Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. The principle is that context — where an object is found, what it is found near, at what depth — is as important as the object itself. In a ritual space like a cenote, an object's position may indicate what it was offered with, who deposited it, and when, information that is permanently lost the moment the object is moved without documentation.

2. Dr. Sousa photographs, logs coordinates, and maps relationships before removal, preserving a complete record of the find's context. Thompson's dredge physically mixed objects from different periods, destroying all stratigraphic information and making it impossible to determine which objects were deposited together or in what sequence.

Multiple Choice

1. A

2. B

3. C

Matching

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

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) Peabody, 2) Colombia, 3) 27

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: The cenote was a sacred entrance to Xibalba and associated with Chaac, the rain god, giving it profound religious meaning during droughts and crises. Practically, it was also one of the only freshwater sources in a region without rivers, making control of the cenote a matter of survival as well as spiritual authority.

Q2: Thompson removed objects without Mexican government authorization, committing what modern law would consider cultural property theft. This reflects a broader pattern of colonial-era archaeologists treating heritage objects as collectibles to be taken rather than as belonging to the communities and nations where they were found.

Q3: Scientific analysis revealed the cenote served complex ritual purposes over centuries, not simply as a site of virgin sacrifice. Human remains show multiple ages and sexes, and gold objects came from distant regions, suggesting the cenote

attracted offerings from a vast network and served as a drought-petition site rather than a regular execution ground.