

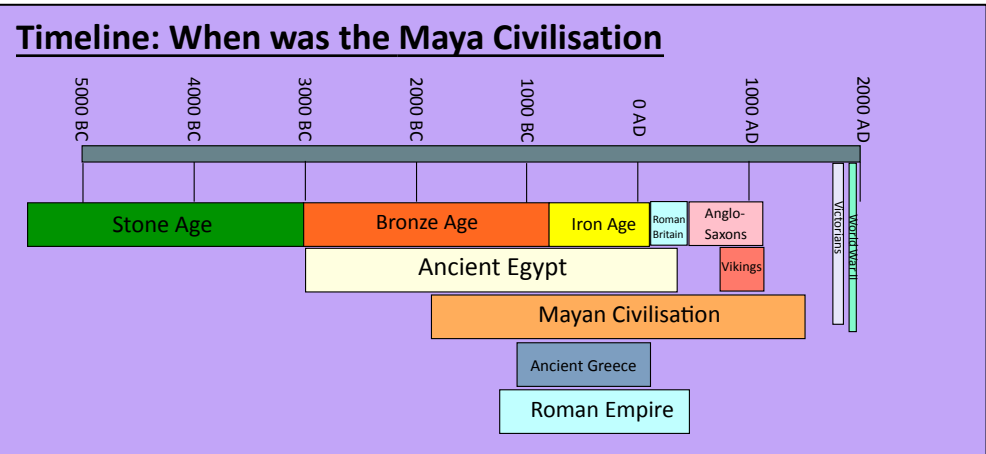
The Maya Civilisation Knowledge Planner: The Mayans – Marvellous or Vicious?

The Victorian Era?

Background information – The most important bit

Historical Concepts

Change	The process or actions by which something or someone becomes different.
Continuity	Aspects that may stay the same despite changes.
Causation	The connections between events where one thing happens as a result of another
Significance	Identifying those events, sources, people, places or ideas which are most important.
Similarity and Difference	Comparing ways of life at different times.
Perspective	When interpreting evidence recognise that judgements are influenced by the view and opinion of the observer.
Sources	Evidence that is used to gather information and reach judgements.
Chronology	Arrange historical events in their correct time order.
Empathy	Placing yourself in another’s position to better understand their actions.



Key Vocabulary

archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains.
architecture	The art of planning, designing, and constructing buildings.
civilisation	A human society with its own social organisation and culture.
climate	The general weather conditions that are typical of a place
culture	Activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to Mayan society be important for the development of civilisation.
deforestation	If an area is deforested, all the trees are cut down.
demise	Something or someone is at their end or death
drought	A long period of time during which no rain falls.
indigenous	People or things belong to the country in which they are found
Mayan	Of, relating to, or characteristic of the Maya or any of their languages.
Mesoamerica	Central America – the countries consist of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Belize; and the western sections of Honduras and Nicaragua, and the northern Costa Rica.
Plaza	An open square in a city
polytheists	The worship of or belief in more than one God.

Timeline

Dates in Chronological order with the events

2000 BC - The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.

300 BC - Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.

AD 900 - Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to an extensive drought. People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.

AD 1000 - Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.

AD 1500s - The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.

AD 1839 - American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood explore Copán and extensively document what they find, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation. They go on to document other Maya cities, including Chichén Itzá.

AD 2014 - The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

Key Concepts

Writing:

The Maya writing system, used to write several different Maya languages, was made up of over 800 symbols called glyphs. They were carved onto stone buildings and monuments and painted onto pottery. Only priests and noblemen would know the whole written language.

Maths:

The Maya developed a complex number and counting system that was advanced for their time. Maya people used just three symbols in their number system. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with, such as pebbles, sticks and shells.

Religion:

The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that the gods could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods. Priests were very important in Maya society as it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods. They would perform different rituals during festivals or special ceremonies in order to appeal to the gods.

Important Artefacts



Key Pieces of information

- Mayan cities had similar layouts to each other. They would have a palace for the ruler, a plaza for the marketplaces and temples, in the form of pyramids.
- Mayan cities were often found near trade routes and good farmland.
- Mayans were polytheists, believing in many nature gods or deities.
- Priests were considered the most important people in the Mayan culture. Warriors, craftsmen, and traders were next in the hierarchy. Farmers, workers, and slaves were at the bottom of the hierarchy.
- Mayan merchants traded many goods including salt, cotton, honey, and jade.
- The Mayan calendar (Tzolkin) consisted of 260 days and 13 months.
- The demise of the Mayan civilisation came about because of a mixture of deforestation, land erosion and drought.

Important Places

Where did the Mayans live?



Famous Mayan cities include Palenque and Chichen Itza, which are found in Mexico.

Tikal not far south of El Mirador that also was an early site and by the Late Classic become a metropolis of over 60,000 people. Tikal had several large pyramids one rising 47 metres high! It is called the Temple of the Great Jaguar and housed the tomb of King Jasaw Chan K'awiil.

