Understanding Centuries

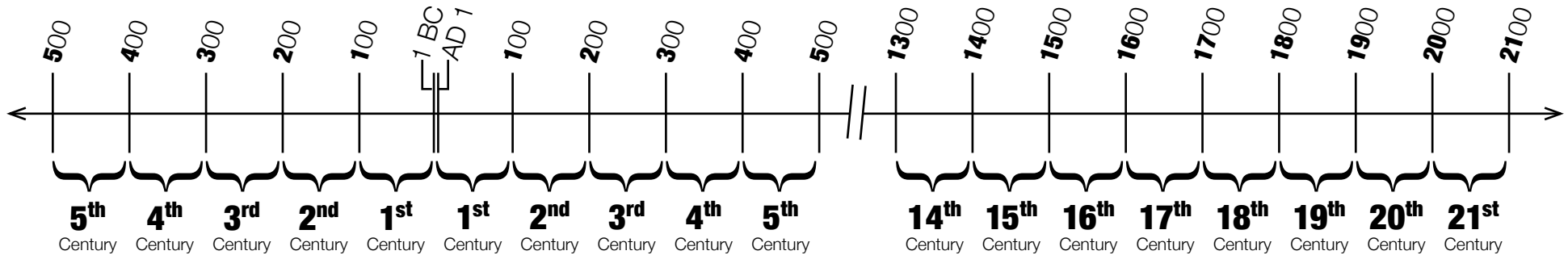| 500	400	300	200	100	1 BC · AD 1	100	200	300	400	500		1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100
5th Century	**4th** Century	**3rd** Century	**2nd** Century	**1st** Century	**1st** Century	**2nd** Century	**3rd** Century	**4th** Century	**5th** Century		**14th** Century	**15th** Century	**16th** Century	**17th** Century	**18th** Century	**19th** Century	**20th** Century	**21st** Century

When you were born, you were **0 years old** the entire time you were in your **1st year of life;** when you were **1 year old,** you were in your **2nd year of life;** and at the **age of 17,** you will be in your **18th year of life**.

Did you notice how the **number** of your age is always different from your **year of life**? For example, when you're **7** you are in your **8th** year of life.

Dates in history are also figured this way, except instead of saying 1st **year** or 10th **year**, we talk about the 1st **set of 100 years** (centuries), the 10th **set of 100 years**, etc.

Take a look on the time line at the 1st set of 100 years following Christ's birth (AD 1*). This range of years, from 1 to 100** is called the 1st **century** because it is the 1st **set of 100 years** after the birth of Christ.

A KEY TO REMEMBER!

If you're trying to remember dates, thinking in terms of centuries can really be confusing. So, whenever you hear a time period given as a century, **always translate the century into years in your head**. For example:

- When you see **14th century,** think **1300's**
- When you see **6th century,** think **500's**

The next set of 100 years, the dates in the 100's, is called the 2nd century, and the 1700's is called the 18th century. This is even true for the years before Christ (BC). For example, the 3rd century BC is the 200's.

Did you notice that the **years** are different from the **centuries**? For example, **the year 1345** is in the **14th century**.

When you come across a *century* term in your reading, it's always a good idea to translate it into years in your head. For example, if you read the term **15th century**, think the **1400's.**

If you read a date or set of dates, but you'd like to describe them in terms of centuries, just drop the last two digits of the year and go *up* to the next number. For example, for the year **1453** you would think, "14 rounds up to 15, so it's the **15th century**."

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* Our modern calendar was based on the traditional placement of Christ's birth at AD 1, although it is now believed Christ was actually born a few years prior to AD 1.

**Although technically a new century doesn't begin until the "01" year, people commonly consider that a new "century" begins at "00" instead of "01." Since this distinction isn't crucial to understanding centuries, for memorization's sake, it's often easiest to remember that the 18th century is *any* date in the 1700's, the 2nd century is *any* date in the 100's, etc.

CENTURY PRACTICE

Fill in the missing terms. If given the century, write the years; if given the years, write the century. The first one has been done for you.

The 6th century = The ___500___'s

The 12th century = The _____'s

The 600's = The _____ century

The 20th century = The _____'s

The 2nd century = The _____'s

The 200's = The _____ century

The 10th century = The _____'s

The 18th century = The _____'s

The 0's = The _____ century

The 21st century = The _____'s

The 1100's = The _____ century

The 15th century = The _____'s

The 1st century = The _____'s

The 1700's = The _____ century

The 8th century = The _____'s

The 900's = The _____ century

WRITE YOUR OWN CENTURY PRACTICE

Write in equivalent century and year terms. The first one has been done for you.

The __19th__ century = The ___1800___'s

The _____ century = The _____'s

The _____'s = The _____ century

The _____ century = The _____'s

The _____ century = The _____'s

The _____'s = The _____ century

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