Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. The mixed objects suggest the two cultures were in contact through trade, traveling craftspeople, or diplomatic exchange, even though their artistic traditions were very different. Civilizations rarely develop in total isolation, and this evidence shows that Bronze Age China was more interconnected than previously assumed.

2. It is not a failure, because the reading says Sanxingdui has forced historians to reconsider a longstanding assumption about ancient China. Dr. Chen is confused because the altar combines Sanxingdui motifs with vessel shapes she recognizes as Shang. Archaeological knowledge is built by revising earlier conclusions when new evidence does not fit, which is why she says the chapter on Bronze Age China must be rewritten again.

Multiple Choice

1. A

2. D

3. A

Matching

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

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) unknown, 2) burned, 3) Shang

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Every other known Bronze Age Chinese culture has connections to the broader Chinese cultural tradition — recognizable art styles, ritual practices linked to later texts, or overlap with the Shang Dynasty. Sanxingdui's objects have no parallels anywhere: the protruding-eye masks, the sacred tree, and the ritual deposit method all suggest a completely independent cultural tradition that developed separately in the Sichuan Basin.

Q2: Deliberately breaking and burning objects before burial suggests they were being 'killed' or deactivated so their spiritual power could be released for the gods or ancestors. This is a pattern seen in other ancient cultures where valuable objects are ritually destroyed rather than reused, indicating that the act of destruction was itself the offering.

Q3: A discovery that confirms known facts advances knowledge incrementally. A discovery that cannot be explained with existing frameworks forces scholars to ask new questions, develop new methods, and fundamentally reconsider what they thought they knew. Sanxingdui revealed an entire civilization that was completely absent from the historical record, expanding the map of human history in a way that confirmatory finds cannot.