



**Background understanding for teachers and parents**

The Ancient Maya were an indigenous people of Mexico and Central America whose civilisation began over 4000 years ago in 2000BC. They were famous for their inventions and buildings including the temple at Chichen Itza and their hieroglyphic writing system and stone carved calendars. The Ancient Maya worshipped their own Gods and were known to follow bloodletting rituals to appease them. There are still many people, to this day, that belong to Mayan civilisations and speak the language.

**NC Area of Study: a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history**

When? (Chronology of Key Events)	
2000BC	Farming villages began to form across the Maya regions.
700BC	Mayan writing is developed in Mesoamerica.
600BC	The settlement at Tikal is formed.
400BC	The first Maya calendars are carved into stone.
600 AD	Chichen Itza is built.
1517 AD	The main era comes to an end with the arrival of Spanish Conquistador Hernandez de Cordoba.

What? (Key Vocabulary)	
<b>Artefact</b>	Any object, made or shaped by human hand that has historical significance.
<b>Civilisation</b>	Organised groups of human beings living together
<b>Codex</b>	Key Mayan book that contained the creation story.
<b>Indigenous</b>	The first people known to have lived in a region.
<b>Hieroglyphics</b>	A writing system that uses symbols instead of letters or words.
<b>Sacrifice</b>	An offering of something special to the Gods to keep them happy.

Impact (on us at St Joseph the Worker)
The Mayans were amongst the first civilisations to collect and farm cacao beans. They used them to develop their own <b>hot chocolate</b> drink (although it tasted much more bitter than today's).
The Mayans were well known for their <b>calendar</b> system which help us to predict <b>solar eclipses</b> and helped with farming.
They were brilliant farmers who developed new methods for <b>growing vegetables</b> which will have helped <b>farmers</b> on the moss in Irlam and <b>provided our food</b> .

Who? (Notable People)	
<b>K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo'</b>	The founder and <b>first king</b> of the dynasty that ruled the Maya city of Copan.
<b>Itzamna</b>	Itzamna was the god of fire who created the Earth. He was ruler of heaven as well as day and night.
<b>Hernandez de Cordoba</b>	The Spanish Conquistador who led the first expedition to Maya lands
<b>John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood</b>	Explorer and Artist who documented the Mayan civilisations.

Key Enquiry Skills
How did they differ from civilisations in West Benin or Baghdad? How advanced was and is Mayan life?

Pre Assessment Score	Post Assessment Score