



# Assignment

## Explain What the Sources Say About a Topic #2

**Topic: Pyramids**

### Your Assignment:

Your teacher just came back from a trip to Egypt, and he brought hundreds of pictures back to share with the class in a video presentation. You had studied ancient civilizations in the past, but you started to wonder about the incredible pyramids and how they were built. You figured there was an interesting story to find out. So, you decided to do some research.

As part of your research you have found three sources. After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the question that follows. Then, go back and read the sources carefully so you will have the information you will need to answer the question and complete your research. You may use scratch paper to take notes.

You completed Part 1 previously. In Part 2, you will write an opinion piece using information you have read.

### Directions for Beginning:

You will now review several sources. You may review the sources as often as you like.

## Research Questions:

After reviewing the research sources, use the rest of the time in Part 2 to answer the questions about them. Your answers to the questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the information you have read, which should help you write your opinion piece.

You may refer back to your scratch paper to review your notes when you think it would be helpful. Answer the questions in the spaces below the items.

Your written notes will be available to you in Part 1 and Part 2 of the performance task.

## Sources for the Task:

### Source #1

You have found an article about the reasons behind the construction of the Egyptian Pyramids:

## Egyptian Pyramids- Why Do They Exist?

**By Bengie Roberts**

The Egyptian Pyramids are one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Their mere size and construction has intrigued archeologists for centuries. Ancient Egypt was one of the most sophisticated ancient civilizations. It is evident in these amazing man-made structures. Travelers from across the globe make a pilgrimage to Egypt specifically to take in the sights of the ancient pyramids. Archeologists have studied the pyramids to determine their purpose as well as who constructed these impressive structures.

### **The Pyramids**

Located to the west of the Nile River, the ancient pyramids were built more than 4000 years ago. One hundred thirty-eight pyramids have been discovered in the region. Most notably, Khufu's great pyramid is the largest of the pyramids in Giza. This was the tallest building on Earth until 1889 when the Eiffel Tower was erected. Pyramids were built as massive tombs to honor Pharaoh. They served as a place to bury Pharaoh and his family as well as a place to preserve the body for the afterlife. It was widely understood that Pharaohs were the closest people to the gods and goddesses worshiped in ancient Egypt, and it was the gods who selected the Pharaoh as king. This is important because it is believed that the shape of the pyramids help ascend the body to the heavens. These massive pyramids were largely engineered with limestone and granite blocks. Often the outer side of the pyramid was made with shiny white limestone to please the gods.

### **The Purpose of the Pyramids**

Pyramids were built not only as tombs but impressive monuments to honor Pharaoh. The more elaborate the better. Inside the pyramid was a burial room where the mummified body was kept along with treasures such as gold and jewels believed to be useful in succeeding in the afterlife. The enormous building was designed to protect the body and his belongings. In fact, each pyramid contained several passages and chambers to help deter tomb robbers. Afterlife was a central theme and incredibly important in Egyptian religious customs, and therefore, it was necessary to mummify the body of the Pharaoh. If mummified, the Pharaoh would live forever.

### **Source #2**

You have found an editorial written by an Egyptian American (a person born in Egypt and now is a United States citizen) about the profits, or money, made from people visiting the pyramids:

# Eliminate Profits from Slave Labor

**By Norman Paul**

It is no secret that the enslaved people in Ancient Egypt worked tirelessly on the construction of the great pyramids. Some of them even worked to death! This is a thought that often eludes the minds of curious travelers eager to catch a glimpse of these glorious monuments. The average traveler pays \$35 for a day trip to tour these natural wonders; thus, providing a profit for the Egyptians. Without question, these funds should be given to education instead of distant relatives of former slave owners who are likely the ones receiving the money from tourism.

Education paves the way to avoid the wrong doings of the past like enslaving others. Funds collected should benefit the families of those enslaved, however, it would be difficult to give money to deserving families. Thus, monies earned should be transferred to another cause. Education is the best solution because it is widely known that without education history tends to repeat itself. Therefore, education presents the greatest need and is where the money would be best spent.

## **Source #3**

You have found an article about the on-going debate about who actually built the Egyptian pyramids:

## **Who Built the Pyramids: Slaves vs Egyptians**

**By Ann Anthony**

There is no question that human hands built the great pyramids, and it is widely suspected that each pyramid required twenty to one-hundred thousand laborers. Unanimously, ancient

sources determined that slave labor was at the root of the building process. Ancient Egypt was the most rich and powerful civilization of its time, and it was no secret that the Egyptians had and used slaves. The process of building the pyramids was laborious and often times excruciating. Construction would often take decades to complete. Slave labor was not paid; however, food, water, and shelter were provided. Due to the long hours and ever increasing work, it is believed that some slaves were worked to death. In addition to slaves, Egyptian peasants were also coerced into working on the pyramids in order to pay the government a labor tax.

More recently, archeologists of the twenty-first century, paint a very different picture and have attempted to convey that it was an honor for the Egyptian people to work on the tombs of Pharaoh. Evidence shows that bones and small tombs on the outskirts of the pyramids belong to Egyptian aristocrats who were a part of the building process. Additionally, the remains that have been discovered indicate that the workers ate well furthering the belief that they were respected workers. Considering very few tombs were found, it should be noted that slaves were not given tombs and would not be buried near the precious pyramids.

By nature, the construction and engineering process took skilled workers. However, it is estimated that only twenty-five percent of the all the work done on the pyramids was completed by skilled workers. The rest of the heavy lifting was done by slaves or coercion of peasants.

Although the Ancient Pyramids where built thousands of years ago, they still continue to intrigue the people of modern day. Successfully constructed as elaborate burial grounds to glorify Pharaoh, the role that slaves had in constructing these great structures continues to be debated.

**Answer this Question:**

*Identify one benefit of the existence of the Egyptian pyramids. Explain why it is a benefit. Provide two details, one detail from Source #1 and one detail from Source #2, to support your explanation. Be sure to identify the source of each detail by title or number.*

**Your Response:**

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