BUILDING STONEHENGE
Stonehenge

• Stonehenge is located on the Salisbury Plain of what is now southern England.

• Around 3000 BC, construction began as a circular ditch and surrounding bank, 110 m in diameter.

• An opening in the bank is aligned with the midsummer sunrise and midwinter sunset.

• The site was used for the burial of cremated human remains.
Stonehenge

• Around 2600 BC, dozens of bluestones, 2 m in height, are placed within the circle.

• Over the next thousand years they are rearranged many times in different patterns.

• Two things remain constant: the alignment with the sun and the association with human burials.
Stonehenge

- Around 2500 BC, 75 sarsen stones are brought to the site over a distance of 25 miles.
- The terrain includes gently rolling hills.
- Typical sarsen stones weigh 25 tons.
Stonehenge

- Most sarsen stones are raised upright, forming a ring within Stonehenge.

- Others are used as lintels and lie atop the ring, forming a complete circle.

- The stones were shaped and fitted together using joints common in woodworking.
Stonehenge

- Inside the circle, five trilithons are constructed from the largest of the sarsen stones.
- Trilithons stand 7 m high.
- The uprights weigh 40 to 50 tons and their lintels weigh 7 tons.
Stonehenge

This construction work was accomplished by people who had not yet invented the wheel or metal tools.

- They dug with picks made of deer antlers.
- They shaped large stones by pounding on them with smaller, hand-held stones.
- They made rope from tree bark.
Stonehenge

- Stonehenge seems to have been abandoned by 1100 BC.
- Most of the originally standing stones have fallen.
- Its builders left behind no written records or oral history.
- All knowledge of the site is the result of modern archaeology.
- No one knows for certain how the monument was built.
Building Stonehenge

In a group, you will build a replica of a Stonehenge trilithon, using simple machines and a very limited amount of force.

You will develop your understanding of the relationships between energy, work, and various forces.

You will practice engineering skills which are just as relevant today as they were in 2500 BC. Perhaps you will solve the mystery of how Stonehenge was built.