



# Working the Calendar: Practice and Ceremony Today

*Module 6 handout · Reading, keeping and living the count*

A calendar is only alive if someone counts it. This handout is a working sheet: how to say a date in full, how to track the year, and how to treat the auguries as historical testimony rather than instruction.

## The parts of a full date

| Part                     | What it names                                                         | Example                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Tonalpowalli day</b>  | Number 1-13 plus one of the twenty signs.                             | chikwei Ozelotl — 8 Jaguar             |
| <b>Veintena position</b> | Which veintena, and the day within its twenty.                        | day 12 of Ochpaniztli                  |
| <b>Year bearer</b>       | The year's number and sign; it also fixes the day the year opened on. | Yei Akatl — 3 Reed, opened on Zipaktli |

Spoken in full: chikwei Ozelotl, day 12 of Ochpaniztli, in the year Yei Akatl — the day sign and the year bearer, with their glyphs:



chikwei Ozelotl — 8 Jaguar  
day 12 of Ochpaniztli  
in the year Yei Akatl — 3 Reed



## Daily practice

- Say the day aloud each morning at first light — the day turns at sunrise, not at midnight.
- Write it down. A count kept only in the head is lost the first time you miss a day.
- Track the veintena alongside the day count; the two together tell you where the year stands.
- Mark the close of each veintena, and keep the nemontemi as quiet days.
- Keep the turning of the year at the observed equinox sunrise: that day ties off the old year, and the new year begins the day after, on the opening sign of the incoming bearer.

## Reading the auguries

Book 4 of the Florentine Codex records how day keepers — tonalpohkeh — read the days. Read it as testimony from a specific place and time, what people said the days meant, rather than as a rule about what you must do. The value is historical and reflective: a day's character is a lens, not a verdict.



## Seven-day count sheet

| Day | Number + sign | Veintena position | Note |
|-----|---------------|-------------------|------|
| 1   |               |                   |      |
| 2   |               |                   |      |
| 3   |               |                   |      |
| 4   |               |                   |      |
| 5   |               |                   |      |
| 6   |               |                   |      |
| 7   |               |                   |      |



## Quiz

1. Name the three parts of a complete date.

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2. At what moment does the day turn over?

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3. Write today's date in full: tonalpwalli day, veintena position, and year.

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4. What is Book 4 of the Florentine Codex, and how should it be read?

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5. When does the new year turn in this system?

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6. Which day sign opens a Tochtli year? A Kalli year?

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7. Why is keeping the count described as a practice rather than a lookup?

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8. How would you say 8 Jaguar in Nawatl?

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9. You miss three days of counting. How do you recover the correct day?

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## Answer key

1. The tonalpwalli day (number and sign), the position in the veintena, and the year bearer.
2. At sunrise.
3. Answers vary — check against the count you are keeping and name the correlation you used.
4. The book of the day signs and their auguries: a record of how day keepers (tonalpohkeh) read the days. Read it as testimony from a place and time, not as prescription.
5. The observed equinox sunrise ties off the old year; the new year begins the day after, when the count is re-anchored.
6. A Tochtli year opens on Kozkakwawhtli; a Kalli year opens on Ozomahtli.
7. Because the count is continuous and cumulative; it stays alive only through someone counting it daily, and the discipline is the point.
8. chikwei Ozelotl.
9. Count forward three days from the last day you recorded — the sequence never breaks, so simple arithmetic restores it.

*Study tip: keep the count by hand for seven days without looking it up. Use the sheet above.*