

**Knowledge of the world -
Year 5: Ancient Maya**

Key Vocabulary		Diagrams		What will I know by the end of the unit?	
civilisation	A human society with well-developed rules and government, often where technology and the arts are considered important.		Key Dates (c. stands for circa, which means approximately)	Who were the Mayans and where did they live?	
drought	A long period of time with little or no rain.		c. 2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.	The ancient Mayans lived in what is now known as southern Mexico and northern Central America including Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Yucatan Peninsula and El Salvador. Their dependents still live there today, and many of them speak in the Mayan language.
jaguar	A big cat, heavier than a leopard, with yellowish fur and black spots.		c. 300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.	Their dependents still live there today, and many of them speak in the Mayan language.
scribes	People trained to write things down, either as an official record or for someone else unable to write.		AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to a drought . People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.	Who were the Mayans and were they an advanced civilisation?
codices	Ancient handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina. One text is called a codex.		AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.	The ancient Mayans were the longest standing civilisation around for over 3000 years. They developed an advanced number and writing system.
maize	Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.		AD 1500s (16 th century)	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.	What was life like for the ancient Maya?
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.		AD 1839	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood, explore Copán and other cities including Chichén Itzá, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation .	Mayan adults worked as farmers, warriors, hunters, builders, teachers and many other things. Children from noble families could learn astronomy math, science and writing, but poorer children were only taught their parents jobs.
			AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.	What do we know about the rituals carried out by the Ancient Mayan civilisation?
				Mayans engaged in many rituals, one being the game of Pok-a-tok (a ball game) but he main ritual being sacrificial, following their religion and worshipping many gods.	
				What caused the Mayan Civilisation to disappear?	
				Scholars have suggested a number of potential reasons for the downfall of Maya civilisation in the southern lowlands including over-population, environmental degradation, warfare, shifting trade routes and extended drought. What is clear it that the Mayans didn't disappear in the aftermath of the collapse.	

