Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. The inside perspective reminds us that the people who participated in these rituals may not have seen them as barbaric — they were embedded in a belief system that gave the act meaning. Archaeologists must interpret evidence within its cultural context rather than judging past practices by modern standards, while still acknowledging the human cost.

2. Ninsun's thoughts reveal that even royal servants had lives connected to the ordinary world of farming and irrigation. Archaeology helps us access both worlds: royal tombs show elite power and belief, while residential archaeology and cuneiform tablets from private homes reveal the daily concerns of ordinary Mesopotamians.

Multiple Choice

1. A

2. D

3. B

Matching

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

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) moon, 2) British Museum, 3) Pennsylvania

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: The Great Death Pit contained 74 individuals, mostly women, arranged in rows and wearing court finery, with small cups near each body. It suggests mass ritual killing to accompany a royal burial, which is extraordinary evidence of how absolute royal power was in Sumerian society. Recent analysis showing skull trauma adds complexity to whether deaths were fully voluntary.

Q2: British Museum curators argue they provide world-class conservation and that the museum's international audience allows millions to see it. Iraqi scholars counter that the artifact belongs to Iraq's cultural heritage and that its removal under colonial conditions was unjust. Both positions involve legitimate concerns about preservation, ownership, and historical justice.

Q3: The residential neighborhood reveals how ordinary people lived: two-story courtyard houses with basic plumbing, private business records, school tablets, and personal letters. The royal tombs show elite wealth and ritual, but they cannot tell

us what an average family ate for dinner, how they conducted business, or what children were learning in school.