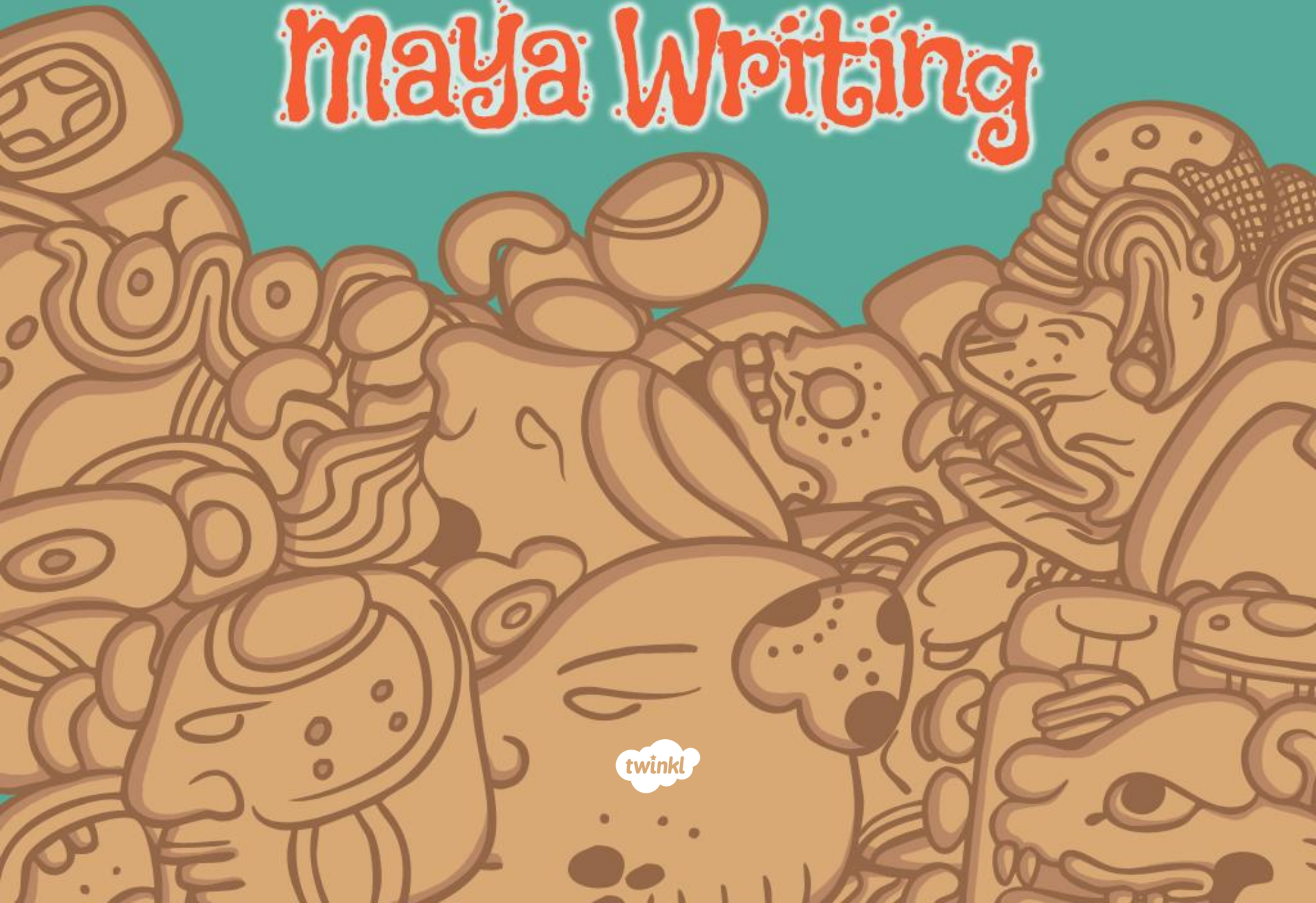




History

The Maya Civilisation

Maya Writing



Aim

- I can explain what the Maya writing system consists of, how words are constructed and what codices are.

Success Criteria

- I can identify key facts about the Maya writing system.
- I can answer questions about the Maya writing system and codices.
- I can construct Maya words using syllabograms and logograms.

Maya Writing



What do you know about Maya writing?

Discuss these questions with your partner. Be ready to feedback your ideas to the rest of the class.

1. What does Maya writing look like?
2. Where have you seen examples of Maya writing in your learning about the Maya so far?
3. What do you think the Maya may have written about? Why?
4. What would you like to find out about Maya writing?



Maya Writing Fact Hunt



Can you work with a partner to find and read all the Maya Writing Fact Cards?
Use the information on the fact cards to help you complete the Maya Writing Fact Hunt Activity Sheet.

Writing Fact Hunt

Use the facts to help you complete the information about Maya writing?

These people knew the whole Mayan language...	Maya books are called...
The different types of glyphs used in Maya writing are...	Maya hieroglyphs have been found...
Maya books were made of...	My own amazing Maya writing fact...

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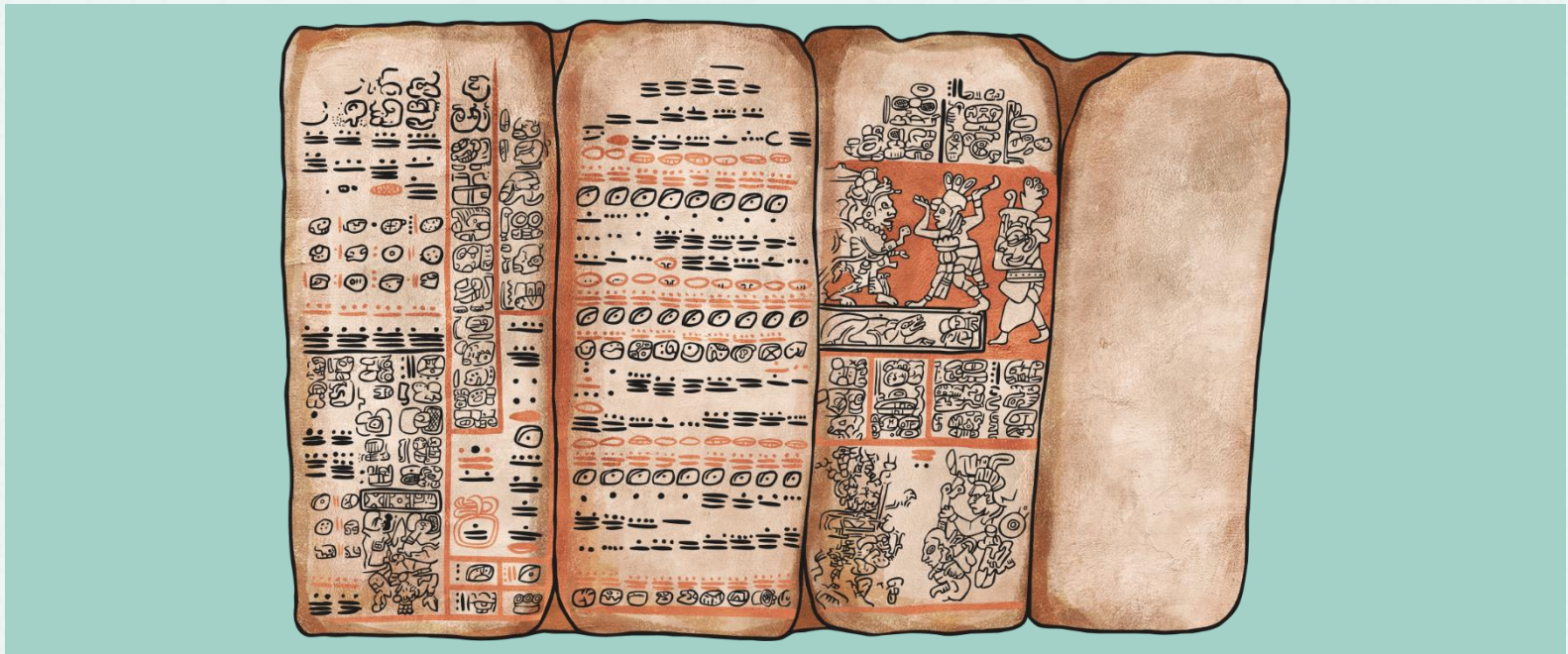
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Codices

The Maya people also wrote books made of the bark from fig trees. One book is called a codex and the plural is codices.

The codices were written by professional scribes and contained information about astronomy, gods, war and history.

Rather than having separate pages, the codices unfolded like a concertina.



The Last Codices

Unfortunately, when the Spanish arrived and set to conquer the Maya, their priests burned as many Maya codices as they could find as they considered them to be the work of the devil. Three genuine Maya codices remain, and they were discovered 'hiding out' in Europe. These codices are named after the places they are kept.

- **The Dresden Codex:** part of the Royal Library collection in Dresden, Germany.
- **The Madrid Codex:** Housed in the Madrid Archaeological Museum, Spain.
- **The Paris Codex:** Housed in the National Library of Paris, France.

A fourth codex was discovered in the 1960s, but historians cannot decide if it is real. It is called the Grolier codex.

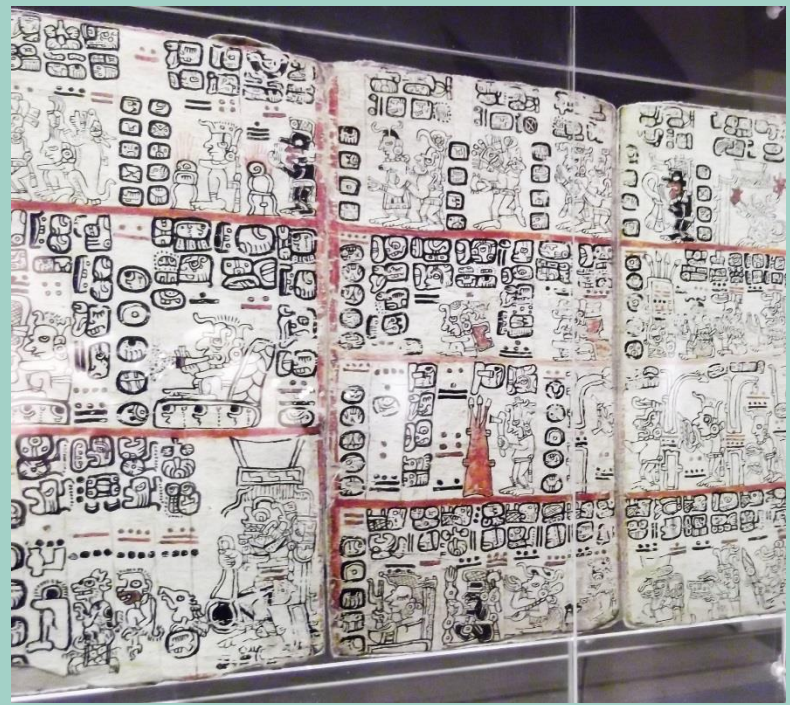


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Maya Hieroglyphs



Maya hieroglyphic writing can be made up of syllabograms (representing sounds) or logograms (representing whole words).

Logograms often resemble the thing that they represent, so it is easy for us to see what they mean, but others are more tricky.

Look closely at these logograms. Can you match them to their meanings?



to grab

fire

to scatter

jaguar



chan
'sky'



winik
'person'



witz
'mountain'



k'in
'sun'



b'alam
'jaguar'



k'ak'
'fire'



bak
'bone'



way
'spirit'



juun
'book'



ja'
'water'



ajaw
'lord'



muyal
'cloud'



ix
'woman'



ch'am
'to grab'



k'uk'
'quetzal'



chan
'snake'



ch'ul
'holy'



chok
'to scatter'



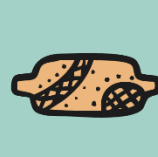
jaab
'year'



yax
'blue/green'



pakal
'shield'



tok
'flint'



naj
'house'



k'al
'twenty'