

Reading Sample Task 3 - Questions

On 26 November 1922, Howard Carter stood before a sealed door blocking a dark corridor. Behind him stood his patron Lord Carnarvon. Both knew that they were standing in the tomb of the 18th-Dynasty boy king Tutankhamun – the sealing on the now dismantled outer door had made that clear. But the outer door had also shown the unmistakable signs of more than one **forced** entry. Was Tutankhamun still lying peacefully in his tomb? Or had ancient robberies once again thwarted the modern archaeologists? Nervously, his hands trembling, Carter poked a small hole in the left-hand corner of the doorway, lit a candle, and peered inside, before starting to speak.

“As my eyes got accustomed to the lack of light, details of the room within appeared slowly from the darkness: strange animals, paintings, statues and gold – everywhere the glint of gold. For the moment – an eternity it must have seemed to the others standing by – I was struck dumb with amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer, inquired anxiously, ‘Can you see anything?’ it was all I could do to get out the words ‘Yes, wonderful things.’”

Howard Carter was a highly **gifted** artist who became an Egyptologist – a person who studies Ancient Egypt – by accident. Born on 9 May 1874, the youngest of the seven surviving children of the animal painter Samuel Carter and his wife Martha, he was raised in the Norfolk village of Swaffham, where he came under the sponsorship of the Amhersts' household of Didlington Hall. William Amherst Tyssen-Amherst was a keen amateur Egyptologist with a private museum. It was on his recommendation that the Egypt Exploration Fund employed the 17-year-old Carter as an archaeological illustrator.

Carter gained valuable experience working on the rock tombs of Beni Hassan, in the desert city of Amarna, and at Hatshepsut's Deir el-Bahari mortuary temple. Then, in 1899, he was offered a permanent position with the Egyptian Antiquities Service. He spent five productive and successful years in Luxor as antiquities inspector for Southern Egypt before moving to Cairo to become inspector for Northern Egypt. Here his career received an unexpected check. An argument with a group of men led to his resignation from the antiquities service, and in October 1905 he started a new life as an artist and antiquities dealer.

Carter lived a hand-to-mouth existence until he was introduced to Lord Carnarvon, a wealthy **amateur** Egyptologist in need of a professional partner. Together in 1917 they set out to discover the tomb of Tutankhamun. Carter was prepared to strip the Valley of the Kings down to the bedrock if necessary. Carnarvon, who was funding the mission, was at first equally enthusiastic, but by 1922 was having second thoughts. As such, the



partners agreed that the 1922–3 season of excavation would be the last. Digging started on 1 November 1922. Just three days later the entrance to Tutankhamun’s tomb was revealed.

His great discovery saw the end of Carter’s career as an excavator. He was to spend the next decade recording and preserving the tomb and its contents. When the tomb was finally empty, the publication of the results became his top priority. But his health was starting to fail and the publication was never completed. Howard Carter died in London on 2 March 1939.

1. According to the text, what was the most striking feature Carter noticed when he first looked into the room?

- A) The arrangement of objects inside the room
- B) The detailed wall paintings
- C) The large amount of gold objects
- D) The changing light inside the room

2. How did the Amherst family help Howard Carter?

- A) They allowed him access to their museum.
- B) They supported him financially.
- C) They taught him about exploration.
- D) They employed him. B

3. How did Carter’s involvement in the dispute ultimately affect the trajectory of his career?

- A) It redirected his professional path in a significant way
- B) It damaged his standing within the Antiquities Service
- C) It reduced his access to excavation opportunities in Egypt
- D) It had little lasting impact on his work

4. What was Howard Carter's main goal towards the end of his life?

- A) discovering more tombs
- B) preserving historical objects
- C) writing up his discoveries
- D) changing his career

5. Complete the sentence with a word from paragraph 1:

No other _____ had ever entered Tutankhamun's tomb.



6. Complete the sentence with a word from paragraph 2:

Howard Carter was unable to see anything until he had become _____ to the darkness.

7. The word forced in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

- A) unwilling
- B) violent
- C) pressured
- D) unwanted

8. The word gifted in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:

- A) privileged
- B) innovative
- C) accomplished
- D) competent

9. The word amateur in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to:

- A) unqualified
- B) unprofessional
- C) primitive
- D) naïve

10. Carter’s position with the Egyptian Antiquities Service was not supposed to be permanent.

- TRUE
- FALSE
- NOT GIVEN

11. Howard Carter was good at his job in Luxor.

- TRUE
- FALSE
- NOT GIVEN

12. Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon personally emptied the tomb.

- TRUE
- FALSE
- NOT GIVEN



13. What can be inferred about Lord Carnarvon’s state of mind when the tomb was opened? (2 POINTS)

- A) He was anxious and struggling to remain patient
- B) He was doubtful about whether the tomb would contain anything valuable
- C) He was calm and confident in Carter’s judgement
- D) He was focused on the technical process of the excavation

14. What does the text suggest about Carter’s situation before he began working with Lord Carnarvon?

- A) He was continuing successfully in a senior role in Egypt
- B) He was struggling to earn a steady living
- C) He had decided to leave archaeology permanently
- D) He was building a strong reputation as an independent dealer

15. Why might Howard Carter have accepted the offer to work with Lord Carnarvon?

- A) He wanted more control over how his work was carried out
- B) He needed more stable financial support to continue his work
- C) He was seeking greater recognition
- D) He needed support to continue his work at the same level

16. Why did Carter and Carnarvon consider ending their work after the 1922–23 season? (2 POINTS)

- A) They believed their search had reached its limit
- B) They were becoming less confident about continuing
- C) They had lost interest in the search
- D) They were encouraged to focus on other work

