

ACET Junior Academies'

Scheme of Work for history

Unit 11: Mayan Civilisation c. AD900



About this unit:

In this unit pupils will study a non-European society which contrasts with their understanding of the British Isles. They will learn that up until about 200 years ago, very little was known about the Maya and that our knowledge and understanding is growing all the time but there are still gaps and historians often disagree over aspects of Maya life. In this unit there are clear links to previous units on the Egyptians and Greeks as well as the opportunity to draw comparisons with other Stone Age societies. There are also links to geography and to current issues such as the destruction of the tropical rainforest and its impact. Pupils will continue to develop their understanding of key concepts and should show increasing independence and confidence in carrying out their own research, investigating sources and considering different interpretations. They should also be able to show a strong sense of chronology and understand that the Maya were a Stone Age society that existed up until 900CE.

Unit structure

This unit is structured around six sequential history enquiries:

1. Maya civilisation: Who? When? Where?
2. Why was the rainforest important to the Maya?
3. Why did the Maya build roads when they did not have any wheeled vehicles?
4. How inventive were the Maya?
5. What happened if you lost at Pok-ta-Pok?
6. Why did the Mayan disappear?

National Curriculum unit:

- A non-European society that provides contrast with British history - Mayan civilisation c.AD900

Links to previous and future National Curriculum units

- The achievements of the earliest civilisations - Ancient Egypt. (Y3 HT3.1)
- the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor. (Y4 HT3.1)

Enquiry 1: Maya civilisation: Who? When? Where?

Links to previous learning	Knowledge and second order concepts	Historical skills:	Assessment criteria:	Curricular links:
<p>Children should now have acquired a chronological narrative of some of the key events before and after the time of the Maya civilisation. They should also be able to construct timelines and ask their own enquiry questions.</p>	<p>Substantive knowledge: (<i>What the children should know.</i>) Up until about 200 year ago, hardly anyone knew anything about the Maya. The Maya inhabited areas of rainforest in modern day South America. The Maya civilisation dates from around 2000BCE to 900CE.</p> <p>Second order concepts: (<i>What students should understand</i>) Chronology Similarity and difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chronology - place current study on timeline in relation to other studies. - Communication - select and organise information to produce structured work. <p>Key concepts:</p> <p>BC/BCE AD/CE Ancient Civilisation</p>	<p>Can your children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify where the Maya came from using a map? - recall previous time periods and place them on a timeline? - place events linked to the Maya on a timeline using correct terminology? 	<p>Horizontal:</p> <p>Vertical:</p>
<p>Suggested activities:</p>		<p>Resources:</p>	<p>Useful links:</p>	
<p>Children could begin by reading the story of the American and British explorers Stephens and Catherwood who 'discovered' the ruins of the Maya city of Copan about 200 years ago. Children could then look at some of Catherwood's drawings and make inferences about where the Maya lived and their features of their lifestyle.</p> <p>Children should then find where the Maya lived by using a map - the Maya lived in many separate city-states like the Ancient Greeks. Why are they often referred to as Meso-American? Encourage the children to consider what they know about this area - climate, terrain etc.</p> <p>Children could then move onto constructing a timeline - start by asking children what they already know eg. Stone Ages in Britain, Romans arriving, invasions by Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. Children should then plot on the key dates for the Maya civilisation - what else was happening in the world at the same time? <i>Don't forget timelines and scale.</i></p> <p>Finally children could start thinking about their own enquiry questions which should be added to the Enquiry Wall.</p>		<p>Story of Stephens and Catherwood.</p> <p>Map showing the Maya civilisation and a modern day map of South America.</p> <p>Toilet rolls etc to construct a class timeline.</p> <p>Timeline cards.</p> <p>Timeline for students to complete.</p>	<p>Llanes-Ortiz, Davies and Mursell 'The Maya: a 4000-year-old civilisation in the Americas', <i>Primary History</i> 68 (Autumn 2014)</p> <p>Alf Wilkinson 'The Maya Pupil Book' (2019)</p> <p>For details of the exploration by Stephens and Catherwood try: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/magazine/2018/09-10/history-maya-archaeology-stephens-catherwood/</p> <p>For a short video outlining the Maya try: https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2018-19/100818/jungle-of-secrets.html#940L</p>	

Enquiry 2: Why was the rainforest important to the Maya?

Links to previous learning	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts
<p>Children should now know where the Maya lived and the type of terrain they lived in. They should also know something of their lifestyle.</p>	<p>Substantive knowledge: (<i>What the children should know.</i>) Many of the Maya lived in tropical rainforests. The rainforest was important to the Maya and provided them with many raw materials and food. Cocoa was important to the Maya.</p> <p>Second order concepts: (<i>What the children should understand</i>) Significance Similarity and difference</p>	<p>Historical skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range & depth - find out about the beliefs and behaviour of people. - Enquiry- use a range of sources to find out about the past. - Communication <p>Key concepts: Myths and legends Gods Stone Age</p>	<p>Can your children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify advantages and challenges of living in the rainforest? - identify and describe ways in which the Maya used the resources found in the rainforest? - compare two accounts of how cocoa is grown and drunk identifying similarities and starting to explain reasons for differences? 	<p>Horizontal:</p> <p>Vertical:</p>
<p>Suggested activities:</p>		<p>Resources:</p>	<p>Useful links:</p>	
<p>Children could start by listening to the sounds of the rainforest/looking at a picture of the rainforest or even taking a virtual tour - why might this be a good place to live? What could be the challenges of living in this region?</p> <p>Explain that the rainforest provided many valuable resources for the Maya - a teacher/TA could then take on the role of a Mayan visitor and children could hot seat them about their life in the rainforest OR this might lead to a simple comprehension activity OR children could be given some of the resources found in the rainforest and categorise them - food, shelter, medicine etc. Emphasise to the children that they were a stone age society - they did not have access to metal.</p> <p>Finally, explain to the children that one of the most important trees found in the rainforest was the cacao trees. Children could then read an account of how cacao is grown and drunk and then compare this to the Mayan story of Kukulcan and how he gave the Mayan chocolate - what is similar between the two accounts? What is different? What does the Mayan account tell us about their beliefs and the importance of cacao to them? <i>NB. If you can get hold of some cocoa beans, you could even try making the drink!</i></p>		<p>Pictures/virtual tour of the rainforest</p> <p>A well informed teacher/TA who is willing to be hot seated!</p> <p>Information about the rainforest and its resources</p> <p>Account of how cocoa is grown and drunk</p> <p>Story of Kukulcan</p> <p>Cacao beans!</p>	<p>Llanes-Ortiz, Davies and Mursell 'The Maya: a 4000-year-old civilisation in the Americas', <i>Primary History</i> 68 (Autumn 2014)</p> <p>For a virtual tour of a rainforest: https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/kids/rainforest-visits</p> <p>For information about life in the rainforest try: Alf Wilkinson 'The Maya Pupil Book' (2019)</p> <p>For an overview of Mayan life try the BBC Lost Lands series: https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks2-introducing-the-maya-civilisation/znk3cqt</p> <p>For the story of how the Maya got chocolate: Wilkinson 'Using myths and legends in the classroom', <i>Primary History</i> 72 (Spring 2016) Cacao beans are widely available on Amazon! For Ian Dawson's criteria for significance: http://canonshistory.weebly.com/what-criteria-can-we-use-to-make-a-judgement-about-significance.html</p>	

Enquiry 3: Why did the Maya build roads when they did not have any wheeled vehicles?

Links to previous learning	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts
<p>Children should now know that many Mayan groups lived in the rainforest. Children should also know something about their lifestyle.</p>	<p>Substantive knowledge: (What the children should know.) The Maya lived in city states that were connected by roads to the countryside. Maya cities were both similar and different to our own. The Maya traded lots of goods.</p> <p>Second order concepts: (What the children should understand) Similarity and difference</p>	<p>Historical skills: - Range & depth - Find out about the characteristics of Maya city states.</p> <p>Key concepts: City state Pyramid Trade Diversity</p>	<p>Can your children: - identify ways in which Maya cities were similar and different to our own? - identify features of four key city states as well as similarities and differences? - provide an explanation as to why the Maya built roads?</p>	<p>Horizontal:</p> <p>Vertical:</p>
Suggested activities:		Resources:		Useful links:
<p>You could start by explaining to the children that the Maya did not have wheels or large animals but they still built roads - why?</p> <p>Next, you could explain to the children that the Maya lived in city states as well as in the countryside - show them them an artist's impression of a Mayan city - what is similar and what is different to our own? What questions would you like to ask?</p> <p>Next explain to the children that the Maya lived in up to 50 city states. <i>NB. The children should have learnt about the City States of Ancient Greece in Y5.</i> The city states were built/important at different times - explain that they are going to investigate some of the key city states and compare them.</p> <p>Next, the children could be organised into groups and provided with key information on the city states - Tikal, Chichen Itza, Tulum, and Mayapan. Each group could have a pack of information about location, population size, important buildings, time it was important. The information could then be switched between groups so that each group looks at each of the city states. What are the similarities/differences between the city states?</p> <p>Finally, refer back to the enquiry question. <i>NB. The Maya built roads to connect the countryside the cities and also support trade.</i></p>		<p>Picture of an artist's impression of a Maya city.</p> <p>Information packs containing facts about some key Maya cities: Tikal, Chichen Itza, Tulum and Mayapan.</p> <p>Worksheet/grid for the children to complete with notes on each of the city states.</p>		<p>Llanes-Ortiz, Davies and Mursell 'The Maya: a 4000-year-old civilisation in the Americas', <i>Primary History</i> 68 (Autumn 2014)</p> <p>Alf Wilkinson 'The Maya Pupil Book' (2019)</p> <p>A simple Google search for Mayan society will show some artist's impressions of Maya cities.</p> <p>For information on the city states try the following and search for the city state: https://kids.kiddle.co For child friendly websites on the Maya use: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/mayans/ https://www.ducksters.com/history/maya/daily-life.php</p>

Enquiry 4: How inventive were the Maya?

Links to previous learning	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts
<p>Children should now understand that the Maya lived in cities as well as the countryside. They should also know that key Maya settlements were linked by roads despite them not having any wheeled vehicles.</p>	<p>Substantive knowledge: <i>(What the children should know.)</i> The Maya were an advanced civilisation. The Maya were talented astronomers, architects and mathematicians.</p> <p>Second order concepts: <i>(What the children should understand)</i> Change Significance</p>	<p>Historical skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range & depth - find out about the key characteristics of the Maya. - Communication. <p>Key concepts: Ancient civilisation Hieroglyphs Pyramids Calendar</p>	<p>Can your children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify some of the key inventions of the Maya? - explain why they think an invention was significant? - start to evaluate if they think that the Maya were inventive or not? 	<p>Horizontal:</p> <p>Vertical:</p>
Suggested activities:		Resources:		Useful links:
<p>You could start by reminding the children that they Maya did not have any wheels or use metal - they could then predict how inventive they think that that Maya were.</p> <p>Children could work in pairs or groups - research one the key Maya inventions - astronomy, counting, hieroglyphs, calendars, pyramids. Children could then produce a short presentation on their invention and present it 'Dragon's Den' style to the teacher/TA explaining why it was important/it should be invested in. (Investment could be in the form of cocoa beans). <i>NB. This is a good opportunity to link the inventions to fields of study/future jobs.</i></p> <p>Children could make notes of the different inventions and rank each in order of significance.</p> <p>Finally, ask children to refer back to the enquiry question - how inventive were the Maya - they may not have had wheels but what did they have instead?</p>		<p>Information on the key Maya inventions.</p> <p>Worksheet for the children to complete with significance criteria for children to refer to.</p> <p>Cocoa beans for investment?</p>		<p>Llanes-Ortiz, Davies and Mursell 'The Maya: a 4000-year-old civilisation in the Americas', <i>Primary History</i> 68 (Autumn 2014)</p> <p>Alf Wilkinson 'The Maya Pupil Book' (2019)</p> <p>Maya mathematical system: www.mycalendar.com</p> <p>Maya hieroglyphs: http://www.famsi.org/reports/03075/CKguidebook_english.pdf</p> <p>Maya calendar: <i>Primary History</i> 68, pp.40-1.</p>

Enquiry 5: What happened if you lost at Pok-ta-Pok?

Links to previous learning	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts
<p>Children should now know some of the key aspects of Maya life. They should also have started to understand that the Maya were very religious and worshipped a range of gods.</p>	<p>Substantive knowledge: <i>(What the children should know.)</i> The Maya played a kind of football, except that you could not use your hands or your feet. Historians differ about the rules of the game and what happened to the winners/losers. History is open to interpretation based on the evidence that you use.</p> <p>Second order concepts: <i>(What the children should understand)</i> Similarity and difference</p>	<p>Historical skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range & depth -use a range of sources to find out about the past. - Interpretation - understand different versions of the past may exist and give reasons. - Communication. <p>Key concepts: Myths and legends Gods Beliefs Interpretation Evidence</p>	<p>Can your children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describe the story of the Hero Twins? - identify ways in which the ball game is similar/different to our ball games? - describe the rules of the ball game based on their own research? - explain why interpretations may differ and what they think happened to the winners/losers and why? 	<p>Horizontal:</p> <p>Vertical:</p>
<p>Suggested activities:</p>		<p>Resources:</p>		<p>Useful links:</p>
<p>You could start by explaining that the Mayans had over 160 different gods and that they used the gods to explain their world. Read the story of the Hero Twins - children could then re-create their own version of the story. <i>NB. Remember that this is a story of good overcoming evil.</i></p> <p>Next, the children could watch a re-construction of the ball-game that is described - what do the players wear? What appear to be the rules/aim? Is it similar to any games we play?</p> <p>Children could then research the rules of the game - children could use a range of different websites/books. <i>NB. It is important that the children do not use the same resources so that their rules are slightly different!</i> Children could then present back to the class how they think the game was played - ask the children why their findings are slightly different. Hopefully, they will answer because they used different sources. Then you could ask them which one is the most accurate? Can we ever find out?</p> <p>Finally, provide children with the two different interpretations about what happened if you won/lost at Pok-ta-Pok - the losers were sacrificed to the gods OR the winners were sacrificed. Look at some artefacts showing the sacrifices - who was being sacrificed? Will we ever know for sure? Why do interpretations of the same event differ? Children could then write their own interpretation based on what they have found out or draw their own interpretation based upon</p>		<p>Copy of the story of the Hero Twins</p> <p>Video reconstruction of the ball game.</p> <p>Access to the Internet/books etc for research.</p> <p>Two different written interpretations.</p> <p>Pictures from the Codex Borgia or from the walls at Chichen Itza. The Codex Borgia is an ancient source showing images of the Aztecs but could be used for the Maya: https://smarthistory.org/codex-borgia/ or use images from Chichen Itza.</p>		<p>Llanes-Ortiz, Davies and Mursell 'The Maya: a 4000-year-old civilisation in the Americas', <i>Primary History</i> 68 (Autumn 2014)</p> <p>Alf Wilkinson 'The Maya Pupil Book' (2019)</p> <p>For a simple version of the Maya Hero Twins myth try: https://www.ducksters.com/history/maya/hero_twins_maya_mythology.php</p> <p>For an explanation of the links between the story and the ball game: https://www.livescience.com/65611-how-to-play-maya-ballgame.html</p> <p>For a video reconstruction of the game try: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99foDilswZA (About 15 minutes in. Do not let it run over!)</p> <p>For different interpretations: https://www.theinitialjourney.com/features/mayans-the-sport-of-life-and-death/ https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/3000-year-old-ball-game-where-losers-lost-their-heads-revived-mexico-007917</p>

Enquiry 6: Why did the Maya disappear?

Links to previous learning	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts	Knowledge and second order concepts
<p>Children should now know some of the key aspects of Maya life. They should also know that when the Maya settlements were discovered, they were ruins.</p>	<p>Substantive knowledge: <i>(What the children should know.)</i> Around 900CE many of the Maya cities were deserted. No one is really certain what happened to those people. There are lots of different ideas put forward by historians.</p> <p>Second order concepts: <i>(What the children should understand)</i> Cause and consequence</p>	<p>Historical skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range & depth -use a range of sources to find out about the past. - Interpretation - understand different versions of the past may exist and give reasons. - Communication. <p>Key concepts: Ancient civilisation Interpretation</p>	<p>Can your children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify different interpretations of what happened to the Maya? - explain which interpretation they agree with and support with evidence? 	<p>Horizontal:</p> <p>Vertical:</p>
<p>Suggested activities:</p> <p>You could start by explaining to the children that they are going to help solve a great mystery - what happened to the Maya. Explain that around 900CE many of the Maya cities were deserted. Historians have come up with different theories but it is their jobs to try to find out which is correct.</p> <p>Children could be divided into six groups - give each group a different interpretation to begin - drought, warfare, force of nature, the actions of rules of the cities, climate change brought on by deforestation, the Maya were just too successful. Children could be given a description of each view then using the evidence they have collected throughout the unit find evidence for/against. This activity could then be developed into a carousel where each group gets to consider each of the theories.</p> <p>Finally, children could present/write up which of the theories they agree with the most and why.</p> <p><i>NB. There is good opportunity here to link in the destruction of the rainforest and the effects on planet. Also, remember that there are still 7-8 million people descended from the Maya living in Central America.</i></p>		<p>Resources:</p> <p>Copies of the different interpretations.</p> <p>Access to the work they have completed in class as well as books, Internet etc.</p> <p>Worksheet so that the children can record their findings.</p>	<p>Useful links:</p> <p>Llanes-Ortiz, Davies and Mursell 'The Maya: a 4000-year-old civilisation in the Americas', <i>Primary History</i> 68 (Autumn 2014)</p> <p>Alf Wilkinson 'The Maya Pupil Book' (2019)</p> <p>For a short video to introduce children to the mystery use: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zq6svcw/articles/zndq7p3</p>	

END POINTS:

Knowledge and second order concepts:

Substantive knowledge:

(What the children should know)

This is not an exhaustive list but an outline of what might be expected:

- 200 years ago the remains of the Maya were found in the rainforest of Central America.
- The Maya lives in lots of different city states.
- Many of the Maya lived in tropical rainforest.
- Cocoa was important to the Maya.
- The Maya built pyramids and roads, used hieroglyphs and developed their own system of counting: they were inventive.
- The Maya were religious and had lots of different gods.
- The Maya played a type of football but historians disagree about the rules of the game.
- Around 900CE many of the Maya cities were deserted. No one is really certain what happened to all the people. There are lots of different ideas put forward by historians.

Taken and adapted from Sue Temple and Alf Wilkinson, 'Collins Primary History: Teacher's Guide', (2019), p.125.

Second order concepts:

Children should start to have an understanding of:

cause and consequence
similarity and difference
significance
chronology

Key concepts developed:

AD/CE

Ancient

Civilisation

BC/BCE

Beliefs

Calendar

City state

Diversity

Evidence

Gods

Hieroglyphs

Interpretation

Myths and legends

Pyramids

Stone Age

Trade

Key historical skills developed:

By the end of the unit, children will have studied a series of question led enquiries. In doing so, children will have had the opportunity to:

- place events on a timeline developing understanding of BC/BCE and AD/CE.
- link events with previous learning and start to draw comparisons.
- conduct their own research increasingly independently.
- investigate a range of sources and start to assess their reliability by comparing them to their own understanding of events.
- use criteria when judging significance.
- ask and pose increasingly complex questions about the enquiry.
- present their findings in a variety of ways.
- compare different accounts/theories/interpretations.
- reach their own conclusions/make their own interpretations based on historical research.

The next step ...

This unit will have allowed the children to study a non-European society that contrasts with their understanding of the history of the British Isles. They will have been given the opportunity to draw links with previous learning on the Stone Age in addition to the Ancient Civilisation of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. In the next unit children will look at 'Crime and Punishment over time' which will help to secure their chronological understanding and explore change and continuity. Once again children will be encouraged to make links to their previous learning in history while also developing their knowledge and understanding in a chronological framework. This will be the last unit of Key Stage 2 and so will aim to draw together their historical journey so far before they move onto Key Stage 3 and beyond.