Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. When an artifact is removed without documentation, we lose its provenience — the specific location, depth, and surrounding material that tells archaeologists where and when it was used. In the case of a cuneiform tablet, this means losing information about which city or scribal school produced it, which would reveal something about how the Gilgamesh tradition was transmitted across Mesopotamia.

2. Amira's work of cataloguing and preserving the fragment ensures that its information survives for future scholars. Like Gilgamesh building the walls of Uruk, scholars who document and preserve the past create something that outlasts their own lives — a record that continues to inform and instruct long after the individual is gone.

Multiple Choice

1. A

2. B

3. C

Matching

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

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) tablets, 2) Utnapishtim, 3) serpent

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Gilgamesh's grief is psychologically realistic — he refuses for days to accept that Enkidu is dead. This emotional depth transforms the epic from a simple story of heroic deeds into a meditation on loss, love, and the terror of mortality. The grief is recognizable to modern readers precisely because it describes universal human experience.

Q2: In the Epic, the gods flood the earth because humans are too noisy — an arbitrary, almost petty reason. In Genesis, God floods the earth because of human moral corruption. The difference suggests Mesopotamian theology was less moralistic: the gods were powerful forces to be appeased, not moral authorities demanding righteous behavior. Later religious traditions shifted toward a more ethical divine relationship.

Q3: The Epic was completely unknown to historians for over two millennia, which means our picture of ancient literature was fundamentally incomplete until 1872. This should make us humble: there may be other major works still buried, still unreadable, or destroyed. What we currently know about ancient civilizations is only what has survived and been recovered — a fraction of what once existed.