

Learning Organiser: Why did the ancient Maya change the way they lived?

Key objective

Understand why the ancient Maya civilisation of Central America abandoned their jungle cities between AD 900-1100.

Important things I will know, understand and do

The location of the countries and cities of modern Central America

The way of life of modern Maya people

The natural features of the environment and climate of Central America

Who the ancient Maya were and some of their achievements

The features and purpose of the structures of the ruined Maya city of Chichen Itza

The purpose of a range of ancient Maya artefacts from the city

The social and religious importance of the ball game pok-a-tok

How the ancient Maya farmed using mountain terraces

The likely cause of the gradual abandonment of the ancient Maya jungle cities between AD 900-1100

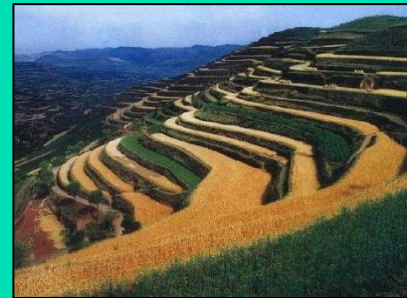
How the way of life of the Maya compared with that of the Anglo Saxons living in Britain at the same time

Environments I will understand



Tropical rainforest of Central America

Important types of Maya agriculture I will understand



Terraced farming

Important subject vocabulary I will learn

Reconstruct	to rebuild or make again
Conquest	gain control of a place or people by force
Ceremonial	an act or series of acts done in a set way on a special occasion
City-state	a small nation with a single large settlement surrounded by the territory it rules
Abandon	to leave behind with no plan ever to return
Erosion	the wearing away of the land by forces such as water, wind and ice that move the soil and rock to a new location
Tropical	regions of the Earth surrounding the equator
Rainforest	dense evergreen woodland found in tropical regions
Expedition	a journey undertaken by a group of people to explore a place
Rediscover	find something that has been lost, hidden or forgotten for a long time
Famine	a serious shortage of food which may result in illness or death caused by hunger
Priest	someone with the authority to carry out the sacred rites of a religion
Eclipse	when one object in space blocks another object from view
Deforestation	the cutting down and clearing of forests
Water cycle	the path that water takes as it moves around the Earth and its atmosphere
Restore	repair or bring something back to its original condition
Timeline	a graph to show the order in which events happened
Flash flood	a very sudden local flood caused by heavy rain

Important historical sources I will use

- Maps
- Journal entries
- Sketches
- Sculptures
- Hieroglyphics
- Figurines
- Ancient codex
- Artefacts

Important maps I will refer to



Central America

Important places I will visit



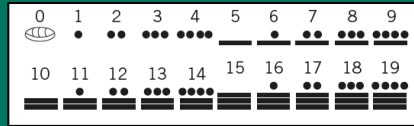
The city of Chichen Itza

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Important historical concepts I will understand

Change	the process or actions by which something or someone becomes different
Causation	the connections between events where one thing happens as a result of another
Significance	identifying events, sources, people, places or ideas which are most important
Sources	evidence that is used to gather information and reach judgements.
Chronology	arranging historical events in their correct time order
Empathy	placing yourself in another's position to better understand their actions
Civilisation	an advanced society with its own government, laws and written language
Society	a community of people who share a common way of life
Environment	the particular physical and human features that make places distinctive
Interdependence	how people and their environments rely upon each other
Trade	buying or selling goods and services between people and countries
War	armed conflict between different countries or people within a country (civil war)
Conflict	a struggle or clash between opposing forces, interests or ideas
Overpopulation	when the number of people in a place cannot be supported by its resources
Agriculture	growing crops and rearing animals on farms
City	a large and densely populated human settlement
Drought	a very long period of time without rainfall leading to water shortage.
Religion	a set of beliefs and convictions about life usually involving the worship of a god or gods

Important Maya artefacts I will interpret



Ancient codex

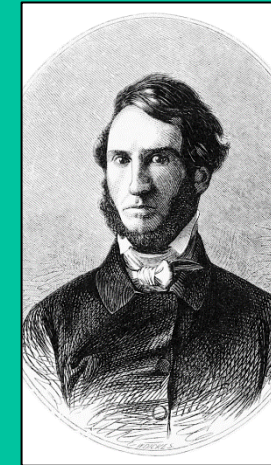


Sun calendar

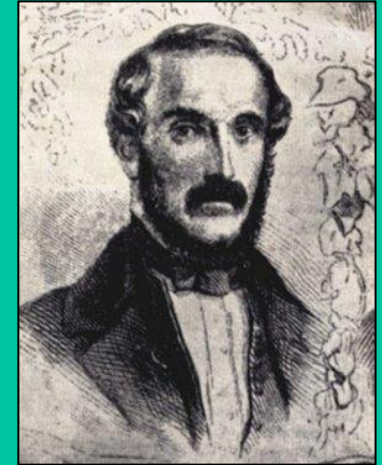


Writing

Important explorers who wrote journals and drew sketches



John Stephens



Frederick Catherwood

Disciplinary thinking skills I will use to understand what I learn

Synthesise	Bring together a range of ideas and facts from different sources to develop an argument or explanation for something.
Explain	Demonstrate understanding and comprehension of how or why something is the way it is as a result of synthesising information.
Empathise	The capacity to place oneself impartially in another's position to better understand their motives, decisions and actions (even if they are not shared values).
Informed conclusion	A knowledgeable summing up of the main points or issues about something.
Reasoned judgement	A personal view or opinion about something supported by factual evidence.
Justify	Give reasons to show or prove what you feel to be right or reasonable.
Apply	The transfer of knowledge and/or skills learned in one context to help make sense of a different situation
Evaluate	Weigh up and judge the relative importance of something in relation to counter ideas and arguments.
Critique	Review and examine something critically particularly to gain an awareness of its limitations and reliability as evidence.
Hypothesise	Come up with an idea, question or theory that can be investigated to see whether it has any validity or truth.