Buried Treasure

Scientists ready to dig up Egyptian boat.

Map: Leigh Haeger;  
Boat: Wolfgang Kaehler/Alamy

The buried boat may look similar to this boat, dug up in 1954.

Dig this! Archaeologists in Egypt are digging up and restoring an ancient boat. An archaeologist studies old objects to learn about the past.

The 4,500-year-old vessel, or boat, is buried in an underground room next to the Great Pyramid. Egyptians built the Pyramids thousands of years ago as burial spots for their pharaohs, or kings.

This boat is the second found near the Great Pyramid. A similar boat was dug up in many pieces in 1954. When the vessel was rebuilt, it stretched about 142 feet long. The boat is on display in a museum above the spot where it was discovered.

Some experts think the boats were used to transport the body of the pharaoh Khufu, who built the Great Pyramid, after his death. Others don’t think that theory holds water. They are not sure the boats ever got wet. New research on the second boat could help scientists figure out the boats’ purpose.

“In Egypt, almost everything real had its ... meaning ... in the spiritual world,” says scientist John Darnell. “But there’s a lot of debate as to whether these vessels ever were used or not.”

Experts will begin removing the boat in about 600 pieces and try to rebuild it. Until then, tourists can view images of the buried boat taken by a camera inserted through a hole in the underground room’s ceiling.
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1. What are archaeologists in Egypt digging up and restoring?

   A  an ancient boat  
   B  an archaeologist  
   C  one of the Great Pyramids  
   D  the body of the pharaoh Khufu

2. A similar boat was dug up in many pieces in 1954. What happened after it was dug up?

   A  The Egyptians built the Great Pyramids.  
   B  The pharaoh Khufu died.  
   C  The vessel was rebuilt.  
   D  The vessel was destroyed.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

   "Some experts think the boats were used to transport the body of the pharaoh Khufu, who built the Great Pyramid, after his death. Others don’t think that theory holds water. They are not sure the boats ever got wet. New research on the second boat could help scientists figure out the boats’ purpose."

   Based on the information, what can you infer about both boats?

   A  Both boats were used to transport the body of the pharaoh Khufu.  
   B  Both boats never got wet.  
   C  Both boats were built before the Great Pyramid.  
   D  Both boats were probably used for the same purpose.

4. Why might scientists be rebuilding the boat?

   A  to see if it sails  
   B  to transport the body of the pharaoh Khufu  
   C  to empty the underground room  
   D  to figure out the purpose of the boat

5. What is the main idea of this text?

   A  Scientists are studying and restoring an ancient boat in Egypt.  
   B  The pharaoh Khufu built the Great Pyramid.  
   C  Tourists can view images of a buried boat.  
   D  An archaeologist studies old objects to learn about the past.
6. Read these sentences from the text.

“Some experts think the boats were used to transport the body of the pharaoh Khufu, who built the Great Pyramid, after his death. Others don’t think that theory holds water. They are not sure the boats ever got wet.”

What does the author mean by the sentence "Others don’t think that theory holds water" in this excerpt?

A  Other experts think that theory seems to be right.
B  Other experts think that theory seems to be wrong.
C  Other experts think that theory needs to be tested.
D  Other experts think that theory doesn't need to be tested.

7. Read these sentences from the text.

“Experts will begin removing the boat in about 600 pieces and try to rebuild it. Until then, tourists can view images of the buried boat taken by a camera inserted through a hole in the underground room’s ceiling.”

What word or phrase could replace "Until then" in the last sentence without changing the sentence’s meaning?

A  For example
B  Moreover
C  In conclusion
D  In the meantime

8. What does an archaeologist do?

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9. Why do archaeologists plan to rebuild the ancient boat? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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10. Why may archaeologists want to figure out the purpose of the ancient boat? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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