History

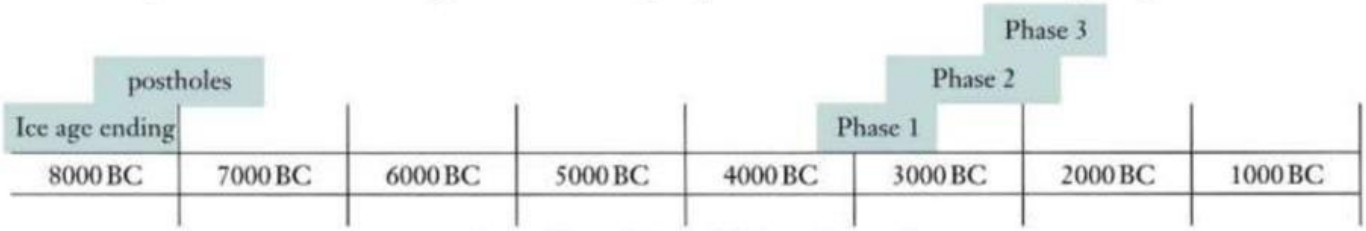
2.1 **Read the text and then answer the questions below.**



Vocabulary note

BC is used in the Christian calendar to refer to the time before the birth of Jesus Christ. *AD* is used to refer to the time after Christ was born. *Circa* is used to mean *about* or *approximately* and is sometimes written simply *c.* NB We do not use an apostrophe to talk about decades: *the 1960s* NOT ~~*the 1960's*~~.

Stonehenge was built over a long period. If we consider only the ancient stones themselves, the work spanned seventy generations – some 1,600 years. However, the first construction at this site began in prehistoric times. True, these first artefacts were just wooden poles which have long gone, but these were raised by men in times so ancient that Britain was still recovering from the Ice Age. The timeline below shows this history, with a frenzy of activity from just before 3000 BC through to 1600 BC being responsible for most of what we now gaze upon in awe.



Timeline of the building of Stonehenge

If we consider the structure chronologically, we can see that construction took place in several phases over more than a thousand years. Exact dates are not possible, since dates are inferred from minute changes in physical measurements, such as the radiocarbon dating method. Nevertheless, archaeologists have sketched out the following outline of events. First, the people of the Mesolithic period erected pine posts, known as the postholes, near Stonehenge. In the 1960s a car park was built over these. During the next stage, Phase 1 (c. 3100 to 2700 BC), a ditch was carved into the chalk less than 1 km from Stonehenge. This would have appeared brilliant white in the green of what had now become pastureland as the hunter-gatherers that erected the postholes gave way to farmers. Also during this time the 'henge' (the earthworks; ditch and bank) was constructed. Many visitors to Stonehenge fail to notice the 'henge' since the ditch and bank have been greatly eroded over the passing millennia. In Phase 2 of the construction (c. 2700 to c. 2500 BC), a large number of wooden posts were placed on the site. These may have served as markers for astronomical measurements. We do not know if there are more of them as excavation did not cover a large area. This was followed by Phase 3 (c. 2600 to 2500 BC). Stones began to arrive in this era and the circular shape and pattern of these enormous stones, which predate all other known structures, is still standing today. According to historians, there was no written mention of Stonehenge until 1100 AD.

1 Approximately when was the Mesolithic period? .....

2 What method was used to establish the dates of construction? .....

3 When did the earliest structures become permanently hidden from view? .....

4 What type of people lived at Stonehenge during the Mesolithic period? .....

5 Why do many visitors not see the 'henge'? .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS