

Name _____

Date _____

Timelines & Chronology

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Timelines are tools that help historians represent and understand the past. On a timeline, you can see major events, when they happened and how they relate to one another. Timelines are visual aids. They list major events in chronological order. They help us see cause and effect, and they can show how groups and events overlap in time, too. For example, a timeline of ancient Mexico might show the dates when different civilizations flourished. You might see on that timeline that the Olmec and Zapotecs were in different parts of the country during the same period of time.

Which of these questions could you most likely use a timeline of ancient Mexico to answer?

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| A. What colors are on the Mexican flag? | B. What languages are spoken in Mexico? |
| C. When did the Olmec civilization flourish? | D. What did the ancient Zapotecs typically eat? |

2. As you study history, you'll see different abbreviations next to dates on timelines. That's because there are two different systems. BC and AD are one system. In the BC and AD system, dates are marked with one of those abbreviations. BC and AD use the date Jesus Christ was thought to be born. BC means before Christ. The year 25 BC, for example, is 25 years before the date Jesus Christ was thought to be born. What do you think AD means? Be careful! AD does not mean after death. If it did, we'd have no way to mark the years during Jesus's life! Instead, AD stands for a Latin phrase. "Anno domini" means "the year of the lord." It's another way of saying after the date Jesus Christ was thought to be born. Since a Christian monk came up with this system, Jesus is referred to as "the lord." The abbreviation AD is put before the date like this: AD 2010. Since all time moving forward is going to be AD, people often leave the abbreviation off.

Using the BC and AD system, 35 years after Jesus Christ's birth was the year

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| A. AD 35. | B. 35 AC. |
| C. BC 35. | D. 35 ADBC. |

3. You'll still see BC and AD used on some timelines. The AD uses Latin to refer to Jesus as the lord. There's another system that doesn't have this reference and is used more widely: BCE and CE. These abbreviations still mark time according to the year Jesus was thought to be born. But they do not refer directly to Jesus or call him lord. The "CE" in both stands for "Common Era." BCE is before the Common Era and CE is since the Common Era. The "Common Era" is the era of Jesus Christ. BC dates are the same as BCE dates. AD dates are the same as CE dates. CE comes after the year. So if the year is 2018, you could say it's AD 2018 or 2018 CE.

One last thing to keep track of, there is no year 0. The year before Jesus Christ was thought to be born was the year 1 BCE (or 1 BC). The year he was born was 1 CE (or AD 1).

Which of these dates is the most recent?

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| A. 50 CE | B. 2000 CE |
| C. 500 BCE | D. 2000 BCE |
4. Historians have different ways to divide time. Some divisions have a set number of years. A decade is 10 years, a century is 100 and a millennium is 1000. It's now the first century of the third millennium. No, we aren't writing this from the future! Think about it. The years 1-1000 were the first millennium. 1001-2000 were the second. After 2000, the third millennium began. There was no zero millennium or zero century either. That's why the 1500s are the 16th century.

Which of these dates is during the 19th century?

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| A. 2001 | B. 1999 |
| C. 1902 | D. 1815 |
5. Historians also use terms like era and age. These are divisions of time that have no set number of years. Instead, they are defined by patterns or major events. The Bronze Age refers to a trend in the use of new materials. The time before the Bronze Age is called the Stone Age. The time after it is called the Iron Age. All three time periods are named for the material that were developed for tools and other objects.

Based on the passage, which of these is most likely true?

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| A. Ages are longer than eras. | B. All eras have at least 1050 years. |
| C. Bronze tools were popular in the Stone Age. | D. Bronze tools were in use before iron tools were used. |

6. On a horizontal timeline, dates farther to the left are farther in the past. That's why 25 BCE is more recent than 55 BCE. If you're calculating the time between events and both share the same abbreviation, you can just subtract them. There are 30 years between 55 BCE and 25 BCE ($55 - 25 = 30$). There are 3 years between 2015 CE and 2018 CE ($2018 - 2015 = 3$). If the two dates do not have the same abbreviation, it's a little more complicated.

How many years passed between 2018 CE and 25 BCE? Well, 2018 years passed since the year 1 BCE. Then another 24 years passed to get to 25 BCE. $2018 + 24 = 2042$ years. Remember there is no year 0, so you can't just add the two dates.

How many years passed between 2 BCE and 206 CE?

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| A. 203 years | B. 204 years |
| C. 207 years | D. 208 years |