



**Year 5  
Summer**

### The Maya Civilisation

The Maya civilisation made their homes in Mesoamerica. Although each city was independent, had a government and its own noble ruler the Maya shared the same culture and religion. The cities never came together to form an empire, instead the Mayan kings were constantly at war with each other fighting for land, gifts and sacrifices to please the gods. After 800 AD many of the cities began to collapse and historians are still debating as to why. In Central America there are still some Maya communities who speak the same language and grow food in the same way as their ancient ancestors.

#### Key Vocabulary

1	Maya civilisation	The Maya civilisation began long ago in a place called 'Mesoamerica'.
2	City State	A city-state was made up of a major city and the surrounding areas which sometimes included some smaller settlements and cities. You can visit the ruins of some Maya city-states today such as Chichen Itza and Tikal.
3	Mesoamerica 	The term Mesoamerica is derived from the Greek and means "Middle America." It refers to a geographical and cultural area which extends from central Mexico down through Central America, including the territory which is now made up of the countries of Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador.
4	Polytheistic	Polytheism is belief in, or worship of, multiple gods or divinities. Most early civilisations were polytheistic as they believed in many gods.
5	Pyramid	The Maya pyramids are structures built in the jungles of Central America. Unlike the straight sides of the Egyptian pyramids, the sides of Maya pyramids are typically stepped—sometimes for the purpose of enabling people to ascend to the top.
6	Sacrifice	An act of offering to a god something precious especially: the killing of a victim on an altar.
7	Civilisation	A civilization is an advanced state of human society containing highly developed forms of government, culture, industry, and common social norms.
8	Calendar	An item that shows the days, weeks, and months of a year.
9	Sisal	A long strong white fibre made from the leaves of a Mexican plant and used to make rope, twine or clothing.
10	Hieroglyphics 	The Maya used symbols (hieroglyphics or glyphs) to represent words, sounds, or objects. By putting several glyphs together, the Maya wrote sentences and told stories.
11	Settlements	A settlement is any small community of people. One kind of settlement is a place where people live. This can be a community that's smaller than a town, like a village. Also, if one country establishes a colony somewhere else, that can be called a settlement.
12	Architecture	A general term to describe buildings and other physical structures.
13	Mexico	Mexico is a country in the southern portion of North America. It is bordered to the north by the United States; to the south and west by the Pacific Ocean; to the southeast by Guatemala, Belize, and the Caribbean Sea; and to the east by the Gulf of Mexico.
14	Central America	Central America is a region in the southern tip of North America and is sometimes defined as a subregion of the Americas.

#### Timeline of Key Events

All dates shown here are approximate

- 1100 BC – The first hunter gatherers settle along the Pacific Coast and then expand into the central highlands.
- 1000 BC - The Maya begin to form larger settlements at places like Copan and Chalchuapa.
- 800 BC – Village farming, and trade becomes established throughout the Maya Region.
- 600 BC - The settlement at Tikal is formed, one of the major cities in the Maya civilization.
- 400 BC – Earliest solar calendars are carved in stone.
- 300 BC – The social structure in Maya adapts to include Nobles and Kings as rulers.
- 100 BC - The city-state of Teotihuacan is established in the Valley of Mexico.
- 450 AD – The city-state of Tikal dominates the tropical lowland of the central region.
- 683 AD – Pacal the Great of Palenque dies and is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions.
- 900 AD – Collapse of the Maya civilisation in the south
- 925 AD - The city-state of Chichen Itza becomes the most powerful city-state in the region. It will rule for the next two hundred years.
- 1250 AD - After declining for years, Chichen Itza is abandoned.
- 1283 AD - The city-state of Mayapan becomes the capital city of the Maya civilization.
- 1441 AD - The people rebel against the rule of Mayapan. The city is abandoned by the late 1400s.
- 1502 AD – First contact with Europeans made.

