Year 5 Summer 1

Maya Civilisation

Key Events		Timeline
2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.	3500 BC Ancient Egypt
300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.	M
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to an extensive drought . People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.	a Religion The Maya believed in and wors
AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.	that the gods had a good side hurt them. The Maya would do to the gods.
AD 1500s	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.	Priests were very important in communicate directly with the festivals or special ceremonies
AD 1839	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood explore Copán and extensively document what they find, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation. They go on to document other Maya cities, including Chichén Itzá.	The Upperworld and the Un The Maya people believed that large and flat and resting on th On the Middleworld grew a th (the Upperworld) and whose which was guarded by gods of Ordinary Maya people believe
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.	through a series of caves and that they had a chance of gett



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AD 1500 0 Ancient Rome aya Civilisation Saxon Britain 🔶

shipped a number of different gods. They believed and a bad side and that the gods could help or ance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood

Maya society as it was believed that they could gods. They would perform different rituals during in order to appeal to the gods.

ıderworld

the earth, which they called the Middleworld, was e back of a creature, such as a turtle or crocodile.

ree whose branches reached up into the heavens roots grew down into Xibalba (the Underworld), death who looked like jaguars.

d that, after they died, their souls would travel tunnels to Xibalba. Rulers and noblemen believed ing to the Upperworld.

Key Vocabulary			
civilisation	An organised society with its own culture and way of life, existing in a particular area over a particular period of time.		
drought	A long period with very little rain.		
ritual	A ceremony, often religious, with set actions performed in a set order.		
jaguar	A big cat, heavier than a leopard, with yellowish fur and black spots.		
scribes	People paid to write things down, either as an official record or for someone else unable to write.		
codices	Ancient handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina. One text is called a codex.		
maize	Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.		
cacao beans	Cacao trees sprout pods directly from their trunks. When they are ripe, the pods can be broken open to reveal the beans, which can then be dried, roasted and ground.		

Writing

The Maya writing system, used to write several different Maya languages, was made up of over 800 symbols called glyphs. Some glyphs were logograms, representing a whole word, and some were syllabograms, representing units of sound. They were carved onto stone buildings and monuments and painted onto pottery. Maya scribes also wrote books, called codices, made from the bark of fig trees. Only priests and noblemen would know the whole written language.

Maya Numbers

The Maya developed a complex number and counting system that was advanced for their time. They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero.

The Maya people used just three symbols in their number system. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with, such as pebbles, sticks and shells.

The Maya used a base 20 number system, so after number 19, multiples of 20 were written above =28 the bottom number.

	=0
•	=1
—	=5

=18

Food

Maize was a very important crop that formed up to 80% of the Maya people's diets. They believed that the first humans were made from maize dough by the gods.

The Maya made a bitter chocolatey drink from cacao beans that was enjoyed by the rich and used for medicines and

in ceremonies.







The Maya logogram for b'alam – jaguar