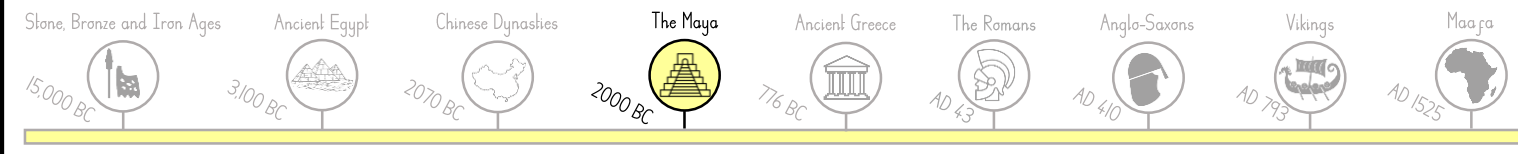


When were the Maya?



Key Vocabulary



CACAO BEANS: Cacao trees sprout pods directly from their trunks. When they are ripe, the pods can be broken open to reveal the beans, which can then be dried, roasted and ground.



CIVILISATION: A human society with its own social organization and culture.



CODICES: Ancient types of book which were written by hand, not printed.



HEADDRESS: Something that is worn on a person's head for decoration.



HIEROGLYPHS: Symbols in the form of pictures, which are used in some writing systems.



IRRIGATION: A system created to enable water to travel to land to help crops grow.



MAIZE: Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.

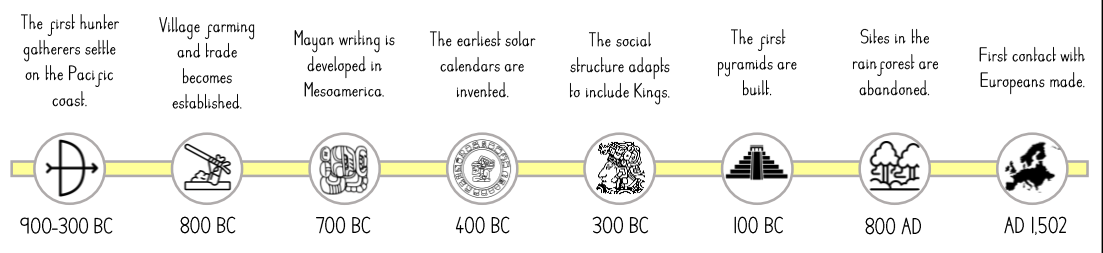


TEMPLE: A building used for the worship of a god or gods

The Mayan Civilisation



The Maya Timeline



Who were the Maya?

The ancient Maya people were quite sophisticated! They developed a writing and number system; studied and charted the stars and planets; invented three complex calendars to keep track of time; built impressive temples, palaces, monuments and cities; skilfully farmed the land and established a complex political system.

The ancient Maya were a clever, deeply religious people who valued intelligence and learning. This helps to explain how and why they were able to develop a complex, thriving civilisation which began over 2000 years ago.



Writing

The Maya writing system was used to write several different Maya languages. It was made up of many symbols called glyphs. Logograms are glyphs representing whole words. Syllabograms are glyphs representing units of sound (syllables). The glyphs were carved on stone buildings and monuments and painted on pottery. Maya scribes also wrote books called codices.



Religions and Beliefs

The Maya believed in many gods and goddesses. They thought that the gods/goddesses had a good side and a bad side and that they could help or hurt them. The Maya people would dance, sing and make offerings to the gods/goddesses. Maya priests were believed to be able to communicate directly with the gods/goddesses. As a result, they were very important in society.

