

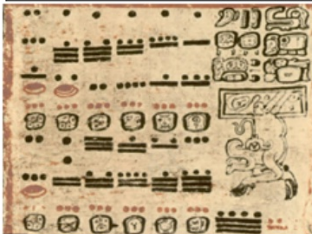
History Knowledge Organiser – Mayans

Famous Figures

Mayan Gods Some were in human form, others in animal but the most supreme god was **Itzamna**, the creator god, lord of day and night and ruler of the heavens. Many looked after the weather or crops such as **Chac**, the rain god and **KinichAhau** the sun god. Priests would perform ceremonies (including sacrifices) to please them and Kings were thought to turn into gods after they died. They believed the world was divided into three parts (Heaven, Earth and the Underworld), linked together by a giant world tree.

Palenque Rulers Archaeologists can name 17 rulers of the citystate of Palenque from 431-800. The most famous was **Pakal I**, also known as **Pakal the Great**, who ruled from 615-683. He began his rule at the age of just 12 and constructed some of Palenque's finest buildings and founded a great dynasty. His funeral mask was carved from stunning Jade.

Best known for his evocative illustrations of the Mayan ruins, British artist, architect and explorer **Frederick Catherwood** (1799-1854) changed the way the Western world viewed and understood lost cities of this ancient Mesoamerican civilisation.



The Mayans used a base-20 number system with symbols that represent the values of 0, 1, 5. In this system, 0 is represented by a shell, 1 is represented by a dot and 2 is represented by a bar. Numbers after 19 are written vertically in multiples of 20.

Key Vocabulary

astronomy	The Mayans were able to predict solar eclipses and used observatories and shadow-casting devices.
calendar	These were circular and charted the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets, with 365 days in a year.
hieroglyphs	They used about 800 symbols to create writing, often on folded pages forming a book (codex).
Kings/Queens	The King/Queen was thought to be given the right to rule by the gods. Each city had a palace for them.
maize	The staple food of the Mayans which was so important that they even had a maize god.
numbers	Using a base 20 system (we use base 10), they used dots and bars to create numbers and had a symbol for zero.
pok-a-tok	A game where large rubber balls were aimed at stone hoops. Losers were sometimes sacrificed to the gods!
pyramids	Built with a temple at the top to give sacrifices to the gods, others were built for the gods themselves.
sacrifice	Humans and animals were used as a blood offering to gods, mostly war prisoners by decapitation or heart removal.
stelae	Stone monuments glorifying Kings and record his deeds, although early examples were of mythical scenes.

Did you know?

The Mayans tied boards to their babies' heads to produce a flat forehead. They also tried to make their babies cross-eyed! Big noses were also considered beautiful.



Set yourself a target! By the end of this topic, what do you want to achieve?

Did you achieve your target? Yes / No

What is history?

Why is it important to study this subject?

What history topics can you remember from previous years?

What did we learn in our last history topic?
Tell your partner three things you remember
about the Victorians.

L.I: To discover facts about the Maya civilisation

L.I: To locate the ancient Maya cities

Help Wanted: Ancient Mayan Citizen

Job Role: Ancient Mayan citizen

Location: Tikal, Guatemala

Salary: 500 cacao beans and 2 sacks of salt per year

So you think you can handle the job of being an Ancient Mayan? Look at the following job description to see if you're up to the task.

Travel: Firstly, you will need to be able to travel to our beautiful location in an area of Mesoamerica, called the Yucatan, which you might now know as Southern Mexico and Central America. The land in this area varies between high mountain ranges, exotic rainforests and stunning coastlines. There are no vehicles, so your only mode of transport will be walking.

Education: You will need to be able to fluently read and write using our Ancient Mayan symbols. The Mayan alphabet system is made up of over 1000 symbols which represent different sounds made in our language. We also use symbols instead of numbers.



Skills: Your main job is likely to be based in farming, so you will need to have skills in growing and harvesting crops. You will also need to be able to turn the dense jungle into suitable farmland, the forests often need to be cut back and burned so the nutrients from the ash can make the soil fertile.

Maya People

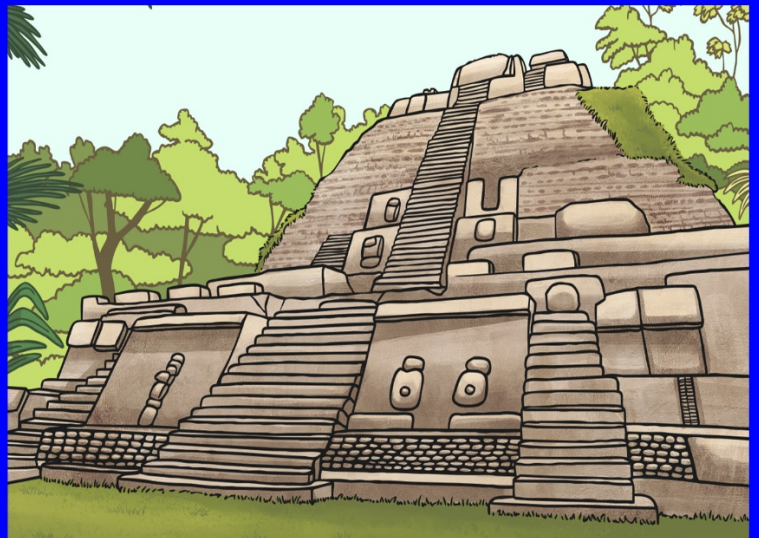
The ancient Maya people were quite a sophisticated bunch! They developed a writing and number system; studied and charted the stars and planets; invented three complex calendars to keep track of time; built impressive temples, palaces, monuments and cities; skilfully farmed the land and established a complex political system.

The ancient Maya were clever, deeply religious people who valued intelligence and learning. This helps to explain how and why they were able to develop a complex, thriving civilisation which began over 2000 years ago.



The Ancient Maya Place in Time

- The Maya civilisation came into being around 2000 BC and cities such as El Mirador became large and powerful from 300 BC onwards.
- By around AD 900, cities in the rainforest were abandoned and people moved up north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatan. This was because there was an extensive drought in the area that lasted a long time and people needed to move out of the rainforest.
- Cities like Chichen Itza were still thriving in AD 1000 and the Maya civilisation was still in existence in AD 1500.
- It was due to the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century that their ancient cities fell to ruin.



Maya Maps

With your partner, see if you can locate Central America on your map or atlas.

What countries can you find in Central America?



Central America

Central America consists of seven countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

Can you find and label these on your sheet?





Mesoamerica

‘Mesoamerica’ refers to an area where a number of societies had been formed before the Spanish arrived in the 16th century. It covers Mexico and the northern parts of Central America. ‘Mesoamerica’ can also refer to the culture of the people who lived there. The Maya lived in the south east of this area.



The Location of the Maya

Today, the area the Maya used to live in spreads over 5 countries: Mexico (southern Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula), Belize, Guatemala, a small area of west Honduras and the very north of El Salvador.



Maya Cities

Use your map or atlas to outline the area of land where the Maya used to live.

Then find the location of the following ancient Maya cities and mark them on your map too. You could use a key or draw arrows and label them.

Xunantunich

Chichen Itza

Uxmal

Palenque

Calakmul

Coba

Copán

Tikal

Tulum



Cities Revealed

Some of these ancient Maya cities were almost 1000km apart yet they shared the same culture and way of life.



Whilst watching the video clip, make notes on your whiteboard. This will help you with the next task.



Welcome to the Maya Area

Your task is to create a 'Welcome to the Maya Area' tourist information page.

The page must include details which answer the following questions:

1. Who were the ancient Maya people?
2. Where in the world did they live?
3. What is special about the ancient Maya people?

You can use maps and pictures on your page too.

You can use books and iPads to support you.



Plenary:

Miss Nixon thinks the Mayans were uncivilised and way behind the times! Do you agree?
Explain why/why not.

L.I: To look at the characteristics of Maya gods and design their own

Maya gods were linked to nature, the most important being the sun, the rain and the corn gods. The Maya believed they needed to please their gods in order to survive. The corn god looked after everything that grew. He was very important because, if a harvest failed, people would starve. He is sometimes shown fighting with the death god, who is illustrated as a skeleton. It was also necessary to please the sun and the rain gods, since crops need sun and rain. The Maya believed the rain gods poured rain down from the shells of a fruit called a gourd and made lightning by throwing stone axes onto the Earth. They were helped by frogs, whose croaking told people it was going to rain. To please their gods, the Maya made gifts of food and gold, and sacrificed insects, animals and humans. Blood was also offered as a gift. A person pulled a rough cord through a hole in his or her tongue and collected the blood in a pot.

1. Why did the Maya people need to please their gods?
2. What did they think would happen if they did not please them?
3. Mr Dawson thinks the sun god would be more important than the rain god. Do you agree with him?
4. Why did people give the gods blood?
5. What title could you give this text?

Tell your partner three things you remember about the Mayans from last lesson.

What can you remember from the last lesson?

Why do you think we are doing this now and
what do you think the topic is leading to?

A solid orange rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student's response.A solid orange rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student's response.

A Central Belief System

Religion was an integral part of the ancient Maya culture, intertwined with all other aspects of society.

The Maya believed in and worshipped a number of different gods. They believed that the gods had a good side and a bad side and that they could help or hurt them. The Maya would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods to demonstrate their respect and loyalty.



Religious Rituals

The Maya people performed many different religious rituals. These rituals were often performed during festivals or special ceremonies and they were a way of appealing to the gods.

Can you match up these rituals to their purpose? Discuss your ideas with your partner.



Blood letting

To represent a battle between the gods



Playing a ball game

To nourish the gods



Priests wearing masks and costumes

To scare away demons

Blood Letting

Stone carvings show rulers and nobles giving blood sacrifices.

The Maya believed that the gods gave their own blood to create humans, so on special occasions the rulers would return the favour by offering their blood to the gods.

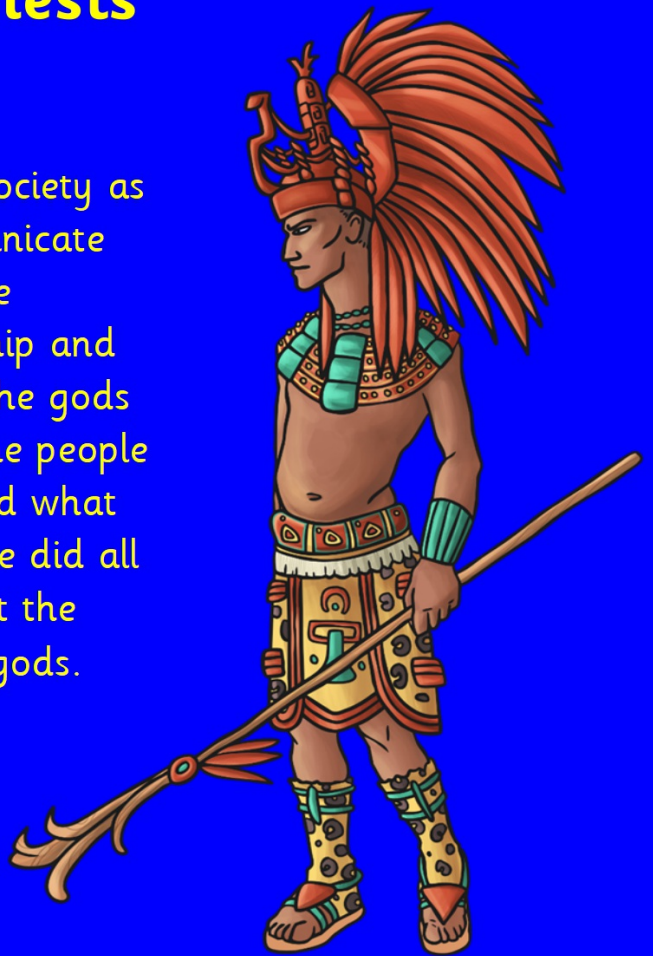
This lintel shows Shield Jaguar, the warrior king of Yaxchilan, standing over his wife, Lady Xook, holding an enormous flaming torch. Lady Xook is pulling a thorn-studded rope through her tongue in an act of blood letting to honour the gods.



Discuss with your partner...

Maya Priests

Priests were very important in Maya society as it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods. The priests were responsible for leading rituals of worship and sacrifice, and telling the people what the gods wanted them to do. They would tell the people when to plant crops, who to marry and what sacrifices they should make. The people did all these things because they believed that the priest was speaking the wishes of the gods.



Festivals

During festivals, the priests would dance, sing, bang drums and make lots of noise on the steps of the temples while wearing brightly coloured clothing and headdresses containing the feathers of exotic birds. This ritual dance was thought to scare away demons and demonstrate the priest's power and authority to the gods.

Discuss with
your partner...



The Maya World

The Maya people believed that the earth, which they called the Middleworld, was large and flat and resting on the back of a creature (like a turtle or crocodile).

On the Middleworld grew a tree whose branches reached up into the heavens (the Uppeworld) and whose roots grew down into Xibalba (the Underworld) which was guarded by gods of death who looked like jaguars.

The Maya believed that after they died, their souls would travel through a series of caves and tunnels to Xibalba (which means 'place of fear') but the rulers and noblemen believed there was a chance of them getting to the Uppeworld.

Discuss with your partner...



Maya Gods

The Maya people worshipped a number of different gods, many of whom had overlapping roles and names. Some had human form, some took the form of an animal and some were a phenomena of nature.

Historians have discovered a lot about the Maya gods from carvings and codices (Maya books).



Read the information about some Maya gods on the following slides. Take notes on the gods' names and meanings, appearances and other facts/features so you can write a Maya Gods Fact File of your own.

Itzamna

One of the creator gods.

Inventor of writing.

Patron of learning.

Portrayed in human form as an old man with no teeth and a large nose.



Ix Chel

Wife of Itzamna.

Goddess of childbirth,
healing, weaving and the
Moon.

Portrayed in human form
wearing a headdress of
snakes entangled in her hair,
and toes and fingers that
looked like jaguar claws.

Capable of causing floods
and destruction.

The mother of many gods.



Maize God

From his head sprouted
an ear of maize.

Was important because
the diet of the Maya was
80% maize and they
relied on the harvest
being successful.

Also important because
humans were created
from maize dough by the
gods.



Chac

Brought the rain
needed to make crops
grow.

Created storms,
thunder and lightning.

Caused wars and
human sacrifice.

Portrayed as a human
with a curling snout
and reptile fangs.



Kimi

Death god.

Portrayed as a human with a skeletal nose, jaw and spine along with a body covered in hideous spots.



Now, in your books, you are going to do a two-page spread on the Mayan gods.

You can use the pictures given or you can choose to draw your own. Just remember, if you are drawing your own, you need to do your writing first.



Kimi	Ix Chel
Itzamna	Maize God
Chac	K'inich Ahau (Sun God)

Name
What does the name mean?
What is the god of?
Appearance
Interesting fact

Now, create your own Mayan god.

Think about the following:

Name

What does the name mean?

What is the god of?

Appearance

Interesting fact

Draw it.

Plenary:

Which God is most important in your opinion
and why? Expand further.

L.I: To investigate and compare the Maya number system.

LI: To locate ancient Mayan cities.

LI: To find out what the Mayan people grew and ate.

Mayan Maths

The Maya were advanced mathematicians. Their numerical system, possibly one of the world most advanced at the time, allowed the Maya to do the elaborate calculations needed to make precise astronomical predictions and the precision of their observations along with their astronomical and calendrical recordkeeping were astonishingly accurate.

It now appears that the Maya had begun to use a system of numeration by position as early as the Late **Preclassic** (ca 400 BC-150 AD). Also called place-value notation, a positional notation is a system for representation of numbers -like our own- in which the value of a numeral symbol depends on its position (e.g. the "ones place", "tens place", "hundreds place").

One of the great intellectual accomplishment of the Maya was the use of the mathematical concept of zero. They were one of the only ancient civilisations to use it (the great Egyptians never used the concept of zero!) and the appearance of the zero in Maya inscriptions is one of the earliest known instance of this concept in the world.

Mayan Beliefs

Maya cosmology is not easy to reconstruct from our current knowledge of their civilization. It seems apparent, however, that the Maya believed Earth to be flat and four-cornered. Each corner was located at a cardinal point and had a colour value: red for east, white for north, black for west, and yellow for south. At the centre was the colour green.

Earth in its flat form was thought by the Maya to be the back of a giant crocodile, resting in a pool of water lilies. The crocodile's counterpart in the sky was a double-headed serpent - a concept probably based on the fact that the Maya word for "sky" is similar to the word for "snake". In hieroglyphics, the body of the skyserpent is marked not only with its own sign of crossed bands, but also those of the Sun, the Moon, Venus and other celestial bodies.

1. What did the Mayans believe about the Earth?
2. What was one of the biggest achievements for the Mayans and why was it a triumph?
3. How did the Mayans write?
4. Find and copy **one word** that is closest in meaning to 'occurrence'.

What can you remember from the last lesson?

Why do you think we are doing this now and what do you think the topic is leading to?

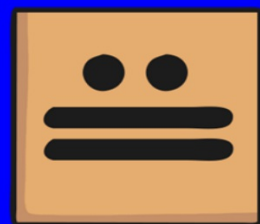
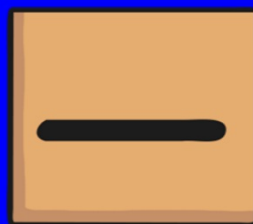
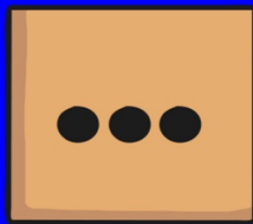
Tell your partner three facts you learned about the Mayan gods last lesson.

The Maya and Numbers

The Maya had a good understanding of numbers and they developed a complex number and counting system which was advanced for their time.

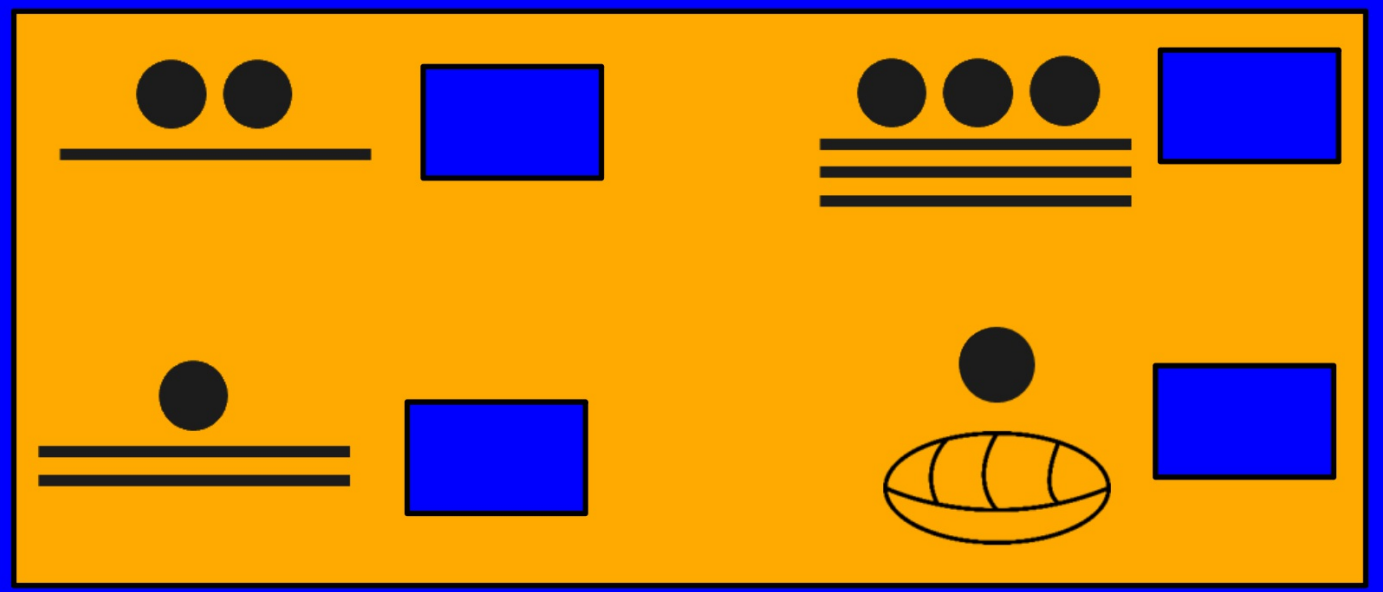
They were one of only two cultures in the world to develop the concept of zero and this allowed them to develop a place value system where a zero could act as a place holder in large numbers. This enabled the Maya people to distinguish between numbers like 23 and 203, where the placement of the zero determines the value of the digit 2 as 200. This is a very important concept which many civilisations did not understand until much later than the Maya.

The Maya people used symbols to represent their numbers. Let's have a look at how it worked.



The Maya people used just three symbols in their number system. These are thought to represent items that the Maya people might have first used to count with such as pebbles, sticks and shells.

With your partner, look at the following Maya numbers. Can you work out what numbers the symbols represent and how the system works?

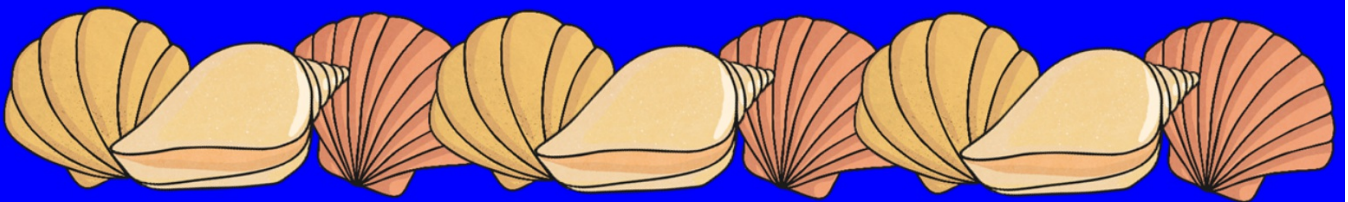
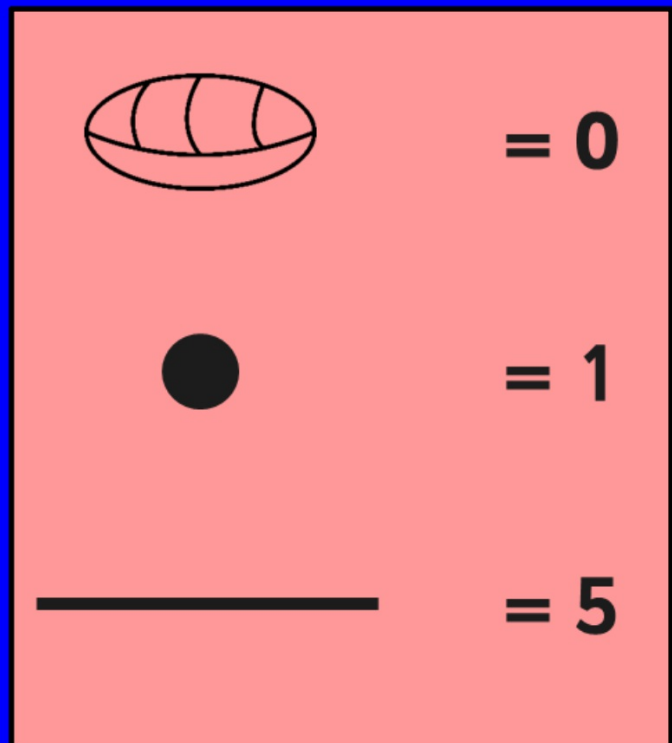


1. Did you figure it out?

2. What have you learnt about the way the numbers are written?

3. What other Maya numbers can you write?

4. How is the Maya number system similar and different to our own?



Maya Numbers

1	●	11	● =====
2	● ●	12	● ● =====
3	● ● ●	13	● ● ● =====
4	● ● ● ●	14	● ● ● ● =====
5	=====	15	=====
6	● =====	16	● =====
7	● ● =====	17	● ● =====
8	● ● ● =====	18	● ● ● =====
9	● ● ● ● =====	19	● ● ● ● =====
10	=====		

Different numbers are made by stacking the lines and lining up the circles on top.

5 circles = a new line.

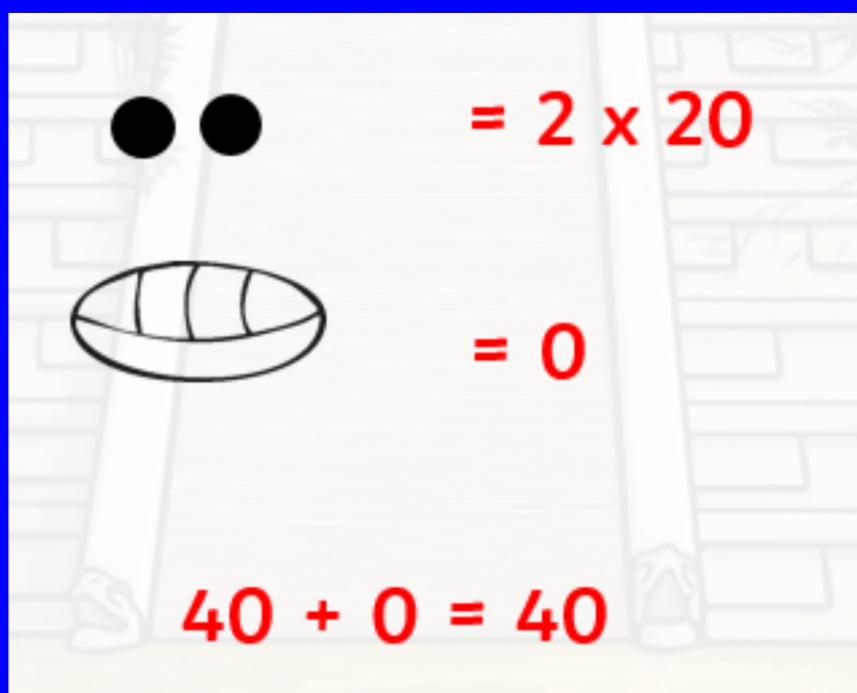
Maya Numbers

20		30	
21		31	
22		32	
23		33	
24		34	
25		35	
26		36	
27		37	
28		38	
29		39	

The Maya people used a base 20 number system, so after number 19 multiples of 20 were written above the bottom number.

This is called a **vigesimal positional** number system.

If you have a multiple of 20, the zero is used as a place holder, like we do today.



●

$$= 1 \times 20$$

● ●

=====

$$= 12$$

$$20 + 12 = 32$$

● ●

$$= 2 \times 20$$

● ● ●

=====

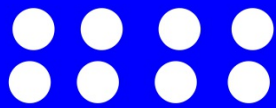
$$= 8$$

$$40 + 8 = 48$$

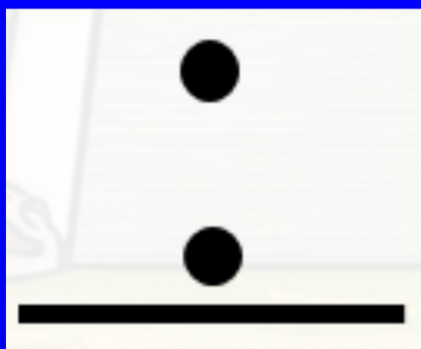
Once we get above 40 it might be easier to see it in a table:



Number of 20s		$4 \times 20 = 80$	93
Number of 1s and 5s		$= 13$	



Number of 20s		$8 \times 20 = 160$	167
Number of 1s and 5s		$= 7$	

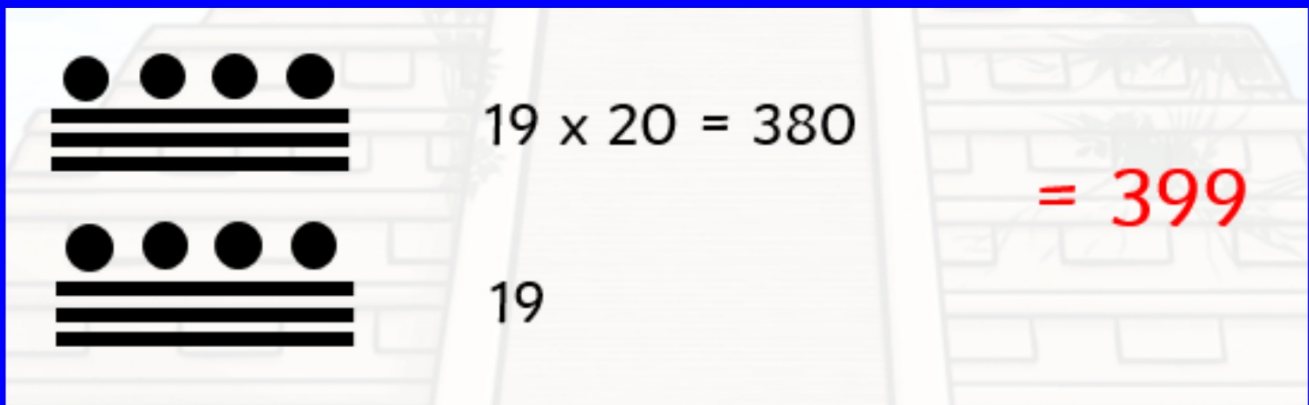




Remember what happens if
you have 5 dots!



Try this one with your partner. Think about the table we've just used.



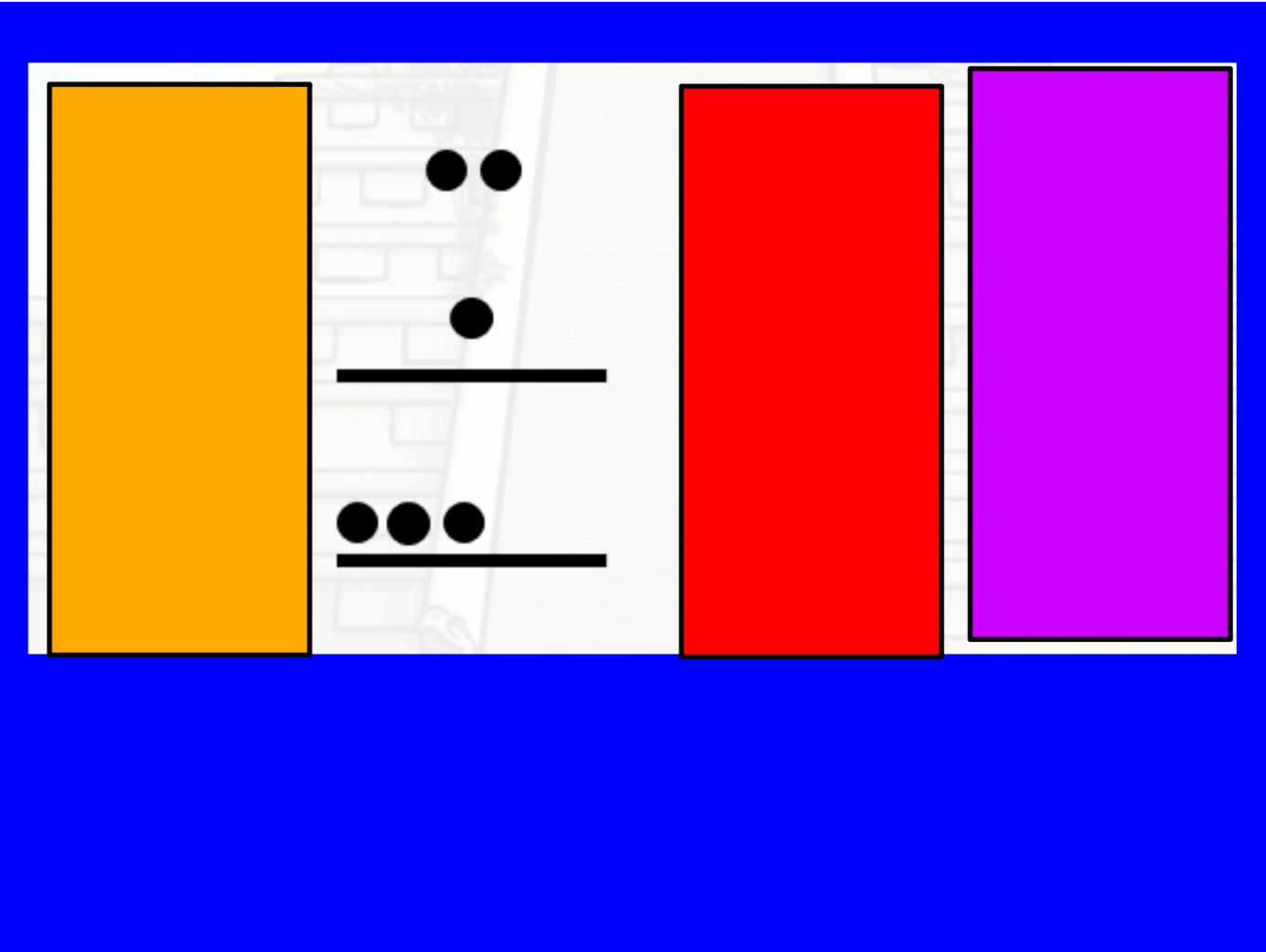
●	●	●	●
●	●	●	●

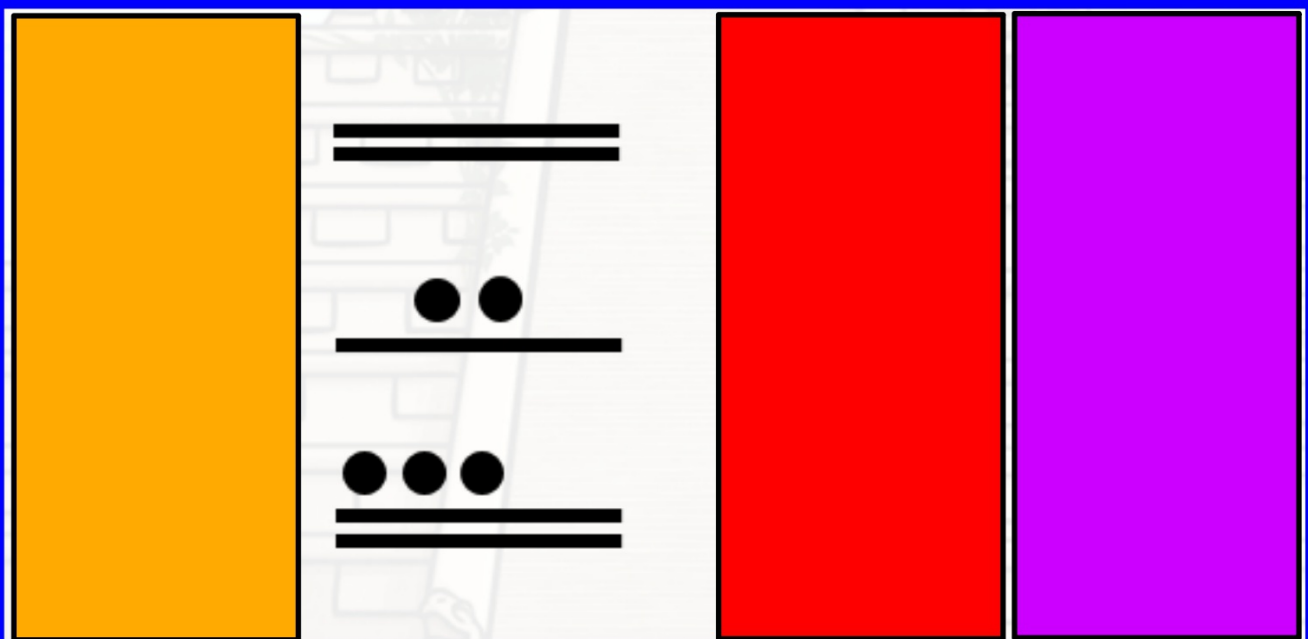
$$19 \times 20 = 380$$
$$19$$
$$= 399$$

Can you draw this number in Mayan?

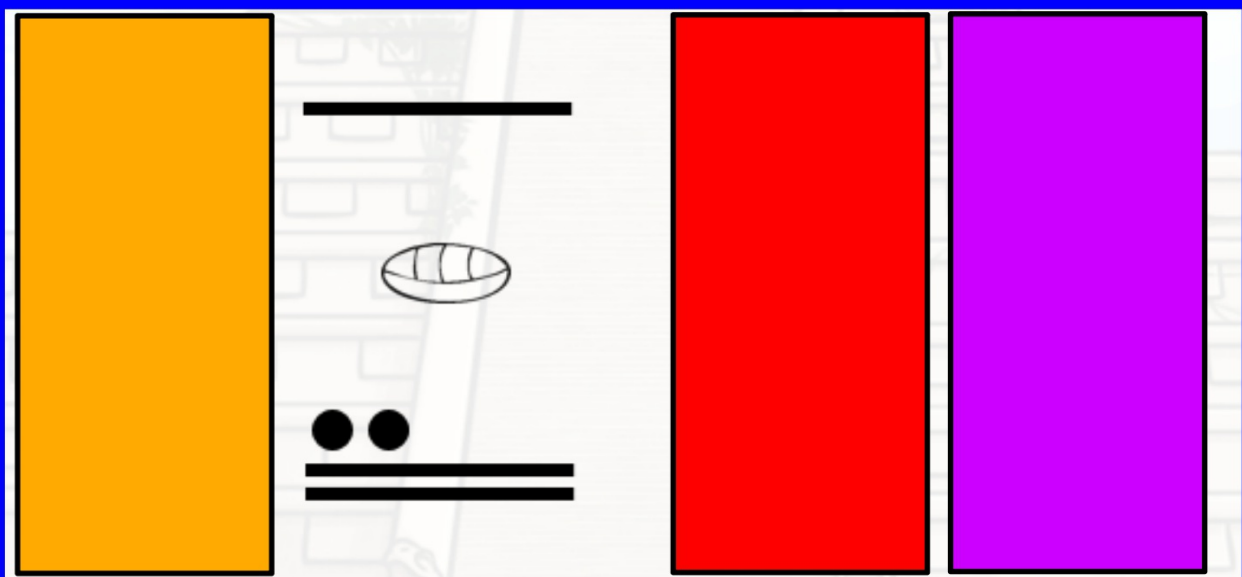
Number of 400s		$2 \times 400 = 800$	937
Number of 20s		$6 \times 20 = 120$	
Number of 1s and 5s		$= 17$	

Number of 20s		$8 \times 20 = 160$	167
Number of 1s and 5s		$= 7$	





Remember what happens if



Remember what happens if

Whilst answering the questions in your book, remember to use this key to help you.

Key	
	0
	1
	5
Number of 400s	
Number of 20s	
Number of 1s and 5s	

Now you know all about Maya numbers are you able to solve this calculation in your book?

Write down the calculation and the answer. Remember to use the Maya symbols!

A horizontal box containing a Maya number calculation. On the left, the number 15 is represented by three black dots above two horizontal bars. This is followed by a plus sign (+). To the right of the plus sign is the number 5, represented by one black dot above a single horizontal bar. This is followed by an equals sign (=). To the right of the equals sign is an empty orange square box for the answer.

A large, empty orange rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to write down the calculation and the answer using Maya symbols.

In your books, write the heading '**Compare this number system to ours**'.

Now, right a small paragraph that tells me the following:

How is the system the same?

How is the system different?

Which do you prefer and why?

Why do you think the Maya chose five and twenty as the bases of their numerical system?



Use the clues on the sheet to help you work out the anagrams for the Maya foods.

Think about how and why these foods could have been eaten.

Use the clues below to help you work out the anagrams for some Maya foods.

- A large animal hunted by the Maya for food.
- A protein rich food often grown alongside corn.
- A small, spicy fruit which could be added to many dishes.
- A sweet, sticky food made by a buzzing insect.
- A wild or domesticated animal which provided meat and eggs.
- The main food in the Maya diet. Used in a range of recipes.
- A small bean which was very precious and was used to make chocolate.
- A root vegetable whose seeds could be made into a nutritious paste.

Anagram	Answer
eynoh	
senab	
hilicl rppeeps	
qshaus	
rnco or ezami	
kutrye	
ocaca	
erde	

Other Maya Foods

Maize or corn was the main food of the Maya people and made up to 80% of their diet. Examples of other foods eaten include:



avocado



cassava



chilli peppers



cacao



honey



jicama



maize



papaya



pumpkins



squash



sweet potato



tomatoes

Fact

They would plant beans next to the maize so that the vines would wrap around the growing maize stalks.

Fact

The Maya people ate out of bowls made of pottery.

Maize was a very important crop, and formed up to 80% of their diet.

To plant the maize, holes would be made in the soil with a sharp bladed, wooden digging stick called a dibble. The soil was very dry and if the May rains didn't come, a whole year's crop would be lost.

For thousands of years, the Maya worshipped the maize god. They believed that the first humans were made by the gods from maize dough!

Because of this, when suffering from severe illness, they would eat nothing but corn.



Maya farmers would plant maize wherever they could. Maize is more commonly known as corn.

Cacao trees sprout cacao pods directly from their trunks. The pods are then opened to reveal the cacao beans inside. The Maya were using these beans to make a chocolatey drink from as far back as the fourth century AD. However, it was not the sweet, chocolately flavour we crave today, but a more bitter tasting version, often laced with chilli or vanilla and other spices.



The drink was enjoyed by the rich and noble members of society, and the cacao beans were highly valued. They were even used as a form of currency later on in Maya history. The Maya word for chocolate is Kakaw.



The Maya used chocolate in religious ceremonies, and they also mixed them with herbs to make medicines.

Chocolate and corn were both very significant and precious foods in ancient Maya, but which do you think was the most important?

Your challenge is to research both foods in more detail and decide which you think is most important.

Using an iPad and the books in the classroom, can you find out at least five reasons why corn was significant and five reasons why chocolate was significant for the ancient Maya people.

Corn	Chocolate

Once you have completed the table, explain which one you think is the most important for the ancient Maya people (remember to say why).

Plenary:
Tell your partner three facts about what you have
learnt about today.

L.I: To consider similarities and differences between ancient religions and different religions today

The Mayan Creation Story

Before the world had a true form, there were two gods. These gods were **Itepu**, the Maker and **Gucumatz**, the Feathered Spirit. While the world around them was dark, the two gods glittered with brilliant blue and green feathers. They came together to create the world.

Whatever they thought came into being. When they thought "Earth", land formed in the darkness. They thought of mountains and valleys, pine trees and sky. All of these things appeared the instant they thought them, and thus the Earth was formed.



Itepu and **Gucumatz** decided that they needed beings there to look after their vast creation, and to praise their names as the creators. So they created deer and birds and panthers and serpents, all the creatures that roam the Earth today.

"Now praise us! Say our names!" commanded the creators.

But the animals could only roar or howl, bleat, bark, twitter or moan. They tried as hard as they could to speak, but they could not. They chirped and mewled at the top of their lungs until the noise was so deafening, that **Itepu** and **Gucumatz** ordered them to stop. Disappointed, the makers agreed that they would have to create better beings, ones who would be able to worship them properly.

The first race of men were made from wet clay. The creators gave them life, and the first men tried to speak; but instead they crumbled apart soon after they were made. The Maker and the Feathered Spirit were determined to create a sturdier race of men.

The second race of men were carved from wood. These were much stronger and were able to walk and talk and multiply. But these men had no minds and their hearts were empty. They had no memories of their creation and when they spoke, their words were just as empty and meaningless. They could not praise their gods.

Itepu and **Gucumatz** sent a great flood down to destroy them. They commanded the animals to attack the survivors and tear them to pieces. The few who managed to escape fled to the woods and became monkeys. The creators left them there as an example to the next race of men.

The Maker and the Feathered Spirit thought for a long time about how they should make the race of men they wanted. There seemed to be no perfect material to build them. Finally, some animals brought the gods a stack of white corn which grew on the far side of the Earth. **Itepu** and **Gucumatz** ground this into a paste and from this formed four individual men.

The new beings seemed perfect. They were sturdy enough to last and their minds were rich with thoughts and feelings. Their first act after their creation was to immediately worship **Itepu** and **Gucumatz** and thank them for their lives. **Itepu** and **Gucumatz** were pleased. "What do you see?" they asked the corn men.

"We can see forever, through rocks and trees and mountains to the edges of the Earth. We can see your entire creation, with all of its animals and plants. We can see and understand everything!"

Itepu and **Gucumatz** looked at each other, "Perhaps we made these beings too well. they should not see as well as WE do!"

The makers removed some of the men's vision. After that they could only see things close to them and they were no longer able to see through or above things that they should not. As such, their understanding of the world was weakened. But the men still sang their creators' praises and settled down to live on the new land. **Itepu** and **Gucumatz** made four women to be their mates.

These eight men and women were the ancestors of all Quiche men and women today. Even today their sight and understanding of the world is not perfect.

What can you remember from the last lesson?

Why do you think we are doing this now and
what do you think the topic is leading to?

A solid orange rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student's response.A solid orange rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student's response.

Using what you already know, iPads and the books in the classroom, you need to write the similarities and differences between the Mayan religion and two religions that are still practised today - for example Christianity or Islam.

- You need to include:
- What their main beliefs are
- Who do they worship
- How their gods are described / pictured
- How they please their god or gods



Plenary:
Tell your partner three facts about what you have
learnt about today.

Fertile Question

Explain why tourists may want to visit Chichen Itza?

