Exploring the Maya Civilisation with Ellie

Learning objective: To identify key features of the Maya civilisation, including their location, farming techniques, and architectural achievements.

Read each question carefully and use what you have learned about the Maya civilisation to write your answers. Think about the facts Ellie the Elephant has shared about their history!

Ellie the Elephant has been busy researching the ancient Maya. They lived in the tropical rainforests of Central America. They were clever farmers who grew crops like maize and beans. They also built giant stone temples, known as step pyramids, and created a special drink from cacao beans. The Maya were also expert astronomers who studied the stars to help them decide when to plant their crops.

Word bank: Rainforest · Chichen Itza · Maize · Step pyramid · Chocolate · Central America

1. In which part of the world did the Maya people build their cities? Name the type of environment they lived in. (2 marks)

2. What was the most important crop that the Maya grew to help feed their people? (1 mark)

3. The Maya were famous for building large stone structures. What are these tall buildings called? (1 mark)

4. Why did the Maya people study the stars and the night sky? How did this help them in their daily lives? (2 marks)

5. If you were visiting a Maya market, you might find people trading cacao beans. If a bag of cacao beans costs £2 and you buy 3 bags, how much money would you spend in total? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of a Maya step pyramid surrounded by tall rainforest trees and some maize plants.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a Maya astronomer. Write a short poem about why the stars were so important to your people.