



# Brookfield Primary School Knowledge Organiser



Year 4: How have the achievements of the ancient Maya impact their society and beyond?

History is the study of how people used to live in the past and how things have changed over time.

## Maya settlements in a rainforest

The Ancient Maya faced many challenges settling in the rainforest, including dangerous animals, dense vegetation and shady conditions, which made growing crops difficult. They solved these problems by slashing and burning trees to clear rainforest areas, becoming adaptable hunters and developing crops that could grow successfully in the conditions, such as cacao and maize.



## Maya inventions

The Ancient Maya developed many things and each invention was linked to their beliefs about the world. Some examples include the ball game, which was a form of telling stories about heroes and gods; calendars to know when to plant their crops and celebrate festivals that honoured the stars and the seasons; temples where people went to give gifts to their gods and writing used to write down important things, including stories about gods and goddesses.

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## Maya city states

Ancient Maya cities such as Tikal thrived in the Classic period. The cities had a grand plaza (main street) on which the most important buildings (such as temples, observatory towers, ball courts and palaces) were found. Ordinary people lived in houses on the outskirts of the city and the cities themselves were connected by roads. Historians have learned more about these cities from recent archaeological discoveries in the rainforest (e.g. hieroglyphics were discovered in the buildings).

<b>achievement</b>	A significant accomplishment or contribution that had a lasting impact.
<b>archaeologist</b>	Someone who studies the buildings, graves, tools and other objects of people who lived in the past.
<b>creation</b>	Something being made.
<b>currency</b>	The type of money that a country uses for buying and selling goods and services.
<b>decline</b>	A situation where something becomes less important or successful.
<b>Mesoamerica</b>	The historical region that is now Mexico and Central America.
<b>ritual</b>	A set of actions or ceremonies performed in a fixed way, sometimes for religious purposes.
<b>theory</b>	An idea that is intended to explain facts or events, often based on some evidence.

## General Historical Words

Ancient Archaeology Civilisation Conquest  
 Democracy Discover Enemies Excavate  
 Monarchy Parliament

How did the ancient Maya settle in a rainforest?	What do remains tell us about ancient Mayan cities?	What did the ancient Maya believe?	How did the Maya reflect world beliefs in their inventions?	How important was Cacao to the ancient Maya?	What caused the decline of the ancient Mayan cities?
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