

# The Mysterious Maya

**Rationale:** To learn about an ancient civilisation: who the ancient Maya people were and where and when they lived, their religious beliefs and rituals, their number and writing systems and their remarkable art and architecture from the Post Classic Era. This experience gives pupils the opportunity to retrieve knowledge from their study of another ancient civilisation – the Egyptians. It also links to the next experience about the solar system.

## Previous Learning:

In Year 3 / 4, pupils learnt about the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians. They will be able to make links between these two cultures noticing common elements such as writing systems, the invention of paper, architecture including pyramids and archaeological and written evidence.

They will develop their understanding of sources of evidence and the importance of being critical when interpreting their significance and accuracy.

In Design Technology, pupils have previously made and evaluated a toy.

In ICT, we will link new learning to the algorithms the pupils have used in Scratch in Year 3 and 4 and the hieroglyphs used by the Ancient Egyptians.

## Hook:

Plan, make and evaluate a worry doll after learning about traditional Guatemalan worry dolls.

Pupils will also participate in a local live archaeological dig via Zoom which will reinforce their understanding of the importance of archaeology.

## Outcome:

Plan, make and evaluate a worry doll.  
A feast, celebrating the significance of this ancient civilisation to our current culture.  
Non-fiction writing about the Mysterious Maya.

## CLA (Core Learning Area)

### History

Learn about the Maya civilisation, understanding who they were and when and where they lived.

Continue to develop a chronological understanding of history;

Note connections and contrasts between other Ancient Civilisations;

Continue to develop the skill of devising historically valid questions;

Construct an informed understanding of the past using the primary evidence from the period (the remains and ruins) and secondary evidence;

Describe the social, cultural and religious values and practices of the Maya and gain an appreciation for their achievements.

Consider the follies of mankind; for example, deforestation, invasion and the destruction of primary evidence.

### Literacy

Non-fiction writing about the Mayan Civilisation.

Comprehension texts related to the Mayans.

### Direct Vocabulary Instruction

We will explore the morphology and etymology of 'Ancient Civilisation' and 'decipher', finding linking ideas and words and practising writing sentences using these words and phrases.

**DT**

Design and make a personal version of the traditional Mayan worry doll. We will learn about the ancient beliefs behind these dolls and produce a double page spread in our art books to show our design and evaluation process. We will consider the suitability of different fabrics and joining methods.

**ICT**

We are Cryptographers (Cracking Codes)

Link the idea of encryptions which store data with secret codes to the Mayan use of pictographs.

This may include:

Learning about semaphore and Morse code

Understanding the need for private information to be encrypted

Encrypting and decrypting messages in simple ciphers

Appreciating the need to use complex passwords and to keep them secure

Having some understanding of how encryption works on the web

Learning Value Focus	
Value: Curiosity The importance of ancient civilisations for today's world and the diversity of cultures from the past. Creativity Using art to express ideas and feelings.	Skill: Research, cracking codes, 3D modelling, artistic decoration, designing and evaluating, interpreting evidence about the past
How Long? 3 weeks	When? Term 1: weeks 2, 3 and 4
Continuous Learning: SPAG, Maths (Arithmetic and Reasoning), Music, PSHE, French, PE.	
Visit: Possibility of a Mayan workshop subject to availability.	Visitor Colin Welch, archaeologist, will visit at a future date to tell us more about the archaeological dig to uncover the World War II V2 rocket. He will bring evidence recovered from the local scene.
Parental Involvement: Provide resources for worry doll Use the Knowledge Organiser to quiz pupils at home Discuss the etymology and morphology of new vocabulary. Carry out further research into the geographical area of Central America including the Amazon Rainforest. This can be linked to assembly topics such as environmental awareness and Neil Layton's book "A Planet Full of Plastic".	