

Timeline	
2000BC	The first Maya people emerge
750BC	The first Maya cities are built
250BC	First Maya hieroglyphics are used.
250AD	The Mayan had many established cities. They had many monuments, pyramids and devised their own systems for writing and maths.
800-850AD	The huge stepped pyramid, El Castillo, is built in Chichen Itza.
870AD	Many city states (e.g. Copan and Tikal) are deserted.
909AD	The last recorded evidence of Maya Civilisation.

What was the Mayan culture like?
The Maya practised human sacrifice as well as animal sacrifice.
Mayan temples were stepped to create a route to the heavens
The Maya observed the movement of the sun, moon and stars to create calendars.
Masks were used for many purposes, but mainly funerals to protect important people in the afterlife
We need to thank the Mayan people for the discovery of the cacao plant . Hot chocolate was a sacred drink for the Mayans.
The Mayan religion was polytheistic (they believed in more than one god). Each god was associated with different areas of life.

The World of the Maya

Vocabulary	
Archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains.
Architecture	the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings.
Astronomy	The study of space, planets, stars and the universe.
Civilisation	The society, culture, and way of life of a particular area.
Codex	An ancient book that was written by hand.
Culture	The way of life and beliefs of a particular group of people.
Mesoamerica	Central America - the countries consist of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Belize; and the western sections of Honduras and Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica.
Trade	The activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services.
Sacrifice	An act of slaughtering an animal or person as an offering to a god or gods.
Worship	To show love and devotion – usually to a god or group of gods.

Important places	
Chichen Itza	A large city built by the Maya people. It contained a large number of temples, monuments and pyramids. It is most famous for the large stepped pyramid at its centre, El Castillo, which is about 1km in diameter.
Palenque	A Maya state in what is now Southern Mexico. It contains some of the finest architecture and sculpture.
Tikal	A Maya city that was built an area of rainforest in what is now Guatemala. Tikal was one of the most powerful kingdoms in Maya and reached its peak in population between 200 and 900AD. It has some of the best-preserved ruins and tombs, giving historians some of the best clues about how the Maya people lived.

Facts about the Mayans
The Mayan empire was organised into city states; each city state was ruled by a different noble family.
Mayan people lived in settlements with a central temple/pyramid as a focal point.
Mayan city states traded with each other - sometimes using cacao beans as money.
Chichen Itza (what remains of it) is a popular tourist attraction.
The Maya used hieroglyphs to inscribe in stone slabs (called stelae) and in books (called codices).
The Maya created a logical and advanced number system.
There are lots of different theories about what happened to the Maya.

Important people	
Pakal the Great 603-683AD	A famous Maya monarch. He was king of the city-state of Palenque for 60 years which was longer than any other Maya king or queen.
Yax K'uk Mo	Founder and first king of the Maya city of Copan (modern day Honduras). He reigned for 11 years and records shown he was a greatly respected leader and brought stability to the region.