

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF EARLY CIVILISATIONS – ANCIENT MAYA – RED SQUIRELS CLASS

VOCABULARY

civilisation	A human society with rules and a government, often where arts and technology are important.
drought	A long period of time with little or no rain.
jaguar	A big cat, heavier than a leopard, with yellowish fur and black spots.
scribes	People trained to write things down, either as an official record or for someone else unable to write.
codices	Ancient handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina. One text is a codex.
maize	Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.
cacao beans	Cacao trees sprout pods directly from their trunk. When they are rip, the pods can be broken open to reveal the beans, which can then be dried, roasted and ground

Key Dates (c. stands for circa, which means approximately)

c. 2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
c. 300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
AD 900	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to a drought . People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.
AD 1000	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.
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.
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 .
AD 2014	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.



SETTLEMENTS

The Maya lived in massive city-states

There was a main central plaza with places, pyramids, temples



They lived in wooden houses spread out erratically

TIMELINE



LOCATION

The Maya lived in Mesoamerica:
Mesoamerica = middle America
Guatemala, Honduras, Belize,
Mexico (south)



Much of the land is tropical rainforest

CULTURE

Mayan society was made up of mainly:



kings and queens
priests and nobles
merchants and craftspeople



peasants and farmers



INVENTIONS



The Maya invented:

Writing (in the form of glyphs) and
number systems



astronomy and calendars

