Maya Civilisation— Y5/6 Knowledge Organiser

Key Vocabulary

absolute monarchy	a form of government in which a single individual (a King or Queen) has complete control over all aspects of society.
belief	trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something; a religious conviction
conquistadors	Knights, soldiers and explorers of the Spanish and Portuguese empires
decline	a decrease in size, strength or quality
glyph	A hieroglyphic character or symbol used in the Maya alphabet
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.
nature gods	A god in charge of forces of nature (e.g. water, vegetation)
power	is the ability to control people, make decisions, and influence what happens in a society
sacrifice	Surrendering a valued possession, person or animal as an offering to a deity (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 Maya population grew rapidly.

292BC - The first known Maya 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—Maya cities discovered by Spanish Conquistadors whilst travelling through Mesoamerica.

Empire

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



Maya Gods

Itzamna - the creator god

Chaac - the rain god

Ix Chel - the goddess of medicine

Kinich Ahau - the sun god

Kukulkan - the serpent god.

Achievements

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

The Mayas 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).