1000AD	1500AD	1839AD	2014AD
Maya civilisation comes into Central America	El Mirador becomes a large and powerful city	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to drought	Cities like Chichén Itzá are still thriving	Spanish arrive in South America to destroy Maya cities	JL. Stephens and F. Catherwood explore Copán	Cities of Langunita and Tamchén are rediscovered

### Maya Gods:



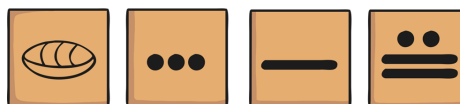
### Maya Writing System - glyphs:



### Maya Calendar:



### Maya Number System:



Although it's possible to find mention of the 'Mayan' Civilisation, academics use 'Maya' to describe all aspects of the civilisation and people, 'Mayan' is used only to describe the language.

### Key Knowledge

- Mayan civilisation flourished in Central America from about 2600BC until around AD1000
- According to Mayans, the world was created on 11th August 3114BC (the date their calendar starts from).
- The Mayans developed the first proper written language.
- The Mayan system of hieroglyphics was not successfully decoded until the 1950s.
- Human sacrifice was rare but took place during times of difficulty, war or when new temple leaders
- They built pyramids, many of them larger than those in Egypt.
- Mayan gods could change themselves into human and animal shapes.
- The Maya thought the world was divided into three parts, the Heavens, the Earth and the Underworld, all linked together by a giant World Tree.
- Mayan kings were thought to become gods after their death
- Almost every Mayan city had a ballcourt to play the ball game Pok-A-Tok. Pok-A-Tok games were often played as parts of religious ceremonies

