



ancestor – A family member from long ago who someone is descended from.
Archaeologist – A person who studies history by digging up objects from the past.

Aztecs – The society that lived to the west of the Maya in Mexico.

bloodletting ritual – A ritual where the ruler of a city state offered their blood to the gods.

codex- An illustrated book made by the Maya.

jade – A hard stone that is usually green. The Maya often used jade to make jewellery.

quetzal – A colourful bird which can be found in Central America.

scribe – A person who copies out documents or writes down the words of others.

Xibalba – The name of the Mayan underworld. The Maya believed that some people went here when they died.

Mayan Civilisation

Map of the Mayan World:



In this unit, you will learn:

- Characteristic features of the period, including the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past.
- Reasons for and results of historical events, situations and changes in the period.
- To recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways.

NPA Knowledge Organiser: Year 5 History - Summer 1

TIMELINE

1,100 BC

The first 'Mayan' settlements begin to appear in Mesoamerica along the Pacific coast.



800BC

Instead of foraging, maize farming begins and trade between villages begins.



700BC

Mayan writing begins to develop through the form of hieroglyphs.



100BC – 450AD

Maya constructs its first pyramids and developing cities, prompting the rapid rise of Tikal in the tropical lowlands.



638AD

Pakal the Great (King of Palenque) dies. His death mask made of jade is created.



800AD – 1,502AD

Mayan civilization begins to decline and vanish. The Mayan ruins are found by a Spanish expedition led by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba.



FAMOUS FIGURES

Mayan Gods

Some were in human form, others in animal but the most supreme god was Itzamna, the creator god, lord of day and night and ruler of the heavens. Many looked after the weather or crops such as Chac, the rain god and Kinich-Ahau the sun god. Priests would perform ceremonies (including sacrifices) to please them and Kings were thought to turn into gods after they died. They believed the world was divided into three parts (Heaven, Earth and the Underworld), linked together by a giant world tree.

Palenque Rulers

Archaeologists can name 17 rulers of the city-state of Palenque from 431-800. The most famous was Pakal I, also known as Pakal the Great, who ruled from 615-683. He began his rule at the age of just 12 and constructed some of Palenque's finest buildings and founded a great dynasty. His funeral mask was carved from stunning Jade.

Top 5 Maya Facts

1. The Mayans predicted that the world would end in 2012
2. Flat foreheads were fashionable so they would put babies' heads in a press to squash them
3. It was considered beautiful to be cross-eyed so parents would hang balls in between their children's eyes to make them look inwards
4. Mayans sacrificed humans for religious and medical reasons. It was an honour to be sacrificed
5. Noblewomen would file their teeth into sharp points

Jungle gems



The picture above shows a bird called a quetzal. Resources such as quetzal feathers, cacao beans and precious stones like jade were only found in Mayan territory. They were very valuable to the Maya. Wealthy Maya used them to show how rich and powerful they were.