

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Ancient Egypt - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. The Egyptians were some of the first people to ever write anything down. They used a system of symbols called hieroglyphics to communicate as early as 3300 BCE. There were as many as 2,000 symbols; each one represented an idea, object or even a sound. They were usually carved into stone. Some scribes made paper from papyrus reeds. They laid the reeds down and pounded them into paper, which was lighter and easier to transport than rocks. They called the paper papyrus. For thousands of years after the end of the ancient Egyptian civilization, people couldn't read the symbols. This all changed in 1799, when archaeologists found a stone in an Egyptian town called Rosetta. This stone, now called the Rosetta Stone, has three different languages written on it. Because the same passage is written in Greek, demotic (another ancient language), and hieroglyphics, historians have been able to figure out the meaning of many hieroglyphic symbols. The stone effectively translated the language of ancient Egypt into words that historians could understand.

How did the Rosetta stone help historians understand hieroglyphics?

**A.**

The stone had the same passage written in three different languages, so historians were able to translate the passage written in hieroglyphics.

*The text states that the stone “has three different languages written on it. Because the same passage is written in Greek, demotic (another ancient language), and hieroglyphics, historians have been able to figure out the meaning of many hieroglyphic symbols.”*

- B. The stone was an Ancient Egyptian dictionary of all of the hieroglyphics and their meanings.

- C. Historians found piles of papyrus buried under the stone that included keys for understanding what each hieroglyphic symbol represented.

- D. The people in Rosetta understood what each hieroglyphic stood for, and they shared the meanings with historians.

2. Egyptians believed very strongly in an afterlife. We know from their Book of the Dead that after death, a person's soul travels to the hall of the dead. There, the dead person's heart is said to be weighed against a "feather of truth." If the heart weighed less than the feather, then it was considered a good heart. The person's soul was taken to Osiris, god of the afterlife. If the heart was heavy, though, it was said that a person was evil. That heart would be eaten by a demon that was part crocodile, part lion, and part hippopotamus. Even the pharaohs, or kings, were anxious about what happened to them after they died. They wanted to bring their favorite things with them, and they believed that in order for their soul to exist in an afterlife, their bodies must be preserved. Thus mummification was invented. They removed the internal organs and placed them in specially decorated urns called canopic jars, dried the body with special salts and oils, and wrapped it with linens. And they did a good job of it: Some mummies were still whole when archaeologists opened their tombs 2,000 years later.

Which of the following is NOT true about mummification?

- A. It was so effective that mummified bodies are still found whole thousands of years later.
- B. It involved removing organs, covering the body with salts and oils and wrapping it in linen.
- C. It meant that the soul didn't have to be weighed by Osiris after death.
- D. It was intended to preserve the body after death so the soul could continue to exist.

*The text states, "If the heart weighed less than the feather, then it was considered a good heart. The person's soul was taken to Osiris, god of the afterlife." It was because ancient Egyptians "believed that in order for their soul to exist in an afterlife, their bodies must be preserved" that mummification was created.*

3. Building the iconic Egyptian pyramids was a monumental effort that took decades to complete. These gigantic gravestones were marvels of early architecture and engineering. In the city of Cairo alone there were 67 of them. Ancient Egyptians didn't have huge trucks, cranes, or earthmovers. All of the work was completed by hand by thousands of laborers, including masons, metalworkers, and carpenters. The pyramids were constructed not as apartments for the living, but as amazingly large tombs for the dead. The biggest pyramid of all belonged to King Khufu (2585–2560 BCE), whom the Greeks called Cheops. Khufu ordered the Great Pyramid of Giza built. It covered 13 acres and rose almost 500 feet up into the air—about as tall as a 50-story building. Many pyramid and temple complexes included statues of sphinxes, which are mythical creatures with the head of a human and the body of a lion. It was a tradition for pharaohs to have their heads carved into the sphinx that sat atop their tomb.

The author of this passage would most likely agree that { }.

- A. building the pyramids was probably easy      B. the pyramids were built as palaces for pharaohs
- C. the pyramids are very impressive      D. the pyramids are not very tall

*The text states, "These gigantic gravestones were marvels of early architecture and engineering" and were "amazingly large."*