

Stonehenge assignment essays example

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Stone circles are found around in the world, from all around the United Kingdom to Poland and Israel. The most famous set of stone circles is Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England; a town in southern England about 13 kilometres north of Salisbury. Stonehenge is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the most amazing puzzling sites in the world. It is a prehistoric monument believed to be built anywhere between 3000 to 2000 BC.

Geologists identified the types of stones at Stonehenge as Bluestone, Sarsen, and Welsh Sandstone, which are all sedimentary rocks. The remains of the Stonehenge structure is a ring of standing stones planted within the earth. Surrounding Stonehenge are several hundred burial mounds and Stonehenge is located perfectly in the center of these complex Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments.

The construction of Stonehenge is believed to have been an elaborate process taking place in three phases requiring more than 30 million hours of labor. The first phase built the “ first Stonehenge”: a large “ Henge” or earthwork made up of a bank, ditch, and the “ Aubrey” holes. This is now the innermost circle of the structure. It is believed that this stage was all built around 3100 BC. Aubrey holes are round pits about three feet wide and three feet deep with very steep sides and flattened bottoms. Altogether, the Aubrey circles form a circle about 284 feet in diameter. Recent excavations have found cremated human bones in the sides of the circle preserved in some kind of chalk filling. It is believed that these were stored not for the purpose of graves but rather as some kind of religious ceremony.

Stonehenge was abandoned for over 1000 years before the next phase of construction began. The second stage is when the Bluestones arrived and is

considered the most dramatic phase of construction. It is believed to have started around 2150 BC. 82 Bluestones are found at Stonehenge and are believed to have been transported from the Wales' Preseli mountains in the south-western part of the country. These stones weighed approximately 8,800 pounds each and were dragged on rollers and then delivered on rafts down the river Wylfe to Stonehenge. This journey is an astonishing 240 miles. The Bluestones were then set up in the center and formed a double circle with an entrance point.

Around 2000 BC, the third stage of construction began. This is when the Sarsen stones arrived coming from Marlborough Downs in north Wiltshire about 25 miles away. The biggest Sarsen stones were believed to have weighed about 110,000 pounds and it would not have been possible to transport these via waterways. Therefore, they would have been transported using sledges and ropes. Some estimates show that five hundred men would have been needed to pull these stones using leather ropes with an additional one hundred men laying huge rollers in front of the rock. Given the large effort needed to move these grand stones, the mystery of the Stonehenge becomes ever more puzzling and leads me to greater questioning if the Stonehenge's creation was even possible by the hand of humans. The stones were then arranged in an outer circle and an inner circle in the shape of a horseshoe.

The final stage of construction occurred after 1500 BC. The bluestones were then rearranged into a horseshoe and circle that is visible in modern times. It is believed that there would have been around 60 bluestones in the circle originally and that these were removed or broken up over time. Only a few

currently exist today and they are small stumps below the ground.

It may never be known who or what built the Stonehenge but one of the most accepted ideas of what ancient peoples created this marvelous site, is that of the Druids work. However, this is also an antiquated guess as the Druids had no need for stone monuments as they worshipped in temples in the forest. Others believe that the Stonehenge was carried by Beaker Folk, indigenous people who had begun using pottery as drinking vessels and lived in more communal ways.

It is believed that the purpose of the Stonehenge was for burial purposes for people who practiced lunar and solar worship. Many people agree that it was built either for human sacrifice or to honor astronomy, or perhaps a combination of both. An archaeological study by the Stonehenge Riverside Project in 2008 found cremated human remains from 3000 BC.

Development cannot threaten Stonehenge as it is protected by its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Sites as of 1986. Additionally, it is nationally protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is owned by the Crown. Today, there is a charge to visit the stones that helps maintain Stonehenge and keep it protected. Only on special or arranged occasions are visitors allowed to walk on and between the stones.

The Stonehenge is an awe-inspiring site that none should miss. It is truly impressive and evokes the deepest feelings of wonder and awe. It is steeped in mystery and questions, where the imagination can run wild with possibilities of how the Stonehenge got here, who built it, when was it built, and for what purpose? But whatever the original intention was, we should all treat it as the ancients did: with the utmost respect and honor for its history.

" Stonehenge." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 25 May 2014. Web. 25 May 2014.