Name: _____ Date: _____

Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

Circle group

In southern Africa, in the country called Zimbabwe, there are the ruins of a big old city. It is called Great Zimbabwe. Many centuries ago, thousands of people lived there. It was a center of trade and power.

The city is famous for its stone walls. Builders cut granite into blocks. They stacked the blocks in tidy rows. They used no mortar to hold them. One curved wall, in the Great Enclosure, is taller than a house. It circles a wide space. The walls showed the strength of the rulers.

The city grew rich from trade. People raised cattle. Merchants carried gold and ivory toward the coast of the Indian Ocean. Ships took goods to far lands. Archaeologists found glass beads and pottery from far places in the ruins. This shows the trade.

The ancestors of today's Shona-speaking people built the city. Later, people moved away. Maybe food or firewood ran short. Nobody knows for sure.

Questions

1. Where are the ruins of Great Zimbabwe?

_____

_____

2. How did the builders hold the stone blocks together?

_____

_____

3. What did merchants carry toward the coast?

_____

_____

4. What did archaeologists find in the ruins that shows trade?

_____

_____

5. Who built Great Zimbabwe?

_____

_____

6. Why do beads from far away show long-distance trade?

_____

_____

Words to know

granite: a very hard gray rock used for building
mortar: a paste that holds bricks or stones together
merchants: people who buy and sell goods
ivory: the hard white material that makes up elephant tusks
archaeologists: scientists who study the past by digging up old objects

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

Triangle group

In southern Africa, in the country now called Zimbabwe, stand the ruins of a once-great city. Today it is known as Great Zimbabwe. Many centuries ago, thousands of people lived there, and it was an important center of trade and power.

The most striking thing about the city is its stone walls. Builders cut granite into blocks and stacked them in tidy rows, and they used no mortar to hold the blocks together. One curving wall in the area called the Great Enclosure is taller than a house, and it circles a wide space. People still wonder exactly how each wall was used, but they surely showed the strength of the rulers who ordered them built.

Great Zimbabwe grew rich through trade. People there raised cattle, and merchants carried gold and ivory from the region toward cities on the coast of the Indian Ocean. From the coast, goods traveled by ship to lands far away. Archaeologists have found glass beads and pottery that came from distant places buried in the ruins, which is evidence of this long-distance trade.

Scholars have also shown that the ancestors of today's Shona-speaking people built the city. In time, people moved away from Great Zimbabwe, perhaps because food or firewood ran short, but nobody knows for sure.

Questions

1. Where are the ruins of Great Zimbabwe?

_____

_____

2. How did the builders hold the stone blocks together?

_____

_____

3. What did merchants carry toward the coast?

_____

_____

4. What have archaeologists found in the ruins that shows trade?

_____

_____

5. Who built Great Zimbabwe?

_____

_____

6. Why would beads from far away be proof of long-distance trade?

_____

_____

Words to know

granite: a very hard gray rock used for building
mortar: a paste that holds bricks or stones together
merchants: people who buy and sell goods
ivory: the hard white material that makes up elephant tusks
archaeologists: scientists who study the past by digging up old objects

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

Square group

In southern Africa, within the borders of the country now called Zimbabwe, lie the remains of a once-magnificent city. Today it is known as Great Zimbabwe. Many centuries ago, thousands of people made their homes there, and the city served as an important center of both commerce and political power.

The most impressive aspect of the city is its stone walls. Builders cut granite into blocks and arranged them in neat rows, and they used no mortar whatsoever to bind the blocks together. One curving wall in the section known as the Great Enclosure is taller than a house, and it encircles a wide space. Scholars still debate precisely how each wall was used, but the walls undoubtedly displayed the strength of the rulers who commanded their construction.

Great Zimbabwe prospered through trade. Its people raised cattle, and merchants transported gold and ivory from the surrounding region toward the cities along the coast of the Indian Ocean. From those coastal ports, goods traveled by ship to lands far across the water. Archaeologists have uncovered glass beads and pottery originating from distant places among the ruins, which provides evidence of this long-distance trade.

Scholars have also demonstrated that the ancestors of today's Shona-speaking people built the city. Eventually, the population moved away from Great Zimbabwe, perhaps because food or firewood became scarce, but nobody can say for certain.

Questions

1. Where are the remains of Great Zimbabwe located?

_____

_____

2. How did the builders bind the stone blocks together?

_____

_____

3. What did merchants transport toward the coast?

_____

_____

4. What have archaeologists uncovered among the ruins that provides evidence of trade?

_____

_____

5. According to scholars, who built the city?

_____

_____

6. Why do beads from distant places count as evidence of long-distance trade?

_____

_____

Words to know

granite: a very hard gray rock used for building
mortar: a paste that holds bricks or stones together
merchants: people who buy and sell goods
ivory: the hard white material that makes up elephant tusks
archaeologists: scientists who study the past by digging up old objects

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

Easier · 157 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.7

1. In southern Africa, in the country called Zimbabwe.
2. They used no mortar. They stacked the blocks in tidy rows.
3. Gold and ivory.
4. Glass beads and pottery from far places.
5. The ancestors of today's Shona-speaking people.
6. People must have carried them there from other places.

Triangle: Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

This passage · 215 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.6

1. In southern Africa, in the country now called Zimbabwe.
2. They did not use mortar. They stacked the blocks in tidy rows.
3. Gold and ivory.
4. Glass beads and pottery that came from distant places.
5. The ancestors of today's Shona-speaking people.
6. They could only have reached Great Zimbabwe if people carried them there from other places.

Square: Great Zimbabwe and Its Walls of Stone

Harder · 230 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 10

1. In southern Africa, within the country now called Zimbabwe.
2. They did not use mortar. They arranged the blocks in neat rows.
3. Gold and ivory.
4. Glass beads and pottery from distant places.
5. The ancestors of today's Shona-speaking people.
6. They could have reached Great Zimbabwe only if people carried them there from elsewhere.