



## Knowledge Organiser—Year 6

How does modern life compare with that of the Ancient Mayans?

### Vocabulary

**Mesoamerica:** the name of the area in which the Mayans lived, now known as southern Mexico and Central America.

**Civilisation:** an advanced society with laws, culture, common language, established food provisions and protection for people.

**Hieroglyphs:** the writing system used by the Mayans featuring symbols and pictures.

**Codex/Codice:** an ancient book used by the Mayans to write in, made from the bark of fig trees.

**Ahau/Ahaw:** The main king or lord in a Mayan society.

**Haab':** the Mayan solar calendar, which had 365 days each year.

**Chichen Itza:** the most important city of the Mayans. It is a famous tourist attraction nowadays.

**Popul Vuh:** the religious book of the Mayans.



### Key facts

The Maya civilisation began thousands of years ago, starting around 2000BCE and lasting until around 1500AD.

The Mayans were a very advanced society at their time—writing, science and art were all part of their lives.

The Mayans built large pyramids with temples at the top dedicated to their gods.

Religion was important to the Mayans and they had many gods. One of the most important ones was Hun Ixim, the maize god, as maize (corn) was one of their main foods.

The Mayans were very successful farmers—they learnt to clear forests so that they could create farmland to grow crops.

The Mayans dressed very elaborately—they made clothing out of cotton, tropical bird feathers and the skins of large animals like jaguars and ocelots. They made jewellery out of bones, shells and jade (a green gemstone).

Even though the Mayans had a 365 day calendar for telling time and days, they had a second religious calendar, which only had 260 days.

Fun fact: beauty was very important in Mayan society—they believed that a strong, large nose and being cross-eyed was very beautiful!