



Reading Sample Questions

Reading Text 4: Sacred Places your Ancestors Left for You: Read the text and answer the questions.

Many tourists looking to disconnect from the stresses and strains of daily life are increasingly choosing to visit **sacred** sites. Ancient civilisations left their mark on the world, leaving behind art, treasures, sometimes architecture, and creating sacred sites. These are places that can still make a world-weary traveller take a moment, or more, to think about life's big questions. These places have been around since before the year dot, and have special meaning to the people who visit them, as they must have had to the people who created them all those years ago. Let's take a look at three of them.

Deep in the Arabian desert, the stone city of Hegra was named by UNESCO as the world's first heritage site. With a history dating back over two thousand years, it was on a trading route and counts among its treasures **burial sites** for long-forgotten kings and queens, and carvings cut into large stones, which seem all the grander on very flat ground they stand on. Travellers can book guided tours of this area, and even see it from a hot air balloon. We are just beginning to understand the importance of this site.

In Uushgiin Uvur, in northern Mongolia, travellers might come across tall stones, carved with depictions of deer and weapons. Nearby, they will find a resting place of an ancient **warrior**, buried with their weapons, and covered in tall piles of boulders. These ancient places are seen by modern Mongolians as sacred connections to their history. There are around 30 deer stones in Uushgiin Uvur, and in another site, called Jargalantyn Am, there are so many in such close proximity that the area is called 'The Valley of the Deer Stones.'

The giants of the ocean have long inspired wonder in those fortunate enough to glimpse one. They most likely conjured up similar feelings in our ancient ancestors. On a tiny island in the Bering Sea, there is an eerie monument to these enormous creatures. Two long lines of whale bones form a passageway running for over half a kilometre. This structure and others like it are thought to be around two thousand years old, built by people called the Yupik who lived in the area well before any Inuit people. They could have been religious or gathering places, even, as many local people think, places to butcher whale meat. Whatever their use, they feel strange and spiritual to those who brave these icy waters.

But you don't need to cross the desert or navigate frozen seas halfway across the globe to experience the sacred, there being important ancient monuments and areas to be found all over the world. Increasingly, though, there is a flood of modernity enveloping, and some would say drowning out, the ancient world. Many argue that it is important to actively work to save and cherish the ancient.

Some even posit that it is not the place, but the mindset that counts towards protecting this intangible idea of the sacred; that there is peace and profundity to be found in most places. Even a solitary swim in a river can be a spiritual experience.

So, if you choose not to pull on your ski goggles, or book a citybreak this next vacation, or even if you do, you might find yourself connecting with your past in sites like these closer to where you live, wondering how they were constructed, how they came to be so visually impactful, and what these amazing places meant to your ancient ancestors.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. The word: sacred is closest in meaning to:
a) Spiritual
b) Hidden
c) Ancient
d) Secret
2. The phrase: burial sites is closest in meaning to:
a) Palaces
b) Cities
c) Tombs
d) Religious buildings
3. In the text, the word: warrior is closest in meaning to:
a) Hero
b) Ruler
c) Farmer
d) Priest
4. The phrase: The giants of the ocean have long inspired wonder in those fortunate enough to glimpse one, is closest in meaning to:
a) Whales were historically thought to bring luck to people who saw them.
b) Seeing whales makes people ask a lot of questions about them.
c) People have almost always felt fortunate to see whales.
d) Whales have amazed people for a long time.
5. According to the article, why is it important to visit these types of places?
a) You can learn about history in them.
b) You can stay there as long as you want to.
c) These places give you an opportunity to think deeply about life.
d) You can remember your ancient ancestors in these sites.
6. According to the article, Hegra:
a) Is a well-protected historical site.
b) Is worth investigating more.
c) Is best seen from the air.
d) Is an example of royal cities from that time.
7. According to the article:
a) Not everyone agrees on why the whale bone passage was made.
b) It took some very brave people to make the whale bone passage.
c) The whale bone passage is an Inuit religious place.
d) Local people still use the whale bone passage to process whale meat.



8. According to the article:

- a) The reader should travel to see as many of these sacred sites as possible.
- b) The reader should try to find a local ancient sacred site to visit.
- c) The reader should try a less usual holiday type and visit sacred sites instead.
- d) The reader should learn about the ancient people who lived in their area.

9. Which of the following can be inferred from the paragraph about Hegra?

- a) It has been valued by experts and visitors for a long time.
- b) It has been forgotten about and only recently become popular with visitors again.
- c) Experts don't know anything about the history of the site.
- d) It gets a large amount of visitors, including experts, every year.

10. Which of the following can be inferred from the paragraph about the Bering Sea?

- a) Its land and islands have been inhabited for a long time.
- b) The people who lived there needed to be brave.
- c) The Innuite people took the islands from the Yupik people.
- d) There have been whales living there since before people came to its islands.

11. Which of the following can be inferred from the paragraph about Mongolia?

- a) Deer stones were decorated by ancient people to celebrate the life of a hero.
- b) Deer stones were put in place to show where an important person was buried.
- c) Deer stones were placed to help modern travellers find sacred places in Mongolia.
- d) Mongolian historians are working to understand the importance of deer stones.

12. Complete the sentence with an appropriate word from the text.

Tall rocks, called _____ stones, are found close to Mongolian warriors' tombs.

The structure on the _____ in the Bering Sea is made from two long lines of large bones

You can pay to see Hegra from the _____.

In both Hegra and Jargalantyn Am, you can see _____ in the stones.

13. Which of the following statements are TRUE, according to the article?

- a) Which of the following statements are TRUE, according to the article?
- b) Most of these places are now deserted.
- c) The Mongolian sites are all together in one place.
- d) The Yupik structure is made from animal remains.

14. Which of the sentences below best express the essential information in the following sentence?

With a history dating back over two thousand years, it was on a trading route and has burial sites for long-forgotten kings and queens.

- a) The place was rediscovered after a long time.
- b) The site was once used by travellers and royalty.
- c) Many important people pass through this site.
- d) This place has been in use for over two millennia.



15. Which of the sentences below best express the essential information in the following sentence?
In another site, called Jargalantyn Am, there are so many in such close proximity that the area is called 'The Valley of the Deer Stones.'

- a) Jargalantyn Am was named 'The Valley of the Deer Stones' because of the number of decorated stones in the area.
- b) Jargalantyn Am is known as 'The Valley of the Deer Stones' because of the way the stones in the area are laid in a pattern.
- c) 'The Valley of the Deer Stones' is to be found very near to Jargalantyn Am.
- d) 'The Valley of the Deer Stones' contains many stones, which are also called Jargalantyn Am.

16. Which of the sentences below best express the essential information in the following sentence?
So, if you choose not to pull on your ski goggles, or book a citybreak this next vacation, or even if you do, you might find yourself connecting with your past in sites like these.

- a) You should visit ancient sites and not go on a traditional holiday next time you travel.
- b) Camping in or exploring historical places brings you closer to the past.
- c) Vacations are not just about doing activities, but also about learning the history of the area you visit.
- d) Visiting ancient spiritual sites can give you an opportunity to think about the history of your ancestors.



Reading 4 - Tübingen: Europe's fairy-tale city:

In Germany's south-west, between the alps of the Swabian region and the densely wooded Schönbuch nature park, lies Tübingen, a university city that would put most Disney locations to shame.

The city is built around the almost perfectly **preserved** old town, with its cobbled alleyways, old timbered houses and rippling canals. (While historical centres of most German cities were destroyed during World War Two, just one bomb fell on Tübingen.) The river Neckar flows through the city centre, forming a little island – the Neckarinsel – which is covered with blossoms in the spring and shines golden in autumn. But that's not all that characterises Tübingen: it's also innovative, green and allows the existence of alternative lifestyles. To put the city into context, Tübingen was one of the centres of the German student protests of 1968, which took place all over West Germany rejecting traditionalism and authority, which influenced the city's leftist and environmental sensibility. What's more, Tübingen is even an official participant in Veganuary, the annual challenge that encourages people to go vegan for the month of January. It's as common to ask if someone eats meat as it is to ask if they have allergies.

Tübingen is also constantly being redesigned and updated to be ever-more environmentally friendly. Wide and well-integrated bike lanes along with high parking fees makes the city very car unfriendly. An order passed in February 2022 declared that cars will no longer be allowed to drive on the city's central street, which will be reserved for buses and bikes. Students can travel on buses for free on weekends and after 19:00 in the evenings, while bus travel is free for everyone on Saturdays. (The local government even plans to make buses free all the time.)

And a new tax imposed at the beginning of 2022 – with Tübingen being the first city in Germany to implement it – has upgraded the green status of the city even further. The Verpackungssteuer (packaging tax) imposes an extra payment of fifty cents on any disposable packaging, from coffee cups to meal plates. In addition, all **disposable** cutlery like forks, knives and spoons cost twenty cents extra. Even pizza boxes are taxed. Regardless of whether they're made from sustainable or recycled material, anything that is one-time use will be costlier, based on the principle that non-production is better than future recycling or disposal. The tax is already off to an encouraging start: the first few weeks resulted in up to 15% less waste in the city's rubbish bins. The number is only set to **rise**, as more people get in the habit of bringing their own cutlery and restaurants start providing reusable dishes.

The ruling has not gone down well with Tübingen's only McDonald's, however, which is suing the city over the tax. With more than 1,500 restaurants across the country, McDonald's claim it's hard to customise solutions and are arguing for a **uniform** framework as opposed to rules differing across cities. "We agree that the best packaging is the one that is not produced in the first place. But local special paths of individual cities stand in the way of a nationally successful concept," said a spokesperson, as the company is implementing targeted trials of their own reusables system.

Nonetheless, the example of Tübingen shows that paving the way for a greener planet can be achieved on a small scale, proving that small can be powerful, beautiful and inspirational.



Questions and Answers:

1. In paragraph 2, the word “preserved” is closest in meaning to:
a) secure
b) rebuilt
c) maintained
d) antique
2. In paragraph 4, the word “disposable” is closest in meaning to:
a) free
b) single use
c) irreplaceable
d) useful
3. In paragraph 4, the word “rise” is closest in meaning to:
a) begin
b) remain
c) decrease
d) increase
4. In paragraph 5, the word “uniform” is closest in meaning to:
a) standard
b) flexible
c) suitable
d) variable
5. According to paragraph 1, Tübingen is a city that ...
a) is surrounded by nature
b) has many schools
c) is fictional
d) is embarrassing
6. According to paragraph 2, the people of Tübingen are
a) vegan
b) old-fashioned
c) students
d) inclusive
7. According to paragraph 4, so far, the Verpackungssteuer (packaging tax) has been
a) wasteful
b) well-received
c) overpriced
d) unsuccessful



8. According to paragraph 5, what is McDonald's main problem?
a) National schemes
b) Too many locations
c) Tübingen's unique guidelines
d) Cost of uniforms
9. The main purpose of the text is to ...
a) encourage conformity in Germany
b) promote travel to the region
c) showcase a sustainable city
d) change existing laws
10. Which of the following is NOT TRUE about Tübingen according to the passage? (Make sure you read the whole passage)?
a) It is environmentally-friendly
b) The city outlasted warfare
c) Everyone in Tübingen is vegan
d) Public transport is free for select groups
11. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 3?
a) Cycling is a hobby for many people
b) Minimizing the use of private vehicles is a priority
c) People enjoy taking public transport
d) Students travel often in the evening and at weekends
12. Which of the following is NOT TRUE according paragraph 5?
a) McDonald's asks for standardization.
b) McDonald's agrees with Tübingen's environmental perspective.
c) It is challenging to modify a business for one location.
d) McDonald's will never change its policies.
13. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the following sentence? It's as common to ask if someone eats meat as it is to ask if they have allergies.
a) Many people are allergic to meat.
b) Allergies are common in Tübingen.
c) People are used to alternative diets.
d) It is important to know who eats meat.
14. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the following sentence? Non-production is better than future recycling or disposal.
a) Recycling is preferred over discarding.
b) Recycling is the best way to help the environment.
c) Eliminating waste before it is created is most effective.



d) We need to think more about future waste.

15. According to the final paragraph what is meant by the phrase “paving the way”?

a) to move towards

b) to create new roads

c) to implement new laws

d) to make international change

16. What can be inferred by the example of Tübingen in the final paragraph?

a) Tübingen’s changes are minor.

b) Tübingen needs to do more for the environment.

c) Small cities are more beautiful.

d) Small localities can be role models.