

**Subskill # 3****Recall Information/Passage Details I**

**Read the passage below on ancient calendars and then answer the questions. The article "Ancient Calendars" was taken from [www.Time.com](http://www.Time.com).**

Celestial bodies — the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars have provided us a reference for measuring the passage of time throughout our existence. Ancient civilizations relied upon the apparent motion of these bodies through the sky to determine seasons, months, and years.

We know little about the details of timekeeping in prehistoric eras, but wherever we turn up records and artifacts, we usually discover that in every culture, some people were preoccupied with measuring and recording the passage of time. Ice-age hunters in Europe over 20,000 years ago scratched lines and gouged holes in sticks and bones, possibly counting the days between phases of the moon. Five thousand years ago, Sumerians in the Tigris-Euphrates valley in today's Iraq had a calendar that divided the year into 30-day months, divided the day into 12 periods (each corresponding to 2 of our hours), and divided these periods into 30 parts (each like 4 of our minutes). We have no written records of Stonehenge, built over 4000 years ago in England, but its alignments show its purposes apparently included the determination of seasonal or celestial events, such as lunar eclipses, solstices and so on.

The earliest Egyptian calendar was based on the moon's cycles, but later the Egyptians realized that the "Dog Star" in Canis Major, which we call Sirius, rose next to the sun every 365 days, about when the annual inundation of the Nile began. Based on this knowledge, they devised a 365-day calendar that seems to have begun in 4236 BCE (Before the Common Era), which thus seems to be one of the earliest years recorded in history.

Before 2000 BCE, the Babylonians (in today's Iraq) used a year of 12 alternating 29 day and 30 day lunar months, giving a 354-day year. In contrast, the Mayans of Central America relied not only on the Sun and Moon, but also the planet Venus, to establish 260 day and 365 day calendars. This culture and its related predecessors spread across Central America between 2600 BCE and 1500 CE, reaching their apex between 250 and 900 CE. They left celestial-cycle records indicating their belief that the creation of the world occurred in 3114 BCE. Their calendars later became portions of the great Aztec calendar stones. Our present civilization has adopted a 365-day solar calendar with a leap year occurring every fourth year (except century years not evenly divisible by 400).

**Now chose the best answer for each question.**

1. The first known civilization to use a 365-day calendar was
  - a. Ancient civilizations
  - b. Our present civilization
  - c. The Egyptians
  - d. The Babylonians
2. Our present civilization calls the "Dog Star"
  - a. Canis Major
  - b. Sirius
  - c. Sun
  - d. Canis Minor
3. One of the earliest "years" recorded in history began around
  - a. 3114 BCE
  - b. 2000 BCE
  - c. 2600 BCE
  - d. 4236 BCE

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4. Which cultures were preoccupied with measuring and recording the passage of time?
  - a. Ice-age hunters
  - b. Aztecs
  - c. Sumerians
  - d. All of the above
5. What did the Mayans of Central America rely on to set their calendar?
  - a. Sun, moon and the planet Venus
  - b. Lines and holes in sticks and bones
  - c. Lunar eclipses
  - d. Solstices

**Read the passage below on the history of the Liberty Bell and then answer the questions. "The History of the Bell" was taken from [www.USHistory.org](http://www.USHistory.org).**

On November 1, 1751, a letter was sent to Robert Charles, the Colonial Agent of the Province of Pennsylvania, who was working in London. Signed by Isaac Norris, Thomas Leech, and Edward Warner, it represented the desires of the Assembly to purchase a bell for the State House (now Independence Hall) steeple. The bell was ordered from Whitechapel Foundry, with instructions to inscribe on it the passage from Leviticus. The bell arrived in Philadelphia on September 1, 1752, but was not hung until March 10, 1753, on which day Isaac Norris wrote, "I had the mortification to hear that it was cracked by a stroke of the clapper without any other violence as it was hung up to try the sound. "The cause of the break is thought to have been attributable either to flaws in its casting or, as they thought at the time, to its being too brittle.

Two Philadelphia foundry workers named John Pass and John Stow were given the cracked bell to be melted down and recast. They added an ounce and a half of copper to a pound of the old bell in an attempt to make the new bell less brittle. For their labors they charged slightly over

36 Pounds. The new bell was raised in the belfry on March 29, 1753. "Upon trial, it seems that they have added too much copper. They were so teased with the witticisms of the town that they will very soon make a second essay," wrote Isaac Norris to London agent Robert Charles. Apparently nobody was now pleased with the tone of the bell.

Pass and Stow indeed tried again. They broke up the bell and recast it. On June 11, 1753, the New York Mercury reported, "Last week was raised and fix'd in the Statehouse Steeple, the new great Bell, cast here by Pass and Stow, weighing 2080 lbs."

In November, Norris wrote to Robert Charles that he was still displeased with the bell and requested that Whitechapel cast a new one.

Upon the arrival of the new bell from England, it was agreed that it sounded no better than the Pass and Stow bell. So the "Liberty Bell" remained where it was in the steeple, and the new Whitechapel bell was placed in the cupola on the State House

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roof and attached to the clock to sound the hours. The Liberty Bell was rung to call the Assembly together and to summon people together for special announcements and events. The Liberty Bell tolled frequently. Among the more historically important occasions, it tolled when Benjamin Franklin was sent to England to address Colonial grievances, it tolled when King George III ascended to the throne in 1761, and it tolled to call together the people of Philadelphia to discuss the Sugar Act in 1764 and the

Stamp Act in 1765. In 1772 a petition was sent to the Assembly stating that the people in the vicinity of the State House were "incommoded and distressed" by the constant "ringing of the great Bell in the steeple. "But it continued tolling for the First Continental Congress in 1774, the Battle of Lexington and Concord in 1775 and its most resonant tolling was on July 8, 1776, when it summoned the citizenry for the reading of the Declaration of Independence produced by the Second Continental Congress."

**Now choose the best answer for each question.**

6. How was the Liberty Bell damaged?

- a. The bell was too brittle
- b. The bell was flawed when it was made
- c. The bell cracked when it was rung for the first time
- d. The bell was designed with the crack

7. The first request for the bell was sent to:

- a. Isaac Norris
- b. Robert Charles
- c. Benjamin Franklin
- d. John Pass and John Stow

8. Which word best describes Isaac Norris' emotion when he used the word "mortification"?

- a. Embarrassment
- b. Sorrow
- c. Worry
- d. Apprehension

9. Why did John Pass and John Stow attempt to make a second bell?

- a. They were persistently annoyed with the townspeople
- b. The townspeople made fun of them
- c. John Pass and John Stow did not like the sound of the first bell
- d. The first bell was too heavy

10. Which word best describes the feelings of the people who lived closest to the Liberty Bell?

- a. Troubled
- b. Ruined
- c. Disfavored
- d. Ostracized

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**Answer Key**

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. D
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. A