



The Big Picture

Cacao originates from the Maya and was grown mainly in Guatemala. It was a highly valued commodity. When processed, the bean of the cacao tree became the chocolate used in chocolate drinks. Like us, the Maya loved chocolate, but rather than eat it in bars, they drank it. They flavoured their chocolate drinks with spices such as chilli and sometimes they would use honey. They made sure that their drink was frothy and we see many depictions on vases of these frothy drinks. We also see depictions of how they made the drink frothy – by pouring the liquid into another pot from a height. Cacao beans can be roasted, then easily stored and transported – for that reason cacao became a medium of exchange (currency) in the great market economies of the Postclassic and contact periods – so at this time the Maya were literally drinking money! The tradition of using the cacao beans as currency and for drink-making was also continued by the Aztec people of Central and South America. They called the drink 'chocolatl'. It was their 'food of the gods' and a royal drink served in golden cups. Emperor Montezuma is said to have drunk 50 cups a day! Chocolate wasn't just a favourite drink – it was an important part of the religious and social lives of the Maya and Aztec people. Columbus and Cortés The 16th-century explorer, Christopher Columbus brought back some cocoa beans to Spain in 1504 from the 'New World', as America was then called. The King and Queen of Spain failed to realise the importance of the beans among the gold and precious gemstones Columbus returned with. This was discovered some twenty years later by Hernán Cortés when he arrived in Mexico in 1519. He was offered the bitter drink chocolatl by Montezuma but it was not to his liking. But he noticed that the beans were being used as local currency (four beans bought one rabbit, ten beans bought one slave) and realised the significance of what he had found – he could grow 'money' on trees!



What do we already know? Knowledge retrieval:

Chronology pre 900AD, that people traded in goods before money, consistency of chocolate now (link with Science – solids and liquids).

That the Mayas were based in Central America.

Key vocabulary and understanding for concept connectors

Cacao, Aztecs, Maya, Emperor Montezuma, triangular trade, Tenochtitlan

That chocolate was originally a royal drink and only consumed by royals before it was traded.

That it took a long time to come to Europe because people did not like the bitter taste.

NC objectives – Key Stage 2

Pupils should continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study. They should note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms. They should regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance. They should construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information. They should understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

In planning to ensure the progression described above through teaching the British, local and world history outlined below, teachers should combine overview and depth studies to help pupils understand both the long arc of development and the complexity of specific aspects of the content.

Pupils should be taught about:

- Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age
- The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain
- Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots
- The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor
- A local history study
- A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066
- The achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and a depth study of one of the following: Ancient Sumer; The Indus Valley; Ancient Egypt; The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China
- Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world
- A non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; Mayan civilization c. AD 900; Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900-1300.

Key unit objectives

- Know about the main events, dates and characteristics of the past societies they have studied
- Know about the lives of people in those periods
- Know about the main similarities and differences between the past societies they have studied
- Be able to give some reasons for particular events and changes
- Be able to gather information from simple sources
- Be able to use their knowledge and understanding to answer simple questions about the past and about changes

Key texts:

The Story of Chocolate, by Caryn Jenner

The Story of Chocolate, by Katie Daynes

The Chocolate Tree, by Linda Lowery and Richard Keep

The Maya and Chichen Itza, by Ben Hubbard