



## Y6-Knowledge Organiser –History-The Mayans

### Key Facts

- The weather of Central America is dominated by distinct wet and dry seasons.
- All of the countries are generally hot and humid year-round. Thunderstorms are a normal spring and summer occurrence.
- Central America is mostly made up of a series of mountainous areas with fertile valleys in between.
- Time was extremely important to the Maya, they made elaborate and accurate calendars and they used them in charting the movements of the sun, moon, stars and even planets.
- The Maya believed in a large number of nature gods. Some gods were considered more important and powerful than others. They built a number of pyramid style temples to worship these Gods and believed in the power of sacrifice (including humans!) The most famous of these temples could be found in the city of Chichen Itza.
- There were 5 social classes in Maya times. These were Rulers, followed by nobles and priest, then craftsmen, peasants and finally the slaves. Each major city had a ruler and the position was passed down through the family. Priest were actually the most powerful people in Maya society. The peasants were generally the farmers who lived outside of the city.

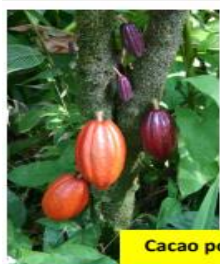
### Key Vocabulary

- **ceremony**- a formal event at which special things are done.
- **cacao**- these are beans which come from cacao trees. The trees sprout pods directly from their trunks, which are used to make chocolate.
- **hieroglyphs** – symbols or pictures used to represent words.
- **irrigation**- supplying land with water
- **maize** – a grain that made up 80% of the Maya diet.
- **Maya** – the name to the people of that time in Central America.
- **Mayan** – the language spoken by the Maya people.
- **terracing**: steps built into sloping land
- **Pok-a-tok**- a game where large rubber balls were aimed at stone hoops. Losers were sometimes sacrificed to the gods!
- **sacrifice**- to kill an animal or person in a religious ceremony.
- **traditions**- customs that have existed for a long time
- **Vigesimal** – number system based on 20s used by the Maya people



### Maya number system

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20



Cacao pod



Maize



The Long Count Calendar

### Timeline of events

- 2000BC – Farming villages appeared.
- 1000BC – Larger settlements were created.
- 700BC – Maya writing began developing.
- 600 BC - Large buildings were built in the city of El Mirador.
- 600 BC - The Maya began to farm to support larger populations.
- 400BC – First Maya calendars are carved into stone.
- 100BC – First pyramids are built.
- 400AD – Many people live in a capital city.
- 925AD – Chichen Itza becomes capital city.
- 1517AD – The Spanish arrive and begin their colonisation of Central America.

