

Year 4



Knowledge Organiser: History

Inquiry Question: What's in your head?

Key Vocabulary

Ogisa	Edo	Oba	Yoruba	Ohen	Animists
Brass	Elders	Benin City Walls	Cowrie Shell	Igodoidogo	Oracle
Oral Culture	Sacrifice	Yam	Ivory	Reincarnation	Massacre
Innovation	Legacy	Conquer	Consequence Invasion	Monarchy	Social Structure

In Year 3, you learnt:

Prehistory – iron age, Bronze Age, Stone Age and Ancient Egypt
 To describe how your life is different to children in the past
 To use appropriate historical vocabulary to describe key events in a time period
 To show a developing understanding of chronology by beginning to realise that the past can be divided into different periods of time.

The long/short term effects of are...

We know thathappened because

Some ways in which... and ... differ are...

One similarity between...and...is that...

The Benin Culture was successful because...

Key Facts

Traditions - No written histories exist, the people of Benin had a rich oral tradition of histories, myths and legends. Children would not go to school but would learn through storytellers at night by the fire. Encounters with the Edo, descriptions of Benin City and of the Obas are recorded in European and colonial history. Treasures of wood, ivory and metal made their way into Europe through trade or plunder and astounded observers with their high degree of artistry and craftsmanship.	Life in Benin - Historians believe most people were farmers, growing crops like yams and plantains and working hard to clear land. Many people had two or three different jobs and might also have been part of one of the guilds of craftsmen, producing high quality goods for the royal court or for trading with foreign visitors. Alternatively, people became warriors, entertainers or builders, required to make their mud homes and the defensive walls around the kingdom. As well as looking after families, women would have been responsible for making domestic ceramic objects like cooking pots.
Beliefs - head was the most important part of a person, where the intelligence was found. When an important person died, artists would make a head of that person. Obas' heads, and those of gods or goddesses, were made from brass. People believed that the person's spirit could be contacted through the brass head. Artists made their work only for the Oba and he rewarded them with gifts. People believed that, after death, Osanobua would decide their fate - either be reincarnated as another person or would join the spirit world. Spirits would live in villages together, watching the behaviour of their families and punishing bad behaviour. Beliefs were centred around a creator god named Osanobua and his many children. Edo people were animists. Leopards, crocodiles and snakes were among the animals associated with the gods. Warriors wore necklaces of leopards' teeth to protect them in battle.	
Ceremonies were led by an ohen and were intended to make the Oba seem powerful and great, as well as to worship the gods. Ceremonies sometimes involved human sacrifices. Usually criminals or prisoners were sacrificed, although there is evidence of other sacrifices, such as women found at the bottom of wells, dressed in fine clothes.	Masks were made for use in ritual ceremonies and represented a link to the spiritual world. Coral beads have a special significance in traditional Edo customs. The beads are made from coral stones from the seas, which are polished and shaped. Edo chiefs would wear necklaces of coral beads and the Oba would wear necklaces, collars and crowns made from them.

400	900	1180	1283	1400	1451	1700	1897
Yoruba people use iron tools to clear land.	Benin Kingdom created	The dynasty of the 'Oba' began.	Oba Oguole builds the Benin City wall	Oba Ewuare expanded the kingdom	Oba Ewuare sets up trade with Portuguese visitors	A period of decline due to civil wars and end of the slave trade in Europe	Benin City is destroyed by British troops.