

BIG BEN



I. Choose the correct preposition:

Big Ben is the name 1) *from/ of/ up* the bell inside St Stephen's clock tower attached 2) *to/ up/ with* the Houses of Parliament, and is as famous 3) *with/ from/ for* its sound as for the clock faces that surround it.

As well as providing the opening sequence 4) *in/ for/ into* the old ITV *News At Ten*, the chime of Big Ben is also the sound that ushers in each New Year, broadcast 5) *on/ at/ for* TV and radio 6) *across/ along/ over* the world. Big Ben is the focus 7) *of/ for/ within* December 31 celebrations, when the nation holds its breath to hear the first Bong! usher in the brand new year. The BBC first broadcast the New Year's Eve chimes to see in 1924, and has been doing so ever since.

The clock is famous for its reliability, telling the time to within one second's accuracy, but extreme weather conditions can affect the mechanism. In 1962, for example, the New Year was ten minutes late owing 8) *for/ to/ of* heavy snow!

II. Match the parts of sentences in the two columns, in order to find out more about BIG BEN:

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| 1. Big Ben is the largest four-faced chiming clock and the third-tallest | a) during which celebratory events took place. |
| 2. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in May 2009 (the clock itself first ticking on 31 May 1859), | b) though United Kingdom residents are able to arrange tours (well in advance) through their Member of Parliament. |
| 3. The present tower was raised as a part of Charles Barry's design for a new palace, | c) free-standing clock tower in the world. |
| 4. The tower has no elevator, | d) so those escorted must climb the 334 limestone stairs to the top. |
| 5. Despite being one of the world's most famous tourist attractions, the interior of the tower is not open to overseas visitors, | e) after the old Palace of Westminster was destroyed by fire on the night of 16 October 1834. |

III. Write the correct form of the verbs in brackets:



When we talk about Big Ben, it 1) (to tend) to be the tower that most of us have in mind. But it is actually the name of the 13-ton bell inside that 2) (to strike) the hours. (The tower is actually called St Stephen's Tower.) Recast at the Whitechapel Foundry in London's East End in 1858, the bell 3) (to be/ make) from the melted-down remains of a predecessor that 4) (to crack) during testing.

Big Ben 5) (to be) originally the name given purely to the bell. Over the years, however, it 6) (to become/ also) the name of the chimes, the clock tower, the mechanism and even the surrounding area. But no one is sure how the name Big Ben 7) (to come) to be used.

IV. Choose which sentences are true and which are false, according to what you know about BIG BEN, then check your answers:

1. The nickname was applied first to the Great Bell; it may have been named after Sir Benjamin Hall, who oversaw the installation of the Great Bell.
2. There is no inscription written on the clock.
3. One of the most popular Big Ben scenes comes in the animation version of *Peter Pan* (1953), when the children, along with Peter Pan and Tinkerbell, fly round Big Ben and off to Neverland.
4. The clock is wound and checked for accuracy three times a week.
5. The Meccano version of Big Ben has 1,085 pieces. The original, patented in 1901 by inventor Frank Hornby, only had 15 pieces.
6. There is no other version of Big Ben in the world.
7. There are several small rooms in the lower part of the tower, including a prison cell.
8. At the bottom of each of Big Ben's four clock faces is a Latin inscription, in gilt letters.



“ DOMINE SALVAM FAC REGINAM NOSTRAM VICTORIAM PRIMAM ”

Which means *O Lord, keep safe our Queen Victoria the First.*

Bibliography:

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2. www.icons.org.uk
3. www.wikipedia.org



Answers:

I. 1.of; 2.to; 3.for; 4.in; 5.on; 6.across; 7.of; 8.to.

II. 1-c); 2-a); 3-e); 4-d); 5-b).

III. 1. tends; 2. strikes; 3. was made; 4. had cracked; 5. was; 6. has also become; 7. came.

IV. 1-T; 2-F; 3-T; 4-T; 5-T; 6-F; 7-T; 8-T.