















Year 6 History Knowledge Organiser Unit 3: The Maya Civilisation

Vocabulary

1	city state 	large cities created by the Maya in parts of Mesoamerica, governed by a king or high priest
2	hierarchy 	a set order of importance with the most important at the top and least at the bottom in a society
3	society 	people living together in a more or less ordered community
4	sacrifice 	an act of slaughtering an animal or person as an offering to a deity (God)
5	astronomy 	a science which deals with space and the physical universe as a whole
6	irrigation 	the supply of water to land or crops to help growth, usually using channels
7	trade 	the action of buying and selling goods and services
8	agriculture 	the practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food and other products
9	hieroglyph (glyphs) 	picture representing a word, syllable or sound, as found in ancient Egyptian and writing systems such as the Maya
10	codices 	Mayan folding books made from bark paper used to record culture, science and rituals in glyphs.


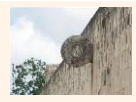

Key People

The priest 	Held the regular rituals surrounding the temple which were very important to the people. He was believed to be the closest to the gods and could talk with them.
The King 	The King was also a high priest and was believed to be chosen to rule by the gods. Sons inherited the right to rule from their fathers. The only way a new ruling family could take over a city state is by winning a war.
The scribe 	Scribes were important people responsible for recording history, religious texts and cultural knowledge using glyphs.
The farmer 	Farmers led a very simple life based around the farming year. Some could become quite rich as they were responsible for growing crops of precious maize and cacao.

Timeline including key events

1	5000 BCE	The Maya settle along the coasts of Mesoamerica
2	3114 BCE	First solar calendars invented and carved into stone
3	1000 BCE	First step pyramids are built.
4	900 BCE	Farming and trade become established
5	600 BCE	The settlement at Tikal is formed (one of the major cities in the Maya civilization)
6	400 BCE	Maya numerical system is developed
7	300 BCE	Cities start to become centres for trade
8	292 BCE	First known Maya writing is produced
9	800 CE	El Castillo pyramid built in the city-state Chichén Itzá
10	900 CE	Maya power declines. The reason for the collapse remains something of a mystery.
11	1532 CE	The Spanish arrive

Key knowledge

1	The Maya believed in many deities (gods) who controlled every part of the world. They were closely tied to the calendar and astronomy and their importance changed according to the movement of the stars, moon and sun.	
2	Pok-a-Tok or Pok-ta-Pok was a game where large rubber balls were aimed at stone hoops. Losers were sometimes sacrificed to the gods!	
3	Pyramids were built with a temple on top to give sacrifices to the gods.	
4	The Maya were able to predict solar eclipses and used observatories and shadow-casting devices.	