Ancient Egypt
The Pyramids

Illustration by Rebekah Hanousek-Monge

You may have seen pictures of the Great Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. Experts believe that these pyramids were built for ancient pharaohs, or kings. The pyramids served as enormous and elaborate tombs.

Imagine building structures so big and heavy without modern construction equipment! The Great Pyramid of Khufu in Giza was built out of over 2 million stone blocks. Most of the blocks weighed about 2.5 tons each. It is amazing that all of these blocks were so skillfully put together.

One thing has always puzzled archaeologists. How did the ancient Egyptians move the blocks? Opinions vary. Many experts think the blocks were moved with ramps and sleds. However, no one knows for sure.

It took many workers to cut the blocks. It took many more to move them. It took even more men to place the blocks on the pyramid. Archaeologists estimate that over 20,000 men worked on the Great Pyramid. Building the pyramid took many years. Today, visitors still come to marvel at this amazing structure. It is called one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.” It is the only one that is still around today.

1 elaborate: having lots of pieces, parts, or details
2 vary: to be different
3 marvel: to look at something with wonder or surprise
Name: ____________________________ Date:______________________

1. How were the pyramids built?
   a. By using strings and sticks.
   b. By using giant construction cranes.
   c. Nobody knows for sure.
   d. By using thousands of camels.

2. The purpose of this passage is to
   a. inform
   b. amuse
   c. persuade
   d. entertain

3. Based on this passage, why are the pyramids one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World?”
   a. They are the largest things ever made by human beings.
   b. They are amazing structures and it is unknown how they were built.
   c. There were seven pyramids and the pharaohs controlled the whole world.
   d. They were among the first seven buildings ever constructed.

4. Read the following sentence: “It is amazing that all of these blocks were so skillfully put together.”

   The word **skillfully** most nearly means
   a. easily
   b. dangerously
   c. lazily
   d. expertly

5. This passage is mostly about
   a. why the pyramids were located in Egypt
   b. the pyramids and how they may have been built
   c. why some people think aliens helped build the pyramids
   d. how ancient Egyptians buried their pharaohs in pyramids
6. Describe how many people believe the pyramids were built.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

7. Why is it especially impressive that the pyramids were built a long time ago?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Around 20,000 people were working on the pyramids _____ they were being built.

   a. sometimes
   b. although
   c. while
   d. after

9. Read the following sentence.

The Great Pyramids were built in Egypt over two thousand years ago.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. What? the Great Pyramids

2. What were the Great Pyramids? _________________________________

3. Where? ____________________________________________________

4. When? _____________________________________________________
10. **Vocabulary Word**: vary: to be different.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: ________________________________  
________________________________________________________________
Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 670

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines, or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The Great Pyramids of Egypt were tombs for ancient pharaohs. They are huge, and archaeologists are still trying to figure out how they were made.

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   d. how ancient Egyptians buried their pharaohs in pyramids

6. Describe how many people believe the pyramids were built.

   Suggested answer: Experts think the pyramids were built with ramps and sleds and that more than 20,000 workers were probably needed.

7. Why is it especially impressive that the pyramids were built a long time ago?

   Suggested answer: It is impressive that the pyramids were built a long time ago because the builders did not have modern construction equipment and the stones were very heavy.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

   Around 20,000 people were working on the pyramids _____ they were being built.
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   b. although
   c. while
   d. after

9. Read the following sentence.

   The Great Pyramids were built in Egypt over two thousand years ago.

   Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

   1. What? the Great Pyramids
   2. What were the Great Pyramids? built
   3. Where? in Egypt
   4. When? over two thousand years ago
10. **Vocabulary Word**: vary: if things vary, they are different from each other in size, amount, or characteristics.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.