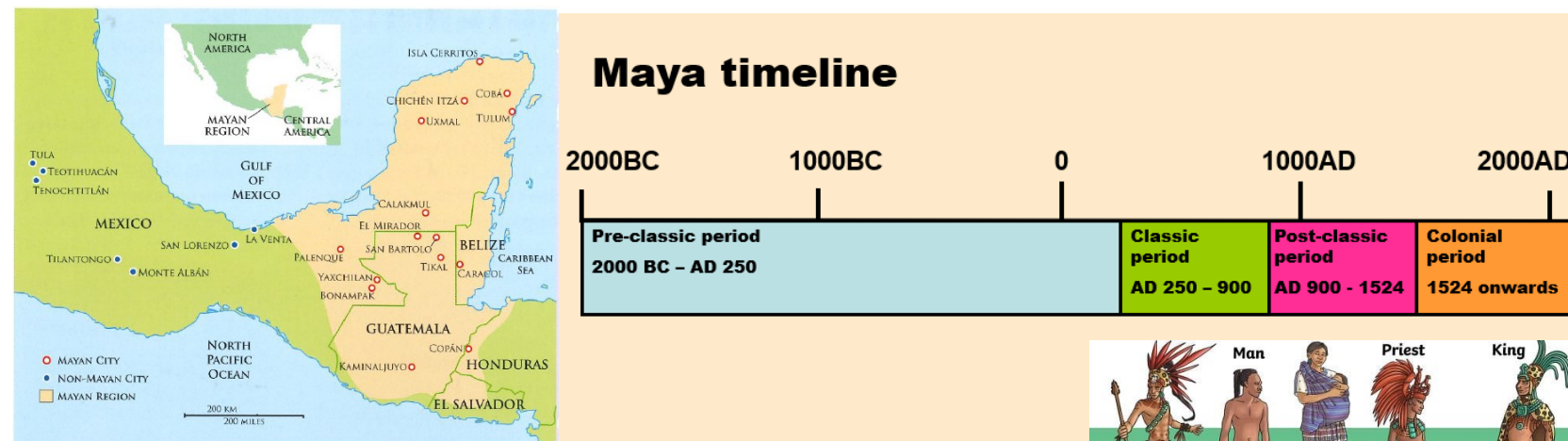




WHO WERE THE ANCIENT MAYA?

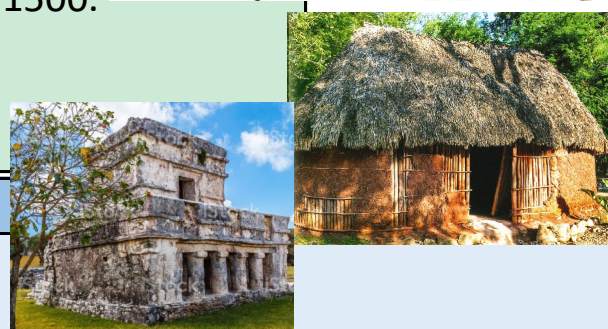


The ancient Maya

- A civilisation that lived between 2000 BCE to around AD 1500.
- Lived in Mesoamerica.
- They were a highly advanced civilisation for their time.

Everyday life

- Society was made up of different levels.
- Housing and clothing varied, depending upon status.
- Farming: the Maya grew numerous crops such as maize, squash, avocados and beans. Maize made up to 80% of their diet. Cacao beans were also a precious crop.
- Those living by the coast would source things such as fish, turtle shells and salt.



Religion

- They worshipped many different gods and would dance, sing and sometimes make offerings of blood to the gods (blood-letting).
- Priests were very important in Maya society: it was believed that they could communicate directly with the gods.

Writing

- Hieroglyphs were carved onto stone buildings and monuments and painted onto pottery.
- Logograms represented a whole word; syllabograms represented a unit of sound.
- Scribes wrote books, called codices.
- Only priests and noblemen would know the whole written language.

What happened to the ancient Maya

- Mystery surrounds their decline. Possibilities include disease, drought and famine, warfare and natural disaster.
- The Maya still exist today.

Vocabulary

Mesoamerica



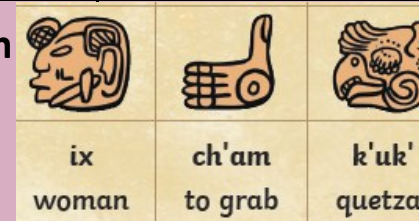
The region of Mexico and Central America inhabited by the ancient Maya, Aztecs and related cultures.

maize



The staple crop of the Maya. Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.

hieroglyph



A picture or symbol that represents a sound, word or phrase.

codex (plural = codices)



An ancient type of book made of bark paper from the fig tree, cloth or animal skin, and folded like a concertina.

drought



A long period with very little rain.

conquistadors



Groups of Spanish conquerors who invaded Mexico and Peru in the 1500s.

Substantive Concepts

civilisation



An organized society with its own culture and way of life, existing in a particular area over a particular period of time.

religion



A particular system of faith and worship.