Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. The Oracle's political power depended entirely on its credibility as a genuinely divine source — if cities believed they could purchase favorable answers, they would have no reason to trust the responses, consult Delphi, or make consequential decisions based on its authority. The entire system of Panhellenic political deference to Delphi collapsed if the Oracle was merely a market for prophecies rather than a channel for divine knowledge.

2. The Croesus example shows that the Oracle crafted responses ambiguous enough to remain technically valid regardless of outcome — 'destroy a great empire' worked whether Croesus won or lost. This allowed Delphi to maintain its reputation through defeats as well as victories by placing the burden of interpretation on the questioner rather than the Oracle, ensuring that failed prophecies could always be explained as misinterpretation rather than inaccuracy.

Multiple Choice

1. A

2. B

3. A

Matching

1-C, 2-D, 3-B, 4-E, 5-A

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) Parnassus, 2) Athenians, 3) Theodosius

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Deliberate ambiguity is not necessarily evidence of fraud — the priests genuinely believed in Apollo's inspiration and may have understood ambiguity as reflecting the inherent uncertainty of divine knowledge. The reading also confirms real geological conditions (ethylene gas) that could produce altered consciousness in the Pythia. The ambiguity served a practical function: it allowed Delphi to maintain credibility across centuries by ensuring responses could always be retrospectively interpreted as correct.

Q2: Delphi served multiple functions simultaneously because its religious neutrality gave it credibility as an arbiter in political disputes, its accumulation of tribute from across the Greek world made it financially powerful, and its role as a meeting point

for delegations from rival city-states naturally transformed it into a diplomatic space. Religion, politics, and finance reinforced each other: each function enhanced the others.

Q3: Demolishing Kastri to excavate Delphi shows that major archaeological projects sometimes displace living communities — a form of harm that modern archaeology increasingly tries to avoid. Like Athens, where construction constantly unearths ancient remains, Delphi illustrates that the ancient past and the modern present compete for the same physical space, and archaeological access always involves choices about whose needs and interests take priority.