

Activity 4. “Ask Dr. Dig”

Instructions: Read the passage below and answer questions 1 – 3.

Dig is an archeological magazine for elementary school children published by Cobblestone. The company produces a series of historical, social science, and scientific magazines including Calliope, which focuses on global history. Readers submit questions to “Dr. Dig” and they are published in the magazine or posted on the website <http://www.digonsite.com/drdig/general/53.html>, accessed June 4, 2010). One young reader asked Dr. Dig “What is the difference between B.C., A.D., B.C.E., and C.E.?” Dr. Dig replied: “B.C., which stands for “Before Christ,” is used to date events before the birth of Jesus. A.D. is the abbreviation for the Latin phrase *anno Domini*, which means “in the year of our Lord,” and is used for dates after Jesus’ birth. This system of dating has been used for many years by Western archaeologists. Today, however, with a growing understanding that not all archaeologists are Christians, some archaeologists prefer to use the terms: Before the Common Era (B.C.E.) and the Common Era (C.E.), which are exactly the same as B.C. and A.D. but have nothing to do with Christianity.”

Questions

1. According to Dr. Dig, what are the origins of B.C. and A.D.?
2. How do B.C.E. and C.E. differ from B.C. and A.D.?
3. In your opinion, which designation should historians use? Why?