

Reading comprehension

Sample Reading Comprehension

This test measures your ability to obtain information from written passages. You will be presented with a passage followed by a number of questions about it. A sample passage is shown below, followed by three sample questions. This passage is shorter than those on the actual test.

Passage

The timing of New Year's Day has changed with customs and calendars. The Mayan civilization, on what is now called the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico, celebrated the New Year on one of the two days when the noonday sun is directly overhead.

In the equatorial regions of the earth, between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the sun is in this position twice a year, once on its passage southward, and once on its passage northward. At the early Mayan city of Izapa in the southern Yucatan, the overhead date for the sun on its southward passage was August 13.

The Mayans celebrated this as the date for the beginning of the New Year. Later at the more northerly Mayan site at Edzna, the corresponding overhead date is July 26. Analyses of Mayan pictorial calendars indicate that they celebrated the New Year on August 13 prior to 150 AD, and on July 26 after that year. This change has been explained by archaeological dating showing that 150 AD was the time that the Mayans moved the hub of their civilization from the southern to the northern site.