

Rainforests and the Ancient Maya – Knowledge Organiser



Geography Enquiry Question Why are the rainforests important to the countries of Central America?
History Enquiry Question 1 Why did Mayan people fight?
History Enquiry Question 2 How did the Mayan communicate in order to survive?
History Enquiry Question 3 What did the Mayans believe about gods and the afterlife?

Rainforest		A dense evergreen forest, mostly found in tropical areas. The weather is both warm and wet.
Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador		These are the countries in Central America that have a rainforest. They are also the names we now give to the countries where the ancient Mayan once lived.
Equator		The imaginary circle around the earth that is halfway between the North and South Poles.
Layers		There are four main layers contained within rainforests, with the emergent layer at the top, the canopy and understory layers in the middle and the forest floor layer at the bottom.
Resources		These are things that the rainforest produces and provides.
Deforestation		Cutting down the trees of a forest. This drives out the animals and insects that live there.
Climate		This is the weather found in a certain place over a long period of time. Climate changes which plants can grow and which animals can live.
Biome		A type of global region such as rainforest, grassland, desert, savannah, woodland and tundra.

Mayan		An ancient civilisation who lived in the countries we now describe as central America.
Kukulkan		Kukulkan was the ancient Mayan god of wind and rain.
Night Jaguar		Night Jaguar was a powerful shape shifting ancient Mayan god.
Chac		Chac was the ancient Mayan god of Thunder and lightning.
ruin		A ruin is a building that is no longer used and is damaged or decayed in some way.
Temple		Temples were places where the ancient Mayan people made offerings to their gods.
Pok-a Tok		This was a ritual ball game okayed by the ancient Mayan people.
City States		The Mayan people lived in city states. Each of these had their own king. City states often fought each other.
Pyramid Society		This described the roles that different people held in society. The king was always at the top.

