

Elton Primary School - History		Topic: Ancient Mayans		Main subject: History		Year 5		Summer 2
Timeline								
1100 B.C.	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	300 B.C.	100 B. C.	600 A.D.	800 A.D.	900 A.D.	1502 A.D.
The first hunter-gatherers on the pacific coast	Village farming and trade become established	First solar calendars invented	Cities become centres for trade and kings begin to rule	First pyramids are built	Cities start expanding quickly	Building of stepped pyramid of Chichen-Itza	Decline of Mayan cities	First contact with Europeans is made

Key Vocabulary	
astronomy	The Mayans were able to predict solar eclipses and used observatories and shadow-casting devices
calendar	These were circular and charted the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets, with 365 days in a year
hieroglyphs	They used about 800 symbols to create writing, often on folded pages forming a book (codex)
Kings/Queens	The King/Queen was thought to be given the right to rule by the gods. Each city had a palace for them.
maize	The staple food of the Mayans which was so important that they even had a maize god.
numbers	Using a base 20 system, they used dots and bars to create numbers
Pok-a-tok	A game where large rubber balls were aimed at stone hoops. Losers were sometimes sacrificed to the gods!
pyramids	Built with a temple at the top to give sacrifices to the gods, others were built for the gods themselves
sacrifice	Humans and animals were used as a blood offering to gods, mostly war prisoners by decapitation or heart removal
stelae	Stone monuments glorifying Kings and recording his deeds, although early examples were of mythical scenes

What I already know.

Britain in AD 900 had already experienced the Stone, Bronze and Iron Age.

The Anglo Saxons and Vikings had their own writing systems.

Settlements in Britain were often based near rivers.

Many Anglo Saxons and Vikings were farmers.

Anglo Saxon and Vikings also had some form of structured society.

What I'm going to learn.

The Mayan civilisation was based in Mesoamerica. The historic region of Mesoamerica comprises the modern day countries of northern Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, and central to southern Mexico.

The Maya took advantage of the area's many natural resources, including limestone (for construction), the volcanic rock obsidian (for tools and weapons) and salt. Mayan farmers grew avocados, maize, pumpkins and chilli peppers. Mayan farmers used cisterns lined with plaster to catch water.

The Mayans knew how to grow crops like maize (slash and burn technique) and irrigate fields, and how to hunt e.g. for deer, and to trade. Maya had to contend with jungle and mountain. Their way of farming depended on the climate.

The Maya people believed that obedience to their leader was critical to maintaining the harmony of the Maya universe. Maya society was structured - rigidly divided between nobles, commoners, and slaves.

They wrote their base numbers (0 to 19) with three symbols: a shell-like oval for zero, a dot to stand for 1 unit, and a bar to represent 5 units.

The Maya had a calendar system as accurate as modern calendars but in a different form

Their brilliant maths skills helped them to build incredible temples and pyramids like the Temple of Kukulcán at Chichén Itzá which is considered one of the new Wonders of the World.

The Mayans used a form of writing based on hieroglyphics and we still don't totally understand them.

The Maya were brilliant astronomers.

For decades, archaeologists have been searching for an explanation of the Maya collapse. Many theories have been put forward, ranging from warfare and invasion to migration, disease and over-farming. Many think the truth may lie with a combination of these and other factors.