

# Who were the Mayans?

## What we need to know:

- ☞ That the Maya people lived in different city-states and worshipped different Gods with different rituals.
- ☞ That the Maya people developed their own early number system with similarities to our Arabic system.
- ☞ That cacao & maize were extremely important in Maya life and culture (not just as food items).
- ☞ They played the earliest team sport (Pok-a-tok) which represented the struggle of life over death.
- ☞ Primary sources (like artefacts) help us to understand more about life in the past.

## Key Vocabulary:

**Temple** A building for religious worship.

**Stelae** An upright stone or slab serving as a monument.

**Sacrifice** To allow to be taken away for the sake of something or someone else.

**Astronomy** A study of the Universe and everything in it, including planet, stars, galaxies etc.

**Ah Kin Mai** Chief Priest

**Hetzmek** A ceremony

**Quetzal** A tropical bird.

**Drought** A long period with very little rain.

## Did you know?

- ☞ The reason for the collapse of the Maya Classic period is still a mystery to archaeologists!
- ☞ The Maya built some of the biggest pyramids in the world!
- ☞ Half of all of the people living in Guatemala today are Maya people.

## Key Vocabulary:

**Archaeology** Study of history through artefacts, sites and other remains.

**Cacao** Seeds from which cocoa - eventually chocolate- are formed.

**Civilisation** A group of people with their own languages and way of life.

**Codex/codices** Books written in Maya glyphs on bark paper.

**Glyph** A character or symbol used in writing.

**Maize** Sweetcorn.

**Empire** A set of land ruled by a person, government or country.

**Pok-a-tok** A ball game with ritual aspects to it.

**Polytheism** The belief in or worship of more than one god.

**Society** Performed religious ceremonies, studied astronomy, contacted the gods.

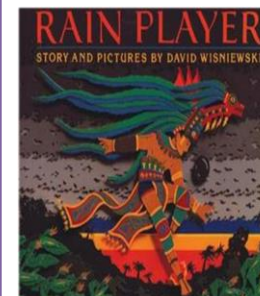
## The ruins of the city-state of Tikal:



## Chichen Itza – one of Ancient Maya’s most famous temples.



## Our class book: Rain Player by David Wisniewski



This beautiful picture book encourages our inference skills when discussing the events (and illustrations) of this narrative. The tale tells of a normal Maya boy who is set a great challenge by the Rain God.

# Who were the Mayans?

## Key Vocabulary:

Cenote	A sacred well
Otzilén	A phrase they would use to say, 'I have need.'
Conch Shell	A large, spiral shell used to invite people to attend a community meeting.
Gourd	A hard-shelled fruit that grows on a vine.

## Map of the Maya Empire in Mesoamerica



## Ancient Maya Timeline

**1100BC**

The first hunter gathers settle along the Pacific Coast and then expanding into the central highlands.

**700BC**

Mayan writing is developed in Mesoamerica

**300BC**

The social structure in Maya adapts to include Nobles and Kings as rulers.

**AD683**

Pakal the Great of Palenque dies and is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions.

**AD1502**

First contact with Europeans made.

**800BC**

Village farming and trade becomes established throughout the Maya Region.

**400BC**

Earliest solar calendars are carved in stone.

**100BC**

The first pyramids are built.

**AD450**

The city-state of Tikal dominates the tropical lowland of the central region.

**AD800**

Sites in the rain forests and tropical lowlands are abandoned whilst northern lowland sites flourish.

1,000BC

500BC

1BC

1AD

500AD

1,000AD

1,500AD