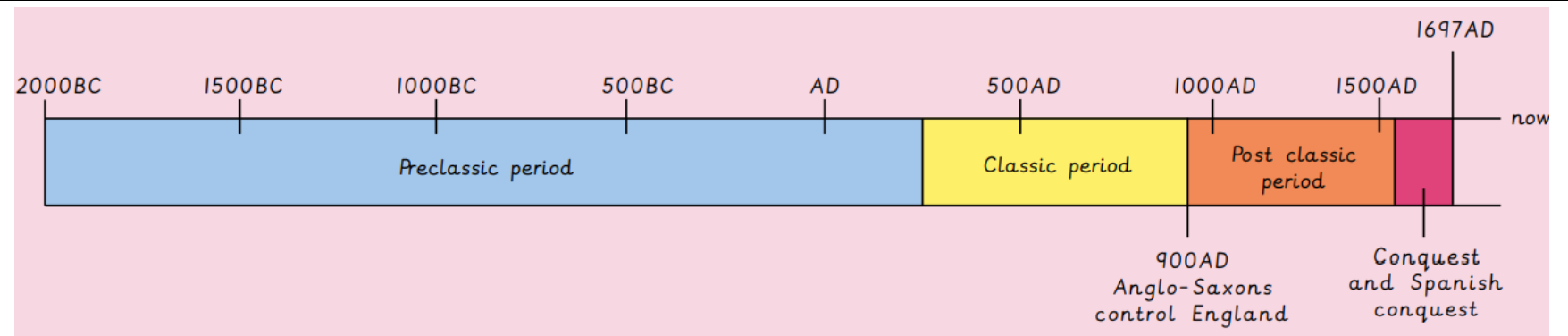


Key Vocabulary

achievement	Significant accomplishment or contribution that had a lasting impact.
ancient	From a very long time ago.
archaeologist	Someone who studies the buildings, graves, tools and other objects of people who lived in the past.
civilisation	A group of people with a common language and way of life.
creation	Something being made.
currency	The type of money that a country uses for buying and selling goods and services.
decline	A situation where something becomes less important or successful.
Mesoamerica	The historical region which is now Mexico and Central America.
ritual	Actions performed in a fixed way sometimes for religious purposes.
theory	An idea to explain facts or events.

Chronology



Mayan Inventions



The ancient Maya developed many things including:

- ball games- a form of telling stories about heroes and gods.
- calendars- to know when to plant their crops and celebrate festivals.
- temples- where people went to give gifts to their gods.
- writing- used to record important things such as stories about gods and goddesses.

Mayan Settlements



Maya cities (Tikal) had a grand plaza (main street) with important buildings eg:

- Temples, observatory towers, ball courts and palaces.

Ordinary people lived in houses nearby. Historians know about cities from recent archaeological discoveries.



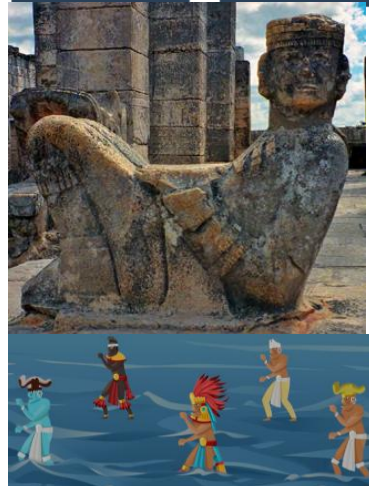
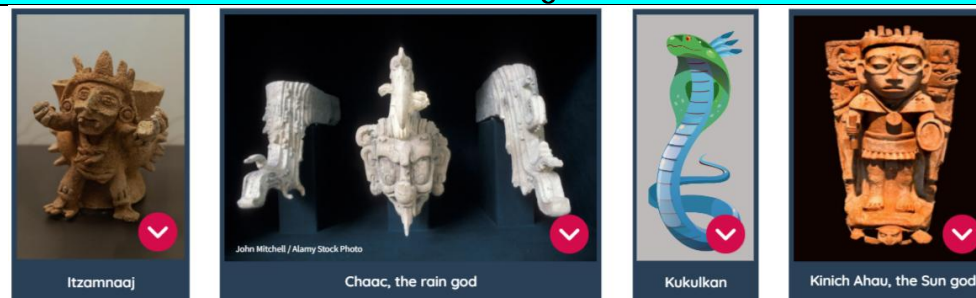
The ancient Maya faced many challenges settling in the rainforest including:

- dangerous animals.
- dense vegetation.
- shady conditions.

This made it difficult for them to grow crops.

To solve these problems, they slashed and burnt trees to clear the rainforest. They also adapted to become good hunters and developed crops that could grow in shady conditions such as cacao and maize.

What did the Mayans believe?



Mayan people:

- were polytheistic and worshipped many gods.
- built temples, created art and performed special ceremonies.
- offered gifts like food, flowers and blood to show

Why did the Mayan empire decline?

By 900AD, the cities within the Southern Lowlands of the Maya civilisation had been abandoned.

- Palenque, Copan, Tikal and Calakmu were all cities that declined.
- They were located in the Southern Lowlands.
- Cities in the highlands of Yucatan (Chichen Itza, Uxmal and Mayapan) continued to thrive.

Historians continue to debate the reasons for the decline of the Mayan empire, the following reasons are thought to be most likely:

- 1 Overpopulation
- 2 Deforestation
- 3 Drought
- 4 Changing trading routes
- 5 Warring Maya city-states
- 6 Problems with water supply

