Norwood Green Junior School - History

Topic: Non-European Society - The Maya | **Year 5** | **Summer**

What should I already know?

- South America is a continent
- The climate of South America is different to that of the UK.
- About other civilisations including the Egyptians and Romans.

Where did the Maya exist?

What will I know by the end of this unit?

- I can speculate and make deductions from a range of visual clues.
- I can offer reasons as to why the Maya grew so strong.
- I can make links with other Empires I have studied.
- I can use artists' reconstructions to suggest what life would have been like in a Maya city.
- I can make deductions about objects using my existing historical knowledge.
- I can raise historical questions and to infer beyond the literal.

  I can explain why human sacrifice was practised.

Important Facts

Religion

The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that the gods could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods. Priests were very important in Maya society as it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods. They would perform different rituals during festivals or special ceremonies in order to appeal to the gods.

Mathematics

The Maya developed a complex number and counting system that was advanced for their time. They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero. The Maya people used just three symbols in their number system. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with, such as pebbles, sticks and shells. The Maya used a base 20 number system, so after number 19, multiples of 20 were written above the bottom number.

Food

Maize was a very important crop that formed up to 80% of the Maya people's diets. They believed that the first humans were made from maize dough by the gods. The Maya made a bitter chocolatey drink from cacao beans that was enjoyed by the rich and used for medicines and in ceremonies. The beans were highly valued and even used as a form of money.

Vocabulary

Astronomy	a branch of science that deals with space and the universe.
Observatory	a room or building housing an astronomical telescope.
Ruins	the remains of a building, city, etc. that has been destroyed or that is in disrepair or a state of decay
Maize	another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.
Sacrifice	a slaughtering of an animal or human as an offering to please the gods.
Nomads	a member of a people having no permanent home but moving from place to place usually in search of food or to graze livestock.
Staple	used, needed, or enjoyed constantly by many people.
	a natural pit, or sinkhole sometimes used by the ancient Maya for sacrificial offerings.

Key Knowledge/Diagrams

TIMELINE

1,100 BC
The first 'Mayan' settlements begin to appear in Mesoamerica along the pacific coast.

800BC
Instead of foraging, maize farming begins and trade between villages begins.

700BC
Mayan writing begins to develop through the form of hieroglyphs.

100BC – 450AD
Maya constructs its first pyramids and developing cities, prompting the rapid rise of Tikal in the tropical lowlands.

638AD
Pakal the Great (King of Palenque) dies. His death mask made of jade is created.

800AD – 1,502AD
Mayan civilization begins to decline and vanish. The Mayan ruins are found by a Spanish expedition lead by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba.