

MYSTERIES OF THE MAYA

WHAT WILL YEAR 5/6 BE LOOKING AT IN THE FIRST SPRING 2026 TERM?



WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT?

English	Non-Chronological Report: Day of the Dead Day of the Dead Narrative Diary
Maths	Ratio Algebra Fractions, Decimals and Percentages
Science	Living Things and Habitats: Classification
Art	Day of the Dead Masks
Computing	Coding
DT	Mexican Food
French	Les planètes (Planets)
History	The Maya Civilisation
Music	Composition and Singing for Performance
PE	RealPE: Gymnastics Invasion Games
PSHE	Jigsaw: Dreams and Goals
RE	How do people choose between right and wrong?

CAN YOU FIND OUT?

- ARE THERE ANY EXAMPLES OF REVERSIBLE OR IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES IN YOUR HOME?
- WHAT OTHER MESOAMERICAN CIVILISATIONS WERE THERE?
- WHAT FOODS DO WE GET FROM MEXICO?
- WHAT IS THE *DAY OF THE DEAD*?

JOURNEY TO THE RIVER SEA

This term we are going to be reading *Journey to the River Sea* by Eva Ibbotson for our class novel. Here is the synopsis:

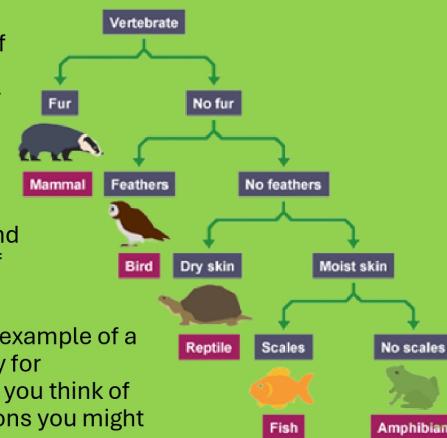
An Amazon adventure set in the wilderness of Brazil, Journey to the River Sea is filled with mystery and memorable characters.

It is 1910 and Maia, tragically orphaned at thirteen, has been sent from England to start a new life with distant relatives in Manaus, hundreds of miles up the Amazon. She is accompanied by an eccentric and mysterious governess who has secret reasons of her own for making the journey. Both soon discover an exotic world bursting with new experiences.



CLASSIFYING LIVING THINGS

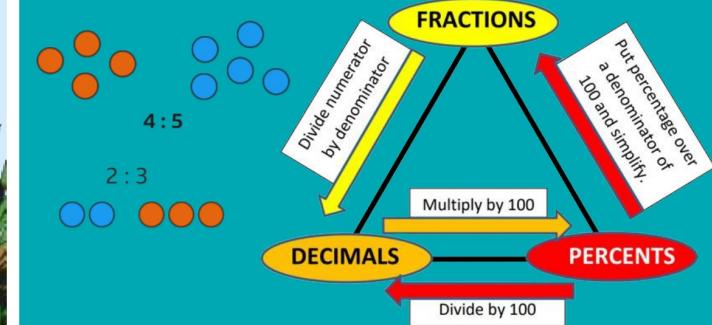
Animals can be grouped in lots of different ways based upon their characteristics. You can use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things.



To the right is an example of a classification key for vertebrates. Can you think of any other questions you might ask?

MATHS

In Maths, we will be learning about ratio and algebra before moving onto the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.



KEEP PRACTISING YOUR TIMES TABLES ON TT ROCKSTARS.
WHO WILL BE TOP OF THE LEADERBOARD?

MICROORGANISMS

Microorganisms are viruses, bacteria, moulds and yeast. Some animals (dust mites) and plants (phytoplankton) are also microorganisms. Microorganisms are very tiny living things that can only be seen using a microscope. They can be found in and on our bodies, in the air, in water and on objects around us.

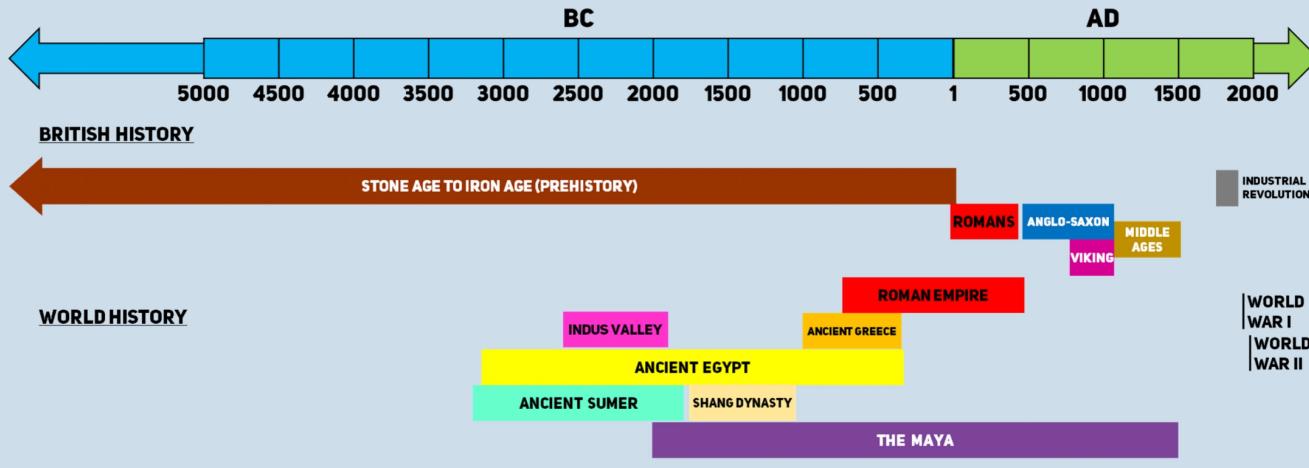
Helpful Microbes				
Bacteria: cheese	Yeast: wine	Bacteria: yoghurt	Yeast: bread dough	Penicillium fungi: antibiotics
Harmful Microbes				
Bacteria: salmonella (causes food poisoning)	Virus: viral diseases e.g. chicken pox and flu	Fungi: athlete's foot	Bacteria: plaque	Fungi: mould

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WHERE DO THE MAYA FIT ON OUR CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE?



WHERE WERE THE MAYA?



USEFUL LINKS

BBC Bitesize: Properties and change of materials
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zrycdm>

National Geographic : Maya Civilisation
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zq6svcw>

Please note, these external links have been checked, but caution is always suggested when using the internet.

MAYA TIMELINE

c. 2000 BC	The Maya civilisation comes into being in Central America.
c. 300 BC	Cities, such as El Mirador, become large and powerful.
900 AD	Cities in the rainforest are abandoned due to a drought. People move north to the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán.
1000 AD	Cities like Chichén Itzá (which has two temple pyramids) are still thriving.
1500s AD (16th century)	The Spanish arrive in South America and set out to destroy the remaining elements of Maya civilisation as part of their conquest.
1839 AD	American explorer and writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and British artist, Frederick Catherwood, explore Copán and other cities including Chichén Itzá, reigniting interest in the Maya civilisation.
2014 AD	The cities of Lagunita and Tamchén are rediscovered.

KEY VOCABULARY

bacteria	A single-celled microorganism.
Cacao beans	Cacao trees sprout pods directly from their trunks. When they are ripe, the pods can be broken open to reveal the beans, which can then be dried, roasted and ground.
civilisation	A human society with well-developed rules and government, often where technology and the arts are considered important.
characteristics	Special qualities or appearances that make an individual or group of things different to others.
classify	To sort things into different groups.
codices	Ancient handwritten texts. Maya codices could be unfolded like a concertina. One text is called a codex.
key	A key is a series of questions about the characteristics of living things. A key is used to identify a living thing or decide which group it belongs to by answering 'yes' or 'no' questions.
maize	Another word for sweetcorn or corn on the cob. It can be made into a dough and baked into tortillas.
microorganism	An organism that can only be seen using a microscope, e.g. bacteria, mould and yeast.
scribes	People trained to write things down, either as an official record or for someone else unable to write.
species	A group of animals that can reproduce to produce fertile offspring.