Imagine walking along the plains of southwestern England. Suddenly, you come upon a group of rocks sticking up from the ground. The giant rocks are set up in a circular pattern. Some rocks appear to be lying on top of rocks set up like posts. You wonder how the rocks were placed that way.

**Ancient Monument**

Such a monument really exists. The ancient monument is called Stonehenge. Stonehenge means "hanging stones." The monument consists of a group of gigantic stones. Archeologists believe the stones date back almost 5,000 years ago. The rough-cut stones are set in a circular pattern. Some of the stones are missing, but archeologists figured out what the monument looked like when it was built.

**Gigantic Stones**

Archeologists think that ancient people built the monument starting about 2800 B.C. Hundreds of men hauled gigantic stones to the site. Experts believe men pulled these enormous stones with ropes to move them. Some of the heavy stones weighed about 50 tons (45 metric tonnes). Experts think they were moved in the winter. The stones could be slid across ice and snow. The stones were brought to the site and propped up to make pillars.

**It's a Mystery!**

People visiting Stonehenge wonder why the stones were set up this way. There are many ideas, but no one knows for sure. Some people think it was a burial ground. Others think Stonehenge was a religious site. Still others think Stonehenge told the passing of the seasons.

The reason why Stonehenge was built remains a mystery. A million tourists visit this place each year to try to uncover the mystery of Stonehenge.
The Mystery of Stonehenge

Fill in the bubble to answer each question or complete each sentence.

1. Stonehenge is ________.
   A an ancient stone monument
   B an ancient rock
   C a circular stone
   D an archeologist

2. Stonehenge is located in which country?
   A United States
   B England
   C France
   D Ireland

3. Most of Stonehenge was probably built in the ________.
   A spring
   B summer
   C fall
   D winter

4. Archeologists think Stonehenge was built ________.
   A a few years ago
   B hundreds of years ago
   C thousands of years ago
   D millions of years ago

5. Stonehenge was probably not originally built for ________.
   A tourists
   B religious reasons
   C a burial ground
   D to tell the seasons

**As you answer the questions, UNDERLINE where you locate your answers from the passage. CIRCLE any unfamiliar words.**
England’s Famous Monument

In southwestern England is a series of unusual rock formations. The rocks are called Stonehenge, which means “hanging stones.” Here are sets of stones set up in a trilithon pattern. A trilithon is made of two stone pillars with a slab of rock laid across the top.

**Hauling the Gigantic Stones**

The largest rocks used to create Stonehenge were not from the area. The stones, which weighed up to 50 tons (45 metric tonnes) each, were dragged to the site from about 19 miles (30 km) away. People believe the rocks were hauled there in winter. The ground in winter in this area is usually full of ice and snow, making it easier to move the rocks.

**Building the Monument**

It is believed Stonehenge was constructed in three different stages. The first stage took place almost 5,000 years ago. A large circular earth wall was dug. The earth wall may have been used as a burial ground. A large stone was placed near the center of the circle. During the second stage, large blue stones were placed in the circle. Finally, in the third stage, up to 1,000 men hauled enormous sandstone rocks and placed them in an outer circle. The sandstone rocks were also called sarsen stones. Some of the sarsen stones were used to make five trilithon patterns. People are most amazed by the construction of the trilithons, some of which are still standing today.

**The Meaning of Stonehenge**

Why was the monument built? Some scientists think it’s a burial ground. There are 400 burial sites nearby. Gold breastplates used in warfare have been found in the burial grounds. Others think Stonehenge was built by early astronomers. Scientists believe that when a person stands in the center of the monument, the changing of seasons can be seen. Many people think Stonehenge was built for religious ceremonies. A group of people called “Druids” have practiced their religion at Stonehenge for hundreds of years.

For whatever reason Stonehenge was built, it remains an amazing sight.
England's Famous Monument

Fill in the bubble to answer each question or complete each sentence.

1. What does the word Stonehenge mean?
   A) circular rocks
   B) gigantic stones
   C) hanging stones
   D) burial ground

2. How many rocks are in a trilithon?
   A) 3
   B) 4
   C) 6
   D) 12

3. About ______ men were needed to lift the heavy stones.
   A) 2
   B) 10
   C) 100
   D) 1,000

4. Why do some people think Stonehenge was built by astronomers?
   A) The rocks point toward the moon.
   B) The passing of seasons can be seen there.
   C) The sun always shines there.
   D) Burial grounds are nearby.

5. What evidence is given to support the theory that Stonehenge was a burial ground?
   A) It is constructed of trilithons.
   B) People practiced their religion there.
   C) There are 400 grave sites nearby.
   D) King Arthur had it built for religious reasons.

**As you answer the questions, UNDERLINE where you locate your answers from the passage. CIRCLE any unfamiliar words.**
Building Stonehenge

On the plains of southwestern England stands an ancient monument called Stonehenge. Stonehenge consists of a group of gigantic rough-cut stones set in circles. How did ancient people construct this enormous monument without the use of modern tools?

Construction Site

Historians agree that Stonehenge was built in three phases. The first phase took place about 2800 B.C. At this time, a large circular earth wall was made. Historians believe the wall was dug with tools made from antlers of red deer. The shoulder blades of cattle were used as picks and shovels. When completed, the earth wall was about 320 feet (98 m) in diameter. A 16-foot (5-meter) tall stone was placed near the center.

Circle of Blue Stones

The second phase of Stonehenge started around 2150 B.C. About 60 large boulders, called blue stones, were placed inside the earthen wall. The blue stones, each weighing up to 4 tons (3.6 metric tonnes), came from the mountainous region of Wales. The stones were transported over water and land nearly 240 miles (384 km) to the site. Later, the blue stones were rearranged into horseshoe patterns.

Gigantic Sarsen Stones

Then around 2000 B.C., 30 enormous blocks of sandstone, called sarsen stones, were placed in an outer circle. A continuous circle of smaller stones stood on top of the larger sarsen stones. Each heavy sarsen stone weighed as much as 50 tons (45 metric tonnes). Almost 1,000 men were needed to drag each sarsen stone to the site from about 19 miles (30 km) away.

Some sarsen stones were set up in a trilithon pattern. A trilithon consisted of two stone pillars with a horizontal stone, called a lintel, on top. Holes were dug for the two stone pillars. Teams of men used great levers and ropes to raise the pillars into an upright position. The stone lintel was laid across the pillars to complete the trilithon. Each of the five trilithons built stood up to 22 feet (7 m) tall. They were arranged in a horseshoe pattern within the inner circle.

Stonehenge was probably completed around 1500 B.C.
Building Stonehenge

Fill in the bubble to answer each question or complete each sentence.

1. The first building stage of Stonehenge was ________.
   A) a circular earth wall
   B) a circle of blue stones
   C) a trilithon
   D) a gigantic sarsen stone

2. About how long ago did the construction of Stonehenge begin?
   A) 1,000 years
   B) 2,000 years
   C) 5,000 years
   D) 10,000 years

3. What were the largest stones at Stonehenge called?
   A) blue stones
   B) sarsen stones
   C) trilithons
   D) rough-cut stones

4. A trilithon uses how many stones?
   A) 1
   B) 2
   C) 3
   D) 5 or more

5. Why did large stones have to be brought to the construction site?
   A) The large stones were scattered all over the Stonehenge area.
   B) The Stonehenge area had only sarsen stones.
   C) England did not have any stones.
   D) There were no gigantic stones at the location of Stonehenge.

**As you answer the questions, UNDERLINE where you locate your answers from the passage. CIRCLE any unfamiliar words. **