Y5 Thinking like a historian

The Mayan Empire

Key knowledge:

- **The height of Maya civilization came at the time when the Saxons were fighting the Vikings in Britain**
- **Mayan society was more advanced with its large cities, sophisticated stone buildings, such as temples, and complicated systems for writing and counting.**
- **They were very knowledgeable about the stars and even had their own calendars.**
- **By the 1520s arrival of the Spanish forced the Mayans to give up their own gods and become Christian. Luckily the Spanish did not destroy all the wonderful ,recently discovered, architecture and artefacts that we can still see today, as testament to the Mayan's skill.**



Cenote	Sink hole formed by collapse of rock into which Maya threw offerings
Codex-plural is codices	Collection of manuscript pages held together into early form of book
Glyph	Written symbol used to present spoken words
Slash and burn	Way of clearing farmland by slashing away most vegetation then burning the rest
Stelae	Upright stone slabs or pillars with inscriptions or design
Hieroglyph	System of writing used by ancient Mayas made up of symbols that stand for words or syllables
Jade	Green stone used to make wonderful jewels
Obsidian	Black glassy rock formed when volcanic lava cools
Quetzal	Colourful tropical bird very important to the maya
Ritual	Act that is always performed in same way as part of a religious ceremony

Learning Questions

Why do you think we study the Mayan empire in school?

When the area they lived in was mainly jungle how were the Maya able to grow so strong?

What was life like at the height of the Mayan civilization?

How can we possibly know what it was like there 1,000 years ago?

Why did the Mayan's believe in human sacrifice?

How can we solve the riddle of why the Mayan empire ended so quickly?

What else do you know?

