

Reading Practice

Directions: Read the passage below. Questions 1–15 are based on the content of the passage. Answer each question based on what is stated or implied in the text. Choose the single best answer (A, B, C, or D) for each item.

READING PASSAGE: Cleopatra — The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt

[1] The deadly snake sat in its case. "Bring me the basket!" Cleopatra ordered her servants. Roman soldiers were invading her country, and the queen of Egypt would rather die than live as a prisoner. Cleopatra picked up the snake and let it bite her. Within minutes, she was dead.

[Line 5]

[2] This story has been told for centuries. But did it really happen? Like so much about Cleopatra, no one knows for sure.

[3] We know little about Cleopatra, but some information about her has survived. We know, for example, that she was born in 69 BCE to a Greek family who ruled Egypt for nearly three hundred years. Growing up in Alexandria, Cleopatra studied science and math. She also learned to speak several languages, including Greek, Latin, and Egyptian.

[Line 10]

[4] By the time she became queen at age 18, Egypt—one of the world's richest nations—was in trouble. The Roman Empire was planning to invade. Cleopatra was also at war with her younger brother, Ptolemy. To stop him, Cleopatra persuaded the Roman general Julius Caesar to help her. With Caesar's help, Cleopatra defeated her brother. Caesar also helped Cleopatra preserve Egypt's independence from Rome.

[Line 15]

[5] The partners soon became a couple, and at age 22, Cleopatra had a son. After Caesar's death in 44 BCE, Cleopatra met another powerful Roman, Marc Antony. The pair eventually had three children, and for years they fought to stop Rome from invading Egypt. In the summer of 30 BCE, though, Rome won. Rather than accept defeat, Marc Antony and Cleopatra killed themselves. Cleopatra—Egypt's last pharaoh (ruler)—was 39 years old.

[Line 20]

[6] After Cleopatra died, the Romans invented negative stories about her and destroyed art with her image on it. They didn't want Egyptians to remember their former queen. Over time, earthquakes also destroyed buildings, and the sea around Alexandria rose. Within a few hundred years, most of Cleopatra's world was buried under water. As a result, we know very little about how Cleopatra lived or exactly how she died. Although stories often describe her as beautiful, we don't really know what she looked like.

[Line 25]

[7] But this may be changing. Today, archaeologists have started searching the Mediterranean near Alexandria, Cleopatra's home. So far, they've brought up 20,000 objects from the sea. Many probably existed during Cleopatra's lifetime. On land nearby, other archaeologists have discovered new tombs, and there are signs

that someone important may be buried there. "My dream is to find a statue of Cleopatra," says one explorer. So far, however, neither search has located Cleopatra—yet.



1. What is the main purpose of the reading passage?

- A) To describe the military strategies used by Roman general Julius Caesar
- B) To provide an overview of Cleopatra's life, her conflicts, and ongoing archaeological searches
- C) To argue that Cleopatra was the most powerful ruler in ancient history
- D) To explain how ancient Egyptian buildings were destroyed by underwater earthquakes

2. According to paragraph 1, why did Cleopatra allow a snake to bite her?

- A) She was accidentally bit while reaching into a basket of fruit.
- B) She wanted to demonstrate her bravery to her servants.
- C) She preferred dying to being captured as a Roman prisoner.
- D) She was following an ancient Egyptian religious tradition.

3. The word "invading" in line 2 is closest in meaning to

- A) protecting peacefully
- B) entering by force
- C) trading with
- D) visiting briefly

4. According to paragraph 3, Cleopatra's family original heritage was

- A) Roman
- B) Egyptian
- C) Greek
- D) Mediterranean

5. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a subject or language Cleopatra studied?

- A) Science
- B) Latin
- C) Mathematics
- D) Military tactics

6. The word "persuaded" in line 12 is closest in meaning to

- A) forced someone through fear
- B) convinced someone to do something
- C) paid someone money
- D) commanded someone directly

7. According to paragraph 4, why did Cleopatra seek help from Julius Caesar?

- A) To defeat her younger brother Ptolemy
- B) To help her escape to Rome
- C) To find lost treasure in Alexandria
- D) To build new monuments in Egypt

8. The word "defeat" in line 18 is closest in meaning to

- A) victory
- B) loss
- C) agreement
- D) defense

9. According to the passage, how old was Cleopatra when she died?

- A) 18
- B) 22
- C) 30
- D) 39

10. Why did the Romans destroy art featuring Cleopatra's image after her death?

- A) They needed materials to build Roman roads.
- B) They wanted to erase her memory from Egyptian minds.
- C) The artwork had been damaged by sea water.
- D) They wanted to replace her statues with images of Julius Caesar.

11. What physical factor contributed to hiding Cleopatra's ancient world?

- A) Massive desert sandstorms
- B) Volcanic eruptions across Alexandria
- C) Earthquakes and rising sea levels
- D) Destruction caused by foreign tourists

12. The word "buried" in line 22 is closest in meaning to

- A) covered completely
- B) washed away
- C) built upon
- D) painted over

13. What can be inferred from paragraph 6 about Cleopatra's physical appearance?

- A) She was proven to be the most beautiful woman in Rome.
- B) Historical evidence definitely confirms she was unattractive.
- C) Contemporary depictions and art survive in large quantities.
- D) Popular descriptions of her beauty are not conclusively verified by historical facts.

14. According to paragraph 7, what have underwater archaeologists found so far in the Mediterranean?

- A) Cleopatra's intact tomb
- B) A statue of Cleopatra
- C) 20,000 historical objects
- D) Marc Antony's royal crown

15. What is the overall tone of the passage regarding future discoveries about Cleopatra?

- A) Hopeless, because everything was destroyed by Romans
- B) Cautiously optimistic that new findings may reveal more
- C) Critical of archaeologists searching in the wrong places
- D) Indifferent to historical facts versus popular stories