

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is a huge stone circle on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. It must have been very important to the people who lived there in ancient times, but no one today knows why they built it.

Some experts think Stonehenge may have been a calendar – a way of keeping track of the days of the year. This is because key parts of the structure line up with the position of the rising sun on midsummer's day. Others think it may have been an important temple, where gods and goddesses were worshipped. Another theory is that Stonehenge may have been built as a memorial to the dead, as there are hundreds of ancient burial sites nearby.

Although we don't know what Stonehenge was used for, we do at least know when it was built. It was built in several stages. The first stage was built about five thousand years ago. It was made up of a circle of wooden posts surrounded by a bank and a ditch.

About 500 years later, the wooden posts were replaced with stones. The builders did not use local stones. Instead, they used stones from South Wales, 380 kilometres away. No one knows how they managed to transport the stones such a long way, as they did not have roads or wheeled vehicles.

After another 200 years, more stones were added to the monument. This time the stones were brought from the Marlborough Downs, 30 kilometres away.

About 700 years later, two rings of pits were dug around the outside of the stone circle. Today, only about half of the stones from the original monument are still standing.



1)

What is Stonehenge?

- 1) ☐ a stone circle
- 2) ☐ a big hedge
- 3) ☐ a group of big round stones
- 4) ☐ a field in the Salisbury Plain

2)

Why do you think Stonehenge must have been very important to the people who lived on Salisbury Plain in ancient times? Tick **two**.

- 1) ☐ It is made of stone.
- 2) ☐ It is huge.
- 3) ☐ It must have taken a lot of effort to build.
- 4) ☐ No one knows why it was built.
- 5) ☐ It was built in several stages.

3.

"This is because key parts of the structure line up with the position of the rising sun on midsummer's day."

What does the word "key" mean in this sentence? Choose the best answer.

- 1) ☐ large
- 2) ☐ many
- 3) ☐ important
- 4) ☐ some

4.

Why do some people think Stonehenge may have been built as a memorial to the dead?

- 1) ☐ It looks old.
- 2) ☐ The stones look like headstones.
- 3) ☐ There are lots of burial sites nearby.
- 4) ☐ There were bones found underneath it.

5.

What is the purpose of the first sentence of paragraph 3? Choose the best answer.

- 1) ☐ To explain that we don't know what Stonehenge was used for.
- 2) ☐ To link the previous paragraphs to the rest of the text.
- 3) ☐ To explain when the first stage of building took place.
- 4) ☐ To explain that Stonehenge was built in several stages.

6.

Why do you think the original wooden posts were replaced by stones after 500 years?

- 1) ☐ They didn't look very nice.
- 2) ☐ They were too tall.
- 3) ☐ They should have been stones.
- 4) ☐ They would have rotted.

7.

"No one knows how they managed to transport the stones such a long way, as they did not have roads or wheeled vehicles."

In this sentence, you could keep the same meaning by replacing the word 'transport' with which two words?

- 1) ☐ move
- 2) ☐ car
- 3) ☐ vehicle
- 4) ☐ carry

8.

Why is it surprising that the huge stones came from South Wales, 380 kilometres away?

- 1) ☐ It was a long way to bring them without roads or wheeled vehicles.
- 2) ☐ It was much further than they thought they had come from.
- 3) ☐ They thought that they came from somewhere nearby.
- 4) ☐ It was not as far as they first thought.

9.

Think about how Stonehenge looked after the first stage of building and how it looked after the final stage of building.

Which two are correct?

- 1) ☐ After the first stage of building, the circle was made of stone posts and after the final stage it was made of wood.
- 2) ☐ After the final stage of building, there were two rings of pits that were not there after the first stage.
- 3) ☐ After the first stage of building, the circle was surrounded by a bank and a ditch. These are not mentioned as being there after the final stage.

10.

Choose the best summary of the text.

- 1) ☐ Stonehenge is an ancient stone circle. There are several theories about why it was built, but no one knows for sure. It was built in several stages, beginning around five thousand years ago.
- 2) ☐ Stonehenge is an ancient stone circle. Some experts think it may have been a calendar. Others think it may have been a temple or a memorial to the dead. No one knows for sure.
- 3) ☐ Stonehenge is an ancient stone circle. It was built in stages. The first stage was built about five thousand years ago. There were three more stages, each several hundred years apart.