

Stonehenge

monument

A monument is a structure that has become historically important.

arcs

Arcs are curved lines that have the shape of part of a circle.

circular

If something is circular, it has the shape of a circle.

aligns

Aligns means lines up with.

Ruins of a huge stone **monument** stand on Salisbury Plain in southern England. Some of the stones are about 18 feet tall and weigh over 20 tons. Many were likely brought to the **site** from over 200 miles away. The stones form broken rings in an area surrounded by a large **circular ditch**. Known as Stonehenge, this monument has existed for thousands of years—since long before machines could have helped create it. Who built it—and how and why?

Over the years, many people have tried to explain Stonehenge. Some people wondered if it was the work of the **Romans**. Others thought the Druids, a group of ancient priests, built it. Some even imagined that the **legendary magician** Merlin had placed the stones. Scientists have studied Stonehenge. Many **theorized** that several groups of people **contributed** to the structure at different times, starting about 5,000 years ago. People have made drawings of how Stonehenge may have looked at different **stages** in history. At one time, many more stones stood at the site. Together with the stones still there, they likely formed completed **rings** around two stone **arcs**.

Moving the large stones from their natural homes into their places at Stonehenge would have been difficult. Scientists have **pondered** how the builders were able to do so without modern tools. The builders may have rolled the huge stones over a series of logs. They may have used large sleds or rafts, and perhaps they used animals. To test these **possibilities**, people have tried to move similar blocks of stone in several different ways.

Chances are that Stonehenge was an important place for the people who worked on and used it. But what did they use it for? Some people have guessed that it was a place where the injured or ill went for healing. Others have said it was a **shrine** to the dead. The entrance to Stonehenge **aligns** with the path of the sun on the longest and shortest days of the year. It's possible that the site served as a type of calendar, helping people to keep track of the seasons. Imagine trying to hang that calendar on your wall!



words read _____

– errors _____ = _____
cold score

words read _____

– errors _____ = _____ goal _____
hot score expression date passed

Stonehenge

Identifying the main idea

1. What is the main idea of this story?
 - a. People may have used sleds, rafts, or animals to build Stonehenge.
 - b. Many unanswered questions remain about the huge ruins of Stonehenge.
 - c. Stonehenge is made of stones that weigh over 20 tons.

Focusing on a detail

2. What may have been used to move the huge stones?
 - a. ditches
 - b. logs
 - c. machines

Getting meaning from the context

3. What does **theorized** mean in this story?
 - a. heard someone say
 - b. gave an explanation
 - c. did not believe

Making connections within the text

4. Why was it probably difficult to build Stonehenge?
 - a. The site changed at different stages in history.
 - b. The entrance aligns with the path of the sun.
 - c. The huge stones came from 200 miles away.

Writing a response

5. Explain why it probably took a long time to build Stonehenge.

Summarizing information

9. Write a summary statement for the following facts: We do not know who built Stonehenge. We do not know how Stonehenge was built. We do not know why Stonehenge was built.

Developing vocabulary

6. A synonym is a word that has the same meaning as another word. Match each word with its synonym.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. stages | a. ___ circles |
| 2. ditch | b. ___ thought |
| 3. pondered | c. ___ famous |
| 4. rings | d. ___ periods |
| 5. legendary | e. ___ hole |

Understanding the information

7. Fill in each blank with a bold-faced word or phrase from the story.

Some people have thought Stonehenge was built by a _____ magician. Scientists believe it was built over time at different _____ in history. They think that different groups of people _____ to the building of Stonehenge. Nobody is sure what Stonehenge was used for, but there are several _____. It may have been a calendar, because its entrance _____ with the sun's path.

Processing information

8. Why might different groups of people have kept contributing to the building of Stonehenge?

Enrichment Activity

Easter Island has hundreds of enormous stone statues. Read about the statues on Easter Island, and explain how they are like Stonehenge.