



Year 5 History: How does the way the Mayans lived compare to the way people in Britain were living at the time?



Key Topics: Discovery of Mayan Civilisations; everyday Mayan life and culture; Mayan religion; the Mayan calendar, writing system and number system; decline of Mayan Civilisation.

Key Vocabulary

archaeologist	An archaeologist learns about the past by excavating and studying the remains and objects left behind.
cacao	The beans from which we make chocolate; the Ancient Mayans used cacao beans to make a drink.
codices	Books created by the Mayans; they were made out of bark.
Chac	One of the Ancient Mayan deities: the god of rain.
city states	A city that is independent and is ruled by a king or queen.
civilisation	A large, well organised group of people united by shared laws, trade, culture and values.
conquistadores	Spanish explorers who landed in Central America in the 1500s and wanted to conquer the land. They discovered the Ancient Mayan ruins. Hernan Cortes is the most famous conquistadore.
glyphs	Symbols or pictures used in Ancient Mayan writing, there were over 800 different glyphs.
hierarchical society	A society where people are organised into different levels with different amounts of importance; a small number of powerful people at the top rule the large number of people below them.
Kinich Ahau	One of the Ancient Mayan deities: the sun god.
maize	A corn plant.
monarchy	A system of government where a King or Queen rules.
Pok a tok	A ball game played by the Ancient Mayans.

People and Places

The Mayans were a civilisation that lived between approximately 2000BC and 900 AD in **Mesoamerica**, the area that is now known as Central America. The Mayan civilisation included huge areas of rainforest and parts of the modern day countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras. The Mayan cities were highly developed societies who fought and traded with each other. They were ruled by powerful **kings** with the help of **nobles** and **priests**.



Chichen Itza was one of the largest Mayan city states; its ruins and temples are wonderfully preserved and teach us much about the Mayan religion and way of life. It can still be visited today.

