



St Paul's C of E Primary School – Knowledge Organiser

Name of Topic

Mesoamerica- Mayan Civilisation

Year Group

6

Key Vocabulary and Spellings

1	Mesoamerica	A historical region and cultural area in North America. It extends from approximately central Mexico through Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica.
2	quetzal	A type of jungle bird with beautiful feathers that the Mayans used to decorate clothing, shields and head-dresses.
3	cacao	Seeds from an evergreen tree that grow in South America and Africa, from which chocolate can be made.
4	sacrifice	An act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering an offering to a deity (ruler or god)
5	codices	Books that Mayans recorded in with glyphs- symbols and pictures.
6	civilisation	An advanced organisation of people who live in a town.
7	pyramids	A monumental structure with a square or triangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top.
8	rituals	A religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a set order.
9	settlement	A place, typically one which has previously been uninhabited, where people establish a community.
10	chronological	Following the order in which they occurred- time order

Top 5 Topic Facts

1	The Mayans were the longest standing civilisation- 3000 years and they developed a number and writing system.
2	Mayans engaged in rituals such as a game called pok-a-tok, and the sacrifice of humans, following their religion worshipping many gods.
3	Chichen Itza was one of the largest Mayan cities ever built.
4	Mayans used cacao to make chocolate drinks. Once Europeans found it, they brought it back to Europe to create edible chocolate.
5	No-one is certain about the downfall of the Mayans. Some theories include: overpopulation, environmental degradation, drought, shifting trade routes, diseases or natural disasters.



Key Investigations/Questions

1	What was Mayan society like and what made it so successful?
2	How did life in Mesoamerica compare to Anglo-Saxon life in Britain at the same time?
3	What led to the downfall of the Mayan civilisation?