

Mayan Civilisation—Knowledge Organiser

Key Vocabulary

empire	Empire is a term used to describe a group of territories ruled by one single ruler or state. Empires are built by countries that wish to control lands outside of their borders.
Invasion	An invasion is the movement of an army into a region, usually in a hostile attack that's part of a war or conflict.
belief	trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something; a religious conviction
decline	a decrease in size, strength or quality
Absolute monarchy	a form of government in which a single individual (a King or Queen) has complete control over all aspects of society.
sacrifice	Surrendering a valued possession, person or animal as an offering to a deity (god)
Conquistadors	Knights, soldiers and explorers of the Spanish and Portuguese empires
glyph	A hieroglyphic character or symbol used in the Mayan alphabet
Nature gods	A god in charge of forces of nature (e.g. water, vegetation)

Empire

- Mayan Civilisation was organised into city states.
- Each state had its own king - an Absolute Monarchy.
- Mayan society was organised into a pyramid system with high and low ranks.

Mayan Gods

Itzamna - the creator god
 Chaac - the rain god
 Yum Kaax - the nature god

Ix Chel - the goddess of medicine
 Kinich Ahau - the sun god
 Kukulcan - the serpent god.

Timeline (Chronology)

- 5000BC – 2000BC** - Hunter-gatherers lived in the rainforests and volcanic mountains.
- 2000BC – 1000BC** - People began to farm and settle in small villages. People copied the crafts of the Olmec people, including making pottery and carving with jade. Basic trade was developed.
- 900BC** - Farmers began to use irrigation systems to help their plants to grow. This meant larger settlements could form.
- 300BC** - The first cities began to develop and the Mayan population grew rapidly.
- 292BC** - The first known Mayan writing was produced.
- 50BC** - The first temple was built in Cerros.
- AD250** - The Maya began their most powerful era. Astronomy, mathematics and architecture were all developing.
- AD300** - The Maya adopted the idea of a monarchy and were now ruled by kings.
- AD500 - AD800** - Major cities developed and thrived, such as Tikal, Palenque, Uxmal and Copan. Fine temples and palaces were built and art, culture and religion all reached their peak.
- AD800 - AD900** - The major cities began to decline and were eventually abandoned.
- AD1519**—Mayan cities discovered by Spanish Conquistadors whilst travelling through Mesoamerica.



Achievements

The Maya developed their own writing system, number system and calendar based on astronomical observation.

The Mayans used advanced farming methods to ensure they had much more land to farm on than they would have done.

The Maya built hundreds of cities across Mesoamerica over hundreds of years.

The period between AD200 and 900 is known as the Classic Period. This was when they built most of their most advanced cities and when their population was at its greatest (approximately 2 million people).

