Ellie’s Maya Mystery: Sorting the Past

Learning objective: To understand the key features of the ancient Maya civilisation by sorting facts about their daily life, achievements, and society.

Ellie the Elephant has been digging through her historical archives! Below is a list of features related to the Maya civilisation. Sort these items into two categories: 'Daily Life & Farming' or 'Achievements & Society'. Write the item under the correct heading to help Ellie organise her notes.

Word bank: Growing maize, beans, and squash · Building giant stone pyramids · Creating a complex writing system · Living in small farming villages · Studying the stars to create calendars · Trading goods at busy marketplaces · Using a number system based on 20 · Clearing rainforest areas for crops

1. Draw a line or list the items for: Daily Life & Farming. (4 marks)

2. Draw a line or list the items for: Achievements & Society. (4 marks)

3. Why do you think the Maya needed to study the stars to create calendars? (2 marks)

4. The Maya used a number system based on 20. If a Maya trader sold a basket of grain for 10 units, how many baskets would they need to sell to reach 30 units? (2 marks)

5. Ellie remembers that the Maya didn't have shops like we do today. Based on the word bank, where did they get their supplies? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw a picture of a Maya marketplace, including some of the crops they grew like maize or beans.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a Maya scribe. Create your own simple symbol or 'glyph' to represent the word 'sun'. Why did you choose that design?