Our Lady's Catholic Primary School – Knowledge Organiser

History | **Mayans** | **Year 4 – Autumn 1**

Vocabulary & Explanation

Maya – the name to the people of that time in Central America.

Mayan – the language spoken by the Maya people.

Maize – a grain that made up 80% of the Maya diet.

Hieroglyphs – symbols or pictures used to represent words.

Vigesimal – number system based on 20s used by the Maya people

Artefact - An object that is made by a person, such as a tool or a decoration, especially one that is of historical interest.

Dynasty - A series of rulers or leaders who are all from the same family, or a period when a country is ruled by them.

Temple - A building used for the worship of a god or gods in some religions.

Chichen Itza - One of the best-preserved examples of a Mayan city.

Mesoamerica - The region in which the Maya lived, spanning over Mexico and parts of Southern America.

Mayan facts I need to know

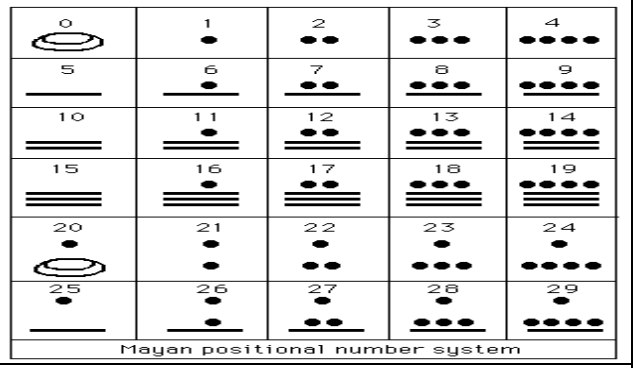
1. The Mayans predicated that the world would end in 2012.
2. Flat foreheads were fashionable so they would put baby's heads in a press to squash them.
3. It was considered beautiful to be cross-eyed so parents would hang balls in-between their children's eyes to make them look inwards.
4. Mayans sacrificed humans for religious and medical reasons. It was an honour to be sacrificed!
5. Noblewomen would file their teeth into sharp points.

Key Information

The Maya were a civilisation who lived in Mesoamerica (now Central America) between approximately 2000 BCE and 900CE. They are known for being the first Mesoamericans to develop writing. They also had a sophisticated culture in which they lived in city states. They built spectacular monuments and stepped pyramids – some (e.g. Chichen Itza) have become world tourist destinations in the modern day. They were also well-known for their advanced maths and calendars. Around 900CE, Maya cities became abandoned. No one knows for sure why this happened.

Map

Number system



Timeline of Events / Key Dates

- 2000BC – Farming villages appear
- 1000BC – Larger settlements are created.
- 400BC – First Maya calendars are carved into stone.
- 700BC – Maya writing begins developing
- 100BC – First pyramids
- 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