

Name _____

Date _____

Lost!

For thousands of years, humans have built cities. Some of our oldest cities have managed to maintain pieces of their original characteristics. Other cities have disappeared completely. Devastation from war, famine, disease, and natural disasters has caused many cities that were once bustling centers of civilization to vanish completely.

One of these lost cities belonged to the Anasazi (pronounced "an-uh-SAH-zee") people. The Anasazi lived in Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. They built dwellings along the river that ran through the canyon. For close to 300 years, the Chaco Canyon was the population center of many desert cities. Now, nothing is left of this busy city but ruins. Scientists speculate that drought may have made the Anasazi's food scarce or that some kind of disease killed off many of the people. However, no one knows for sure what happened to the people of the Chaco Canyon.



Another lost city sits high atop the Andes Mountains in Peru: the city of Machu Picchu (pronounced "MA-choo PEE-choo"). It was once among the most powerful cities in South America, because it was home to the Incan emperor. In 1527, its citizens packed up their belongings and moved for unknown reasons. Scientists guess that smallpox, a disease brought by European explorers, was the cause of Machu Picchu's downfall. Today, tourists from all over the world climb thousands of steep stone steps to view the ruins of this formerly majestic city.

Yet another city that is no more was called Pompeii (pronounced "pom-PAY"). This was one of the wealthiest cities of ancient Italy. This beautiful seaside city was a lively center of commerce and trade. However, Mt. Vesuvius was lurking in the distance. Eventually, a storm of lava, smoke, and ash buried the city of Pompeii, putting an end to its prosperity. Scientists have excavated and studied the ruins of Pompeii, which led to new discoveries about ancient civilizations of Europe.

Humans have always built cities as hubs for trade, business, and family life. Cities that have been lost provide information about the past, helping to inform our future. By studying lost cities, we can learn how to preserve our current cities.

1) Which of the following statements provides the best summary of the passage?

- A. Cities of the past and present look different from one another.
- B. Several great cities have fallen into history.
- C. Ancient cities are shrouded in mystery.
- D. Humans built cities thousands of years ago.

- 2) In paragraph 2, the author describes the Anasazi people of the Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. These people most likely “built dwellings along the river that ran through the canyon” because
- A. the Anasazi utilized the river to transport goods using boats
 - B. the river was the safest place to build homes
 - C. it was difficult to find food in the desert
 - D. water is an important resource in the desert
- 3) According to the passage, the city of Machu Picchu was among the most powerful cities in South America because
- A. it was home to the Incan emperor
 - B. it was nestled high atop the Andes Mountains
 - C. powerful European explorers founded the city
 - D. tourists flocked to climb the steps to the city
- 4) Which of the following statements best summarizes the similarities and differences between the three cities the author examines?
- A. All of the cities were “lost,” but the ruins of each reflect a unique civilization and geographic region.
 - B. Each city was founded by native people long ago, although one of the cities was eventually “lost” by its founders.
 - C. All three cities were competitors in the world trade market of their time, but only one city is still thriving today.
 - D. These cities were all destroyed by natural disasters, however, scientists were only able to uncover ruins from one.
- 5) In the final paragraph, the author suggests that we should
- A. get information about how to build thriving cities for a competitive world
 - B. figure out how to protect our cities from disease and famine
 - C. learn from the past to ensure that we do not lose cities in the years to come
 - D. learn about certain customs of ancient civilizations that can be used today

- 6) Choose two options from this list: Chaco Canyon, Machu Picchu, and Pompeii. Compare and contrast these two ancient civilizations. Be sure to use information from the passage in your answer.

Answers and Explanations

1) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

The first paragraph—often called the introduction—can provide clues about the general meaning, or purpose, of a passage. After figuring out the general meaning, or purpose, of a passage, we can determine the best summary. In the first sentence of the first paragraph, the author writes, “For thousands of years, human beings have built cities.” This lets us know that the author will focus on cities in this passage. Next, the author writes, “Other cities have disappeared completely.

Devastation from war, famine, disease, and natural disasters has caused many cities that were once bustling centers of civilization to vanish completely.” Another way of describing things that have disappeared completely or vanished, is to say that they are lost. The author then continues this idea in the beginning of the second and third paragraph, saying, “One of these lost cities belonged to the Anasazi (pronounced “an-uh-SAH-zee”) people” and “Another lost city sits high atop the Andes Mountains in Peru: the city of Machu Picchu (pronounced “MA-choo PEE-choo”).” Using this information, we can tell that the best summary for this passage is “Several great cities have fallen into history.” Therefore choice **(B)** is correct.

The author writes about three cities from the past: the Anasazi who lived in the Chaco Canyon, the Inca of Machu Picchu, and the ancient Italians of Pompeii. All of these cities existed in the past and are no longer present today. But the author does not describe how they looked different from modern cities. “Cities of the past and present look different from one another” is not the best summary for this passage. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

Using the above information above, we can tell that the author describes how three past cities were “lost.” The author provides good guesses about what led to the downfall of each city: drought or disease in the Chaco Canyon, smallpox in Machu Picchu, and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii. This means that the mystery surrounding the circumstances behind how each of these cities became lost, is less of a focus than describing the cities and how they were lost. Using this information, we can tell that “Ancient cities are shrouded in mystery” is not the best summary for this passage, so **(C)** is incorrect.

Although it can be understood that humans indeed built cities thousands of years ago, this is not the main idea of the passage. Instead, the author describes how the cities were “lost.” This lets us know that “Humans built cities thousands of years ago” is not the best summary for this passage. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

2) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “[The Anasazi] built dwellings along the river that ran through the canyon.” We can use clues within this paragraph to help figure out why the Anasazi most likely built their dwellings here. We know that canyons are typically dry, desert-like, places. This idea is reinforced—supported—later in the paragraph when the author writes, “Scientists speculate that drought may have made the Anasazi’s food scarce...” Since drought describes a lack of water, we can conclude that water was a very important resource for these people; a resource so important that a lack of it might have ultimately led to their downfall. This lets us know that they Anasazi most likely “built dwellings along the river that ran through the canyon,” because water is an important resource in the desert. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

The author does not provide any information in this passage to support choices **(A)** or **(B)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Scientists speculate that drought may have made the Anasazi’s food scarce...” Despite this speculation, the author does not provide any information that would lead us to conclude that the Anasazi built dwellings along the river that ran through the canyon because it was difficult to find food in the desert. While it might be true that it is difficult to find food in the desert, this fact does not explain why the Anasazi built dwellings along the river. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

3) A

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “[Machu Picchu] was once among the most powerful cities in South America, because it was home to the Incan emperor.” This lets us know that the city of Machu Picchu was among the most powerful cities in South America because it was home to the Incan emperor. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

The author does not provide any information in the passage to support choices **(B)**, **(C)**, or **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) A

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, the author describes how three past cities were “lost”. The author provides good guesses about what led to the downfall of each city: drought or disease in the Chaco Canyon, smallpox in Machu Picchu, and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii. This means that the all three of the cities described are similar in that they were “lost.” The author also describes the type of people that lived in each city, and the specific geographic region where each was located. In paragraph 2, the author describes the Anasazi in New Mexico. In paragraph 3, the author describes the Inca in Machu Picchu. Paragraph 4 describes the ancient Italians that lived in Pompeii. We can see that each of these civilizations is unique. Also, the author mentions that each one is from a different geographic region: the Anasazi in the desert of North America, the Inca in the Mountains of South America, and the people of Pompeii in Italy. This lets us know that the statement that best summarizes the similarities and differences between the three cities the author examines is: all of the cities were “lost,” but the ruins of each reflect a unique civilization and geographic region.

Therefore **(A)** is correct.

The author never mentions how each city was founded. Also, all of the cities were lost, not just one city. For instance, the author describes how drought or disease in the Chaco Canyon, smallpox in Machu Picchu, and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii led to each city becoming “lost.” Finally, the author does not provide any information to indicate that any of these cities was “lost” by its founder. Using this information, we can tell that the statement, each city was founded by native people long ago, although one of the cities was eventually “lost” by its founders, does not best summarize the similarities and differences between the three cities the author examines. Therefore

(B) is incorrect.

The author does not provide any information in the passage about the world trade market, or the place of each city in the world economy. Also, all of the cities were lost, not just one. For instance, the author describes how drought or disease in the Chaco Canyon, smallpox in Machu Picchu, and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii led to each city becoming “lost.” This means that none of the cities is still thriving today. Using this information, we can tell that the statement, all three cities were competitors in the world trade market of their time, but only one city is still thriving today, does not best summarize the similarities and differences between the three cities the author examines. This means **(C)** is incorrect.

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “Scientists guess that smallpox, a disease brought by European explorers, was the cause of Machu Picchu’s downfall.” Because smallpox was brought by European explorers, we can tell that it is not a natural disaster. This means that a natural disaster did not most likely cause Machu Picchu’s downfall. Using this information, we can tell that the statement, these cities were all destroyed by natural disasters, however, scientists were only able to uncover ruins from one, does not best summarize the similarities and differences between the three cities the author examines. In addition, the ruins from all of the cities were uncovered, which reinforces that this statement is not the best choice. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

5) C

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In the last paragraph, the author writes, “Cities that have been lost provide information about the past, helping to inform our future.” By looking at other sentences around this selection, we can help determine what the author means when he or she says that studying lost cities can help “inform our future.” After this selection, the author writes, “By studying lost cities, we can learn how to preserve our current cities.” This means that preserving our current cities will likely ensure that we do not lose cities in the years to come, since preserving things keeps them in better condition later. Therefore

(C) is correct.

The author does not provide information for us to conclude that the phrase above most nearly means to get information about how to build thriving cities for a competitive world. The author does not focus on how to build thriving cities, he or she instead examines how various thriving cities of the past were “lost,” or collapsed. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

The author does not write specifically enough about how the cities should have protected from disease and famine for us to say that the phrase above most nearly means to figure out how to protect our cities from disease and famine. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

The author does not write about specific customs of the three lost civilizations. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.