Name Class Date

ACTIVE HISTORY | UNIT 1 | Chapter 2 LESSON 1.1

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LEARNING

Analyze an Ancient Calendar

Many ancient peoples noticed the patterns of the summer and winter solstices and the spring and autumn equinoxes. They made calendars that allowed them to keep track of these days. Some scientists believe that the stone structure called Stonehenge is an example of a prehistoric calendar.

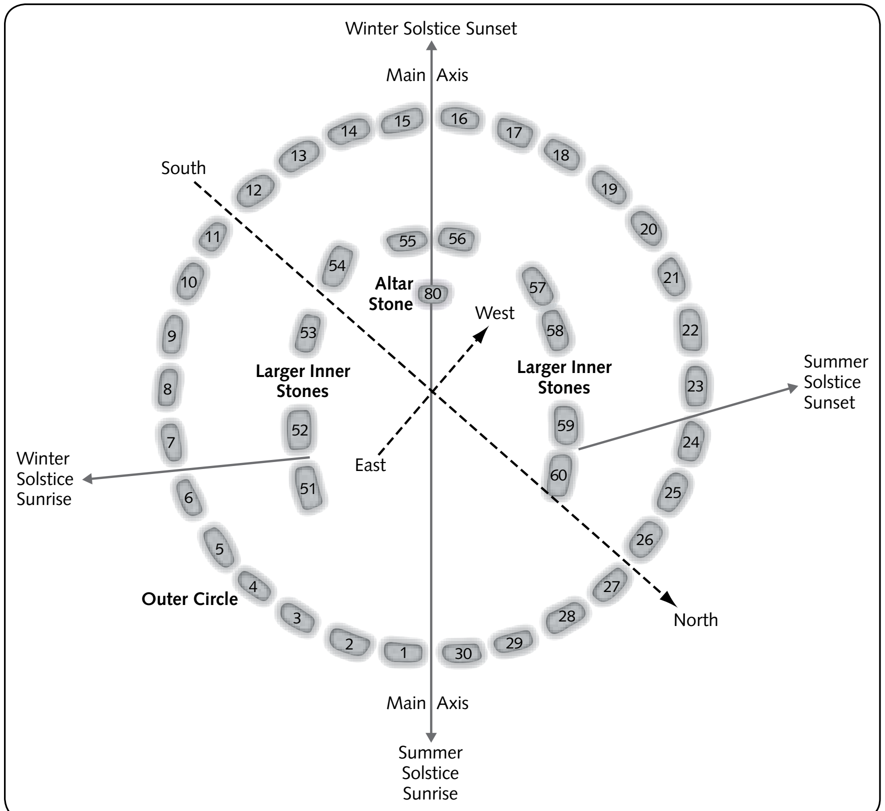
Stonehenge's stones are placed in a specific pattern. If you stand at a certain point and look in the right direction, you can see where the sun will rise on the morning of the summer solstice. If you look in the opposite direction, you can see where the sun will set on the evening of the winter solstice. From other points in the circle, you can see where the sun sets on the evening of the summer solstice and where the sun rises on the morning of the winter solstice. Study the diagram at right and answer the questions.

Stonehenge, in southern England, was built nearly 5,000 years ago.

1. Analyze Visuals From what direction does the sun rise on the summer solstice? In which direction does the sun set on the winter solstice?

2. Make Inferences Think about how Earth revolves around the sun. Why is the winter solstice sunset directly opposite the summer solstice sunrise?

Stonehenge



3. Draw Conclusions Why do you think ancient peoples would pay attention to and keep track of the solstices and the equinoxes?