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LEVEL 2 AWARD THINKING AND REASONING SKILLS

B902/01/RB Unit 2 Thinking and Reasoning Skills Case Study

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- This Resource Booklet is for examination preparation. You will be given a clean copy in the examination.

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INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR

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DOCUMENT 1

The Curse of Tutankhamen

When a pharaoh died, the Ancient Egyptians believed that his tomb should be a way of preparing him for the next world where he would become one with the gods. The body of the pharaoh was mummified, in order to preserve it for use in the afterlife. The tombs were often elaborate, underground mausoleums containing all the things that the pharaoh would supposedly need in the next world. The tombs contained treasure, jewellery, clothes, food and wine, and even furniture and favourite pets, so that the pharaoh would be able to live in luxury and comfort in the next world. The Ancient Egyptians often built false doors and hidden rooms to fool thieves and protect the tomb and sometimes even placed a curse at the entrance to deter intruders.

Between 1539 and 1075 BC the tombs of the pharaohs were built in an area known as the Valley of the Kings near Luxor in Egypt. When the Ancient Egyptians built and prepared these tombs, they did not intend for them ever to be seen again. However, centuries of tomb robbery meant it was rare for 20th century archaeologists to find a tomb intact. Therefore it is not surprising that archaeologists were excited by every new discovery in the Valley of the Kings.

By 1922, sixty-two tombs had already been discovered in the Valley of the Kings, and most archaeologists believed there was nothing left to discover there. Howard Carter was an exception to this - he was searching for the tomb of a boy king named Tutankhamen. After many years of searching and excavation, interrupted by World War 1 and difficulties with funding, Carter discovered the tomb he had been looking for in November 1922. It was intact - the best preserved tomb to be discovered by far. The world's media was excited to report what the tomb would reveal, but Carter signed a contract with The Times, giving them exclusive rights to photograph and report on his findings. No other newspaper had direct access to the facts about the excavation of Tutankhamen's tomb.

Twenty-two people were present at the opening of the tomb, including Carter and his financial backer Lord Carnarvon. Within months of the opening, Lord Carnarvon died following an infected mosquito bite. A media frenzy about 'The Curse of Tutankhamen' followed, fuelled by reports of the death of Lord Carnarvon's dog at the same time as its master and a loss of electricity across Cairo. By 1929, eleven people connected with the tomb's opening (some relatives and employees of those present) had died. Newspaper reports varied, but by 1935, some had connected up to twenty-one deaths with the curse.

DOCUMENT 2

A selection of early newspaper reports about Tutankhamen's tomb

Nottingham Post, April 10, 1926

THE CURSE OF LUXOR

COINCIDENCE OF MARK ON FACE OF TUTANKHAMEN

When the body of Tutankhamen was revealed to those who entered his tomb, a mark was found on his face. The mark left by the fatal mosquito bite on the face of the late Lord Carnarvon was in exactly the same position.

This remarkable coincidence is one of the many incidents in connection with the Luxor operations that has given colour to the claims of the superstitious, who foretold all kinds of disasters for those who tampered with the tombs of the Pharaohs.

In conversation with a *Nottingham Post* representative yesterday, Arthur Weignall, respected Egyptologist, who has made a special study of Egyptian superstitions in general and of Tutankhamen's reign in particular, pointed out that the object of the curse was to terrify the tomb robbers of the period. "While I cannot exactly say that I believe in such curses, I must admit that some very strange coincidences have happened in connection with the Luxor excavations", said Mr Weignall. "For example there was the case of Howard Carter's canary. On the very day on which the tomb of Tutankhamen was opened, a cobra, than which there is no rarer snake in Egypt during winter months, got in to the house and swallowed the bird. It is a known fact that the cobra was a symbol of royalty in Ancient Egypt."

*Aberdeen Journal – Friday
22 November 1929*

Curse of the Pharaohs

The death of the Hon. Richard Bethell recalls the fact that he was associated with Lord Carnarvon's party during the excavations at the tomb of Tutankhamen in the Valley of Kings in Egypt seven years ago. Since the tomb of the Ancient Egyptian king was disturbed and its treasures removed ten of the people concerned in the excavations have now died, several suddenly.

Lord Carnarvon himself died from a mosquito bite six weeks after he penetrated the tomb, and eight of his other assistants have since died.

Is the curse of the Pharaohs still at work?

*Western Morning News, Devon
– Tuesday 03 December 1935*

"CURSE" OF PHARAOHS

Doctor's Death Mystery

TUT-ANKH-AMEN'S TOMB DISCOVERER

"Death shall come on swift wings to him that toucheth the tomb of a Pharaoh."

So runs the curse of the ancient Kings of Egypt, which is again recalled by the death of Dr. James Henry Breasted, the well-known Orientalist, who was one of the discoverers of Tutankhamen's Tomb.

Dr. Breasted died of a mysterious illness, with which he was stricken a week ago, while aboard the S.S. Conte Di Savoia, on his way to the United States.

His illness was first diagnosed as tropical malaria, but was later described as an undetermined malady. He was 70 years of age. Since 1922, when Howard Carter uncovered the mummy at Luxor, more than twenty of those concerned in the excavation at the tomb have died, several of them suddenly.

Lord Carnarvon, another discoverer of the tomb, died immediately after it had been opened.

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DOCUMENT 5

Adapted from a report on a 'Tour Egypt' website advertising travel packages to Egypt

When, in November of 1922, Howard Carter discovered the Tomb of Tutankhamen, the world was really very different from how it is today. It was not a time of instant, live television coverage by investigative reporters. Rather, the world of media still belonged to newspapers, and information travelled much more slowly, and less reliably. It was a more superstitious time, and the media was fully adjusted to take advantage of this to sell their publications. It was a time when reporters often simply made up facts in order to sensationalise their stories and, when in print, people believed them.

The treasures that Howard Carter discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb were factually sensational, and so the media went into a frenzy covering the event, and the world paid attention.

In late March of 1923, a novelist named Marie Corelli published a warning that there would be dire consequences for anyone who had entered the sealed tomb. Perhaps this revelation was inspired by the fact that on the day Howard Carter opened the tomb, his pet canary was swallowed by a cobra.

Lord Carnarvon had been in poor health for over 20 years following a motoring accident. When he died in Cairo on April 5th, 1923, only a few weeks after Marie Corelli's warnings, newspapers and other media throughout the world simply went crazy. As often as not, they made up the facts as they went along. It was said that at the moment of Lord Carnarvon's death, the lights went out in Cairo (an event that is still not uncommon today), and that back in England his dog, Susie, howled and died in the same instant. These reported events are difficult to prove or disprove.

However, other facts were simply invented by the press. One newspaper printed a curse reportedly found in the tomb: "They who enter this sacred tomb shall swift be visited by wings of death."

According to one source, more than 20 people associated with the find died within a decade of its discovery. In reality, far fewer died during this first decade, while many others lived to an old age. For example, the curse should have laid squarely on the shoulders of Howard Carter himself, but he lived another 17 years, dying just prior to his 65th birthday. Yet he had spent about a decade working in the tomb. Others likewise lived long and fruitful lives.

DOCUMENT 6a

A group of students who have been learning about Ancient Egypt have the following discussion in class:

James: It wasn't a curse that killed these people. It's not surprising that people got sick after going in the tomb because it sealed off dead bodies for thousands of years. Diseases breed in places where there are corpses.

Jothan: I don't think that the Ancient Egyptians would have bothered to put a curse on Tutankhamen's tomb anyway, as he wasn't a pharaoh for very long.

Helen: The 'curse' was obviously just made up by the media to sell papers. Journalists either had to make stuff up or sit back and let everyone buy *The Times* instead for the exclusive story on the tomb.

Nabeela: That's a good point. It wasn't fair of Carnarvon and Carter to sign a contract giving *The Times* exclusive rights to the facts, because it meant that other newspaper reporters couldn't get the information they needed to do their jobs. It's a bit like a teacher setting a homework task to the whole class but only giving certain students the textbook.

Emile: It is a fascinating story, but there is nothing to it. People do die, of illness, accidents, and natural causes, and the older they are the more likely they are to die. If they had all died within 6 months of the tomb's opening it might make you sit up and take notice, but that was not the case. The Curse of King Tut is a great yarn but in reality it is just an early example of journalists making up a 'conspiracy theory' to sell newspapers. Journalists should only ever report facts.

Ollie: Howard Carter died in London quite a few years after the event but if there really was a curse or deadly toxins in the tomb he would have died earlier. Also, the other deaths linked to the tomb are easily explained in other ways. Death by infected mosquito bite was not such an odd thing in an era when medical standards were much lower than today. The toxin story is just as far-fetched as the curse!

Georgina: If you ask me, it serves the archaeologists who dug up the tomb right if they got ill and died, whether it was a curse or a toxin! The Ancient Egyptians put huge amounts of effort and time into making that tomb, because they believed that Tutankhamen would need that treasure and other stuff in the next world. Archaeologists should respect those beliefs and leave well alone.

Julie: My auntie went to Egypt on her last holiday and went on a day trip to a pharaoh's tomb that is supposed to be cursed. When they went to the gift shop after visiting the tomb her bag was snatched and later that day she started with a tummy bug that kept her in bed for the rest of the holiday. So there must be something funny going on in those tombs.

DOCUMENT 6b

Student research

The students carried out research into the deaths of people who were involved with the excavation of Tutankhamen's tomb. From what they were able to find out, they produced the following table.

Name	Year of death	Age at death	Link to the tomb	Entered the tomb?
Adamson, Richard	1980	81	Guard - slept in tomb	yes
Bethell, Richard	1929	46	Carter's personal secretary	unknown
Breasted, James H.	1935	70	Archaeologist	yes
Burton, Harry	1939	unknown	Photographer	yes
Callender, A. R.	1939	unknown	Assistant to Carter	yes
Capart, Jean	1947	70	Archaeologist	yes
Carter, Howard	1939	64	Archaeologist	yes
Derry, Douglas	1969	87	Analysed Tutankhamen's mummy	unknown
Engelbach, Reginald	1946	58	Museum worker	unknown
Gardiner, Sir Alan	1963	84	Language specialist who handled all the written material found in the tomb	unknown
Hall, Lindsley F.	1939	unknown	Draftsman, present at all tomb procedures	yes
Hauser, Walter	1939	unknown	Draftsman, present at all tomb procedures	yes
Herbert, George (Lord Carnarvon)	1923	56	Egyptologist and financial backer	yes
Herbert, Lady Evelyn	1980	78	Lord Carnarvon's daughter	yes
Lacau, Pierre	1965	92	Egyptologist, present at all tomb procedures	yes
Lefebvre, Gustave	1957	78	Worked for Cairo Museum	unknown
Lucas, Alfred	1950	79	Chemist for Egypt Government	unknown
Lythgoe, A. M.	1934	66	Worked for Metropolitan Museum (New York) Examined Tutankhamen's open sarcophagus	no
Mace, Arthur C.	1928	54	Worked for Metropolitan Museum (New York)	yes
Winlock, Herbert E.	1950	66	Worked for Metropolitan Museum (New York)	unknown

DOCUMENT 7

Adapted from the website of World Explorer Tours & Travel Inc. (A website advertising travel packages to Egypt.)

TRAVEL EGYPT

Tutankhamen (King Tut) was not a major player in Egyptian Pharaonic history, or at least, in comparison with other pharaohs. In fact, prior to Howard Carter's discovery of his tomb, almost nothing was known of him. Interestingly, the one disappointment in Carter's discovery was that there wasn't much documentation found within his tomb. Therefore, we still know relatively little about Tutankhamen. For example, even who his father was remains a topic of some debate. This has not prevented writers from producing volumes of material on the Pharaoh.

Tutankhamen's famous tomb is certainly less magnificent than those of other pharaohs of Egypt, yet, because of it, Tutankhamen has remained in our memory for many years, and will probably continue to do so for many years to come. Regardless of all the myths surrounding his tomb's discovery, including the 'curse of the mummy' and other media hype, it is all a blessing to the boy-king. The ancient pharaohs believed that if their name was remembered, their soul would live on, so not even the powerful Rameses the Great's soul can be as healthy as King Tut's.

DOCUMENT 8

An extract from an educational website for children

THOSE WHO ENTER THIS SACRED TOMB SHALL SWIFT BE VISITED BY WINGS OF DEATH

When Howard Carter discovered the Ancient Egyptian tomb of Tutankhamen in 1922, this curse warned him and any others who might dare to enter of the danger ahead.

In spite of this, the excavation team entered the tomb on that fateful day, unaware of the string of deaths and the media frenzy that would follow.

Paintings on the walls of Ancient Egyptian tombs suggest that mummies could return to life and seek revenge. The earliest ghost story featuring a mummy's curse was in 1699, and this is an idea that has captured the imagination of many an author ever since. But was the curse of Tutankhamen just that – a ghost story made up to scare people?

The case was examined by Egyptologist Herbert E Winlock twelve years after the tomb had been opened. He studied the people involved in the different parts of the excavation – the opening of the tomb itself, the opening of the sarcophagus after it had been removed from the tomb, and the unwrapping of Tutankhamen's mummy found inside the sarcophagus.

Event	Number of people there	Number of deaths after 10 years
Burial chamber opening	26	6
Sarcophagus opening	22	2
Mummy unwrapping	10	0

This table shows that six people out of the 26 who had been present at the opening had died within ten years. 22 of those same people were present at the opening of the sarcophagus, but only two of them had died within ten years. Only ten of the original 26 were present for the unwrapping of the mummy, but none of those ten had died within ten years! The evidence seems to suggest that the people who had the most contact with the mummy were least affected by the curse!

So, there is no mysterious curse after all.

We can learn an important lesson from the way that people reacted to the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Back in the 1920's people were quick to believe newspaper stories about a curse so modern archaeologists should be very careful what they tell the press about the things they find in tombs.

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