

Knowledge Organiser 1: Mayan Civilisation

Mayan cities were located in **Central America**. The five modern day countries: **Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras** and **El Salvador**.



Farming

Mayans used **slash and burn** farming to clear areas of rainforest. They also used **terrace** farming to grow crops on steep slopes. They grew maize, beans, squash, sweet potatoes, avocados, tomatoes, papaya and chilli peppers. They fished in rivers and hunted for deer, turtles and **peccary**.

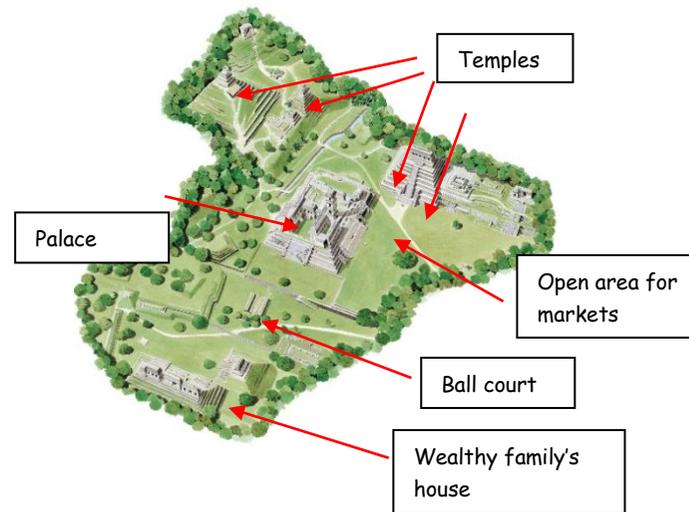
Trade

Mayan cities had large, open spaces for markets. Most trade was **bartering**, though sometimes expensive items were used as a form of money. Mayan goods included: **jade, cacao, jewellery, obsidian, maize, honey, flint** and **textiles** that had been woven, dyed and/or embroidered. Mayans also traded with other civilisations in Central and South America. Merchants either carried goods in baskets on their backs or along rivers in dugout canoes.

Cities and buildings

Most **city states** were independent of one another. Each consisted of a city, with farmland and villages around it. Buildings included **temple-pyramids, ball courts** for Pok-A-Tok, **platforms** for religious rituals, **palace** for ruling

family, **limestone houses** for rich Mayans and **wooden huts** for poor Mayans.



Key Vocabulary - Historical

AD	'Anno Domini'. All the time since the birth of Christ. So AD100 is 100 years after the birth of Christ.
BC	'Before Christ' so 200 BC is 200 years before the birth of Christ.
Ancestors	The people from whom modern people are descended.
Century	100 years.
Civilisation	A human society with its own social organization and culture.
Descendants	A person who is an offspring, however remote, of a certain ancestor, family, group, etc.
Population	The leader of prayer at the Mosque

Key Vocabulary - Topic Specific

City-states	A city and its surrounding villages and farms, all controlled by one ruler.
temple-platforms	A small temple for religious purposes built on a high, limestone platform
ball-courts	Shaped like a capital I, the stone court where Pok-A-Tok was played.
bartering	Trading goods by swapping.
cacao	seeds from a small tropical evergreen tree, from which cocoa, cocoa butter, and chocolate are made.
flint	A rock used to make stone tools and start fires.
jade	A hard, green stone used to make jewellery or to decorate.
limestone	a sedimentary rock that can be dug by hand but quickly hardens.
maize	Also known as corn, a grain crop.
merchant	Someone who buys and sells goods. May travel between city states.
obsidian	A hard, black rock that has a sharp edge where it splits.
peccary	wild pigs hunted by the Mayans
slash and Burn	The cutting and burning of plants in a forest to create a field
terracing	A sloping piece of land that has had flat areas like steps built on it, for example so that people can grow crops there.