



**Year Group:** Year 3-6

**Length:** 28 mins

**Starting Positions:** Lie down in your own space on the floor

### Learning Intention:

*To know about...*

- Different classes of people in Maya society
- Maya achievements ie astronomy, engineering, agriculture, the Maya calendar and number system
- Why the Maya civilisation declined

### Synopsis:

- You pick the best ears of your failing maize crop with your Mum and pet jaguar, Soft Paws.
- You leave home to sell your maize in a distant town, but have to leave Soft Paws behind.
- The market is attacked by Chicahua, a power-hungry noble from Tikal, who takes your Mum.
- You travel through the rainforest to Tikal with Ixcel, a princess in search of her brother, Swift Eagle.
- As the King announces he will offer the gods a sacrifice for rain, Chicahua says he will out-do him.
- You're caught, forced to play in a cruel game, and spot your Mum being taken towards pyramids.
- You escape and try to get to the pyramids with Ixcel, but are chased down a tunnel by Chicahua.
- As you hide in a tomb, Ixcel is caught and locked up with your Mum and Swift Eagle's warriors.
- You climb to the top of the pyramid where the King draws his blood as a sacrifice.
- As Chicahua tries to sacrifice the prisoners, Soft Paws appears by your side.
- The King thinks you're a Jaguar God – you tell him to free the prisoners and lock up Chicahua.

### Characters

- **Mum** – a peasant farmer
- **Ixcel** – a Mayan princess
- **Chicahua** – a Noble of Tikal
- **King** – the King of Tikal
- **Swift Eagle** – Ixcel's brother

## Locations:

- **Farm** – most Maya lived on farms and homesteads
- **River** – rivers were used to transport goods throughout the Maya lands
- **Rainforest** – plants and trees of the rainforest were used for medicinal purposes
- **Tikal** – capital of one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient Maya
- **Pyramid** – pyramids served as burial chambers and locations for religious rituals

## Glossary:

- **Maize** – a cereal plant with large grains in rows on 'ears' or cobs
- **Mesoamerica** – an old name for a region in Central America
- **The Maya** – a people in Mesoamerica who created a civilisation
- **Jaguar** – a large cat with yellow fur and black spots found in the rainforest
- **Pyramid** – a building with a triangular base and sloping sides
- **Sacrifice** – an offering to a god that may involve killing a person or animal
- **Tomb** – a small chamber in which dead people are buried
- **Jade** – a green stone used for jewellery and tools

## Discussion:

### Story & Factual

- What was the flour for your morning porridge made of?
- Why do you think rivers were important to the Maya?
- What goods was the canoe you travelled aboard carrying?
- Ixcel gave you an axe to hack through the rainforest. What was it made of?
- What did the Maya calendar look like?
- The moon was about to eat the sun. What is the scientific word for this event?
- Why did the King offer the gods a sacrifice?
- Ixcel was a noble. What kind of person were you in the story?

### PSHE & Philosophical

- If you had a Maya name, what would you like it to be and why?
- Like Maya society, some countries today have strong class divisions. What do you think of this?
- Why do you think Maya Kings were buried with jewels and household objects?
- Why did you think the Maya had so many gods?
- If you were a Maya noble, how would you treat people 'beneath' you?
- Chichahua wanted a war to steal food from others. For what other reasons do countries go to war?
- The Maya had slaves – in what ways does slavery exist today?

## Resources:

- **Literacy Resources** – 5 creative writing ideas
- **Photo Storyboard** – order the images from the story (or use them for other things – e.g. writing)
- **Quick Quiz** – re-cap key facts
- **Or try some recount, report or creative writing ideas of your own!**