Pyramid Building
(IELTS reading practice)

The most famous pyramid is the Great Pyramid of Giza which is actually only one of over a hundred surviving pyramids.

There is a long-standing question about how the pyramids were built given the lack of technology over 4,000 years ago but scientists are piercing together the puzzle. The blocks which make up the pyramids were hewn from quarries and then transported to pyramids for construction. This was an incredible feat considering the distance that the raw materials had to travel and enormous weight. The transportation of the materials was either by river using a boat or by land using a wooden sledge. Given the softness of the ground, the wheel would have been of little use had it been invented at that time. It is believed that the sand in front of the sledge was wet with water in order to facilitate the movement of the sledge and reduce friction. These sledges were pulled manually or sometimes by using beasts of burden depending on the ease at which the sledges could move over the ground. Interestingly, two thousand years after the pyramid building era of the Ancient Egyptians, the Romans moved stones using similar techniques at Baalbek. Once the blocks arrived at the pyramid construction site, it is thought they were moved into place using a ramp and pulley system.

The Old Kingdom period in Ancient Egyptian history is also known as the pyramid building era. The Ancient Egyptians achieved the most remarkable feats of building work which have still not been surpassed, particularly given the primitive technology used to build them. There is nothing remotely mystical or magical about how the pyramids were built as is commonly thought. Further still, while popular belief is that the Great Pyramid was built using slave labour, this theory has since been debunked. The first building made in a pyramid shape is thought to be the stepped Pyramid which consists of six steps placed on top of each other in a pyramid shape to create the world's first superstructure. The credit to finally achieving a smooth sided pyramid goes to Imhotep, an architect commissioned by King Sneferu. The pyramids were not an instant achievement, but the achievement of trial and error.

Decide if the statements below are True, False or Not Given according to the information in the passage. Write T, F or NG into the boxes.

1. The controversy over the method used in the construction of the pyramids has been solved by scientists.
2. It is possible that Ancient Egyptians could have lubricated paths to aid transportation by sledge.
3. Sleds were dragged by animals not humans.
4. The Romans learned the techniques of moving huge stones from the Ancient Egyptians.
5. The building work of the Ancient Egyptians is unrivalled.
6. Some people believe that magic may have been used by the Ancient Egyptians to build the pyramids.
7. The Great Pyramid was built using slave labour.
8. It took more than one attempt to get the construction of the pyramids right.

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