

Name _____

Reading a Time Line

If you have ever read about something that happened long ago, then you are probably familiar with the abbreviations BC or BCE and AD or CE. Look at the time line on the previous page. Notice that Buddha was born in 563 BCE. Muhammad died in 632 CE. Both BC and BCE represent the years before the birth of Jesus. CE and AD mean the years after the birth of Jesus. The abbreviations stand for the following:

BC = Before Christ

AD = Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord)

BCE = Before the Common Era

CE = Common Era

In this book, only BCE and BC will be used. This is because BC and AD relate all dates to the birth of Jesus. Referring to Jesus as Christ or using dates that are based on the birth of Jesus are part of the Christian religion, while this book focuses on many different religions and belief systems.

You have probably also read of events happening, for example, in the 5th century or even in the 5th century BCE. A century is 100 years. If people lived in the 1st century, they lived in the first 100 years CE, or in the first 100 years after the birth of Jesus. So, if we say something happened in the 19th century, we mean it happened during the years 1801-1900 CE. The same rule applies to the centuries BCE, only we count backwards from the birth of Jesus. For example, Buddha was born in 563 BCE, which would mean he was born in the 6th century BCE.

Here are some practice questions. You will need to refer to the timeline and use your math skills.

Answer:

1. Who is older, someone born in 1760 BCE or someone born in 1450 BCE?

2. In what century was Guru Nanak born?

3. How many years difference is there between 250 CE and 250 BCE?

4. How many years difference is there between 1524 CE and 1436 BCE?

5. You visit a cemetery. One of the tombstones reads: "Born in the 15th century, died in the 16th." Make up possible dates that this person may have been born and died.

6. What century are you living in now?

Introduction

