

## Reading Practice Set 1

### Agriculture, Iron, and the Bantu Peoples

1. There is evidence of agriculture in Africa prior to 3000 B.C. It may have developed independently, but many scholars believe that the spread of agriculture and iron throughout Africa linked it to the major centers of the Near East and Mediterranean world. The drying up of what is now the Sahara desert had pushed many peoples to the south into sub-Saharan Africa. These peoples settled at first in scattered hunting-and-gathering bands, although in some places near lakes and rivers, people who fished, with a more secure food supply, lived in larger population concentrations. Agriculture seems to have reached these people from the Near East, since the first domesticated crops were millets and sorghums whose origins are not African but West Asian. Once the idea of planting diffused, Africans began to develop their own crops, such as certain varieties of rice, and they demonstrated a continued receptiveness to new imports. The proposed areas of the domestication of African crops lie in a band that extends from Ethiopia across southern Sudan to West Africa. Subsequently, other crops, such as bananas, were introduced from Southeast Asia.
2. Livestock also came from outside Africa. Cattle were introduced from Asia, as probably were domestic sheep and goats. Horses were apparently introduced by the Hyksos invaders of Egypt (1780–1560 B.C.) and then spread across the Sudan to West Africa. Rock paintings in the Sahara indicate that horses and chariots were used to traverse the desert and that by 300–200 B.C., there were trade routes across the Sahara. Horses were adopted by peoples of the West African savannah, and later their powerful cavalry forces allowed them to carve out large empires. Finally, the camel was introduced around the first century A.D. This was an important innovation, because the camel’s ability to thrive in harsh desert conditions and to carry large loads cheaply made it an effective and efficient means of transportation. The camel transformed the desert from a barrier into a still difficult, but more accessible, route of trade and communication.
3. Iron came from West Asia, although its routes of diffusion were somewhat different than those of agriculture. Most of Africa presents a curious case in which societies moved directly from a technology of stone to iron without passing through the intermediate stage of copper or bronze metallurgy, although some early copper-working sites have been found in West Africa. Knowledge of iron making penetrated into the forests and savannahs of West Africa at roughly the same time that iron making was reaching Europe. Evidence of iron making has been found in Nigeria, Ghana, and Mali.
4. This technological shift caused **profound** changes in the complexity of African societies. Iron represented power. In West Africa the blacksmith who made tools and weapons had an



important place in society, often with special religious powers and functions. Iron hoes, which made the land more productive, and iron weapons, which made the warrior more powerful, had symbolic meaning in a number of West African societies. Those who knew the secrets of making iron gained ritual and sometimes political power.

5. Unlike in the Americas, where metallurgy was a very late and limited development, Africans had iron from a relatively early date, developing ingenious furnaces to produce the high heat needed for production and to control the amount of air that reached the carbon and iron ore necessary for making iron. Much of Africa moved right into the Iron Age, taking the basic technology and adapting it to local conditions and resources.
  
6. The diffusion of agriculture and later of iron was accompanied by a great movement of people who may have carried these innovations. These people probably originated in eastern Nigeria. Their migration may have been set in motion by an increase in population caused by a movement of peoples fleeing the desiccation, or drying up, of the Sahara. They spoke a language, proto-Bantu (“bantu” means “the people”), which is the parent tongue of a large number of Bantu languages still spoken throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Why and how these people spread out into central and southern Africa remains a mystery, but archaeologists believe that their iron weapons allowed them to conquer their hunting-gathering opponents, who still used stone implements. Still, the process is uncertain, and peaceful migration—or simply rapid demographic growth—may have also caused the Bantu explosion.



**Directions: Now answer the questions.**

1. According to paragraph 1, why do researchers doubt that agriculture developed independently in Africa?
  - (A) African lakes and rivers already provided enough food for people to survive without agriculture.
  - (B) The earliest examples of cultivated plants discovered in Africa are native to Asia.
  - (C) Africa's native plants are very difficult to domesticate.
  - (D) African communities were not large enough to support agriculture.
  
2. In paragraph 1, what does the author imply about changes in the African environment during this time period?
  - (A) The climate was becoming milder, allowing for a greater variety of crops to be grown.
  - (B) Although periods of drying forced people south, they returned once their food supply was secure.
  - (C) Population growth along rivers and lakes was dramatically decreasing the availability of fish.
  - (D) A region that had once supported many people was becoming a desert where few could survive.
  
3. According to paragraph 2, camels were important because they
  - (A) were the first domesticated animal to be introduced to Africa
  - (B) allowed the people of the West African savannahs to carve out large empires
  - (C) helped African peoples defend themselves against Egyptian invaders
  - (D) made it cheaper and easier to cross the Sahara
  
4. The word "profound" in the passage is closest in meaning to
  - (A) fascinating
  - (B) far-reaching
  - (C) necessary
  - (D) temporary
  
5. The word "ritual" in the passage is closest in meaning to
  - (A) military
  - (B) physical
  - (C) ceremonial
  - (D) permanent



6. According to paragraph 4, all of the following were social effects of the new metal technology in Africa EXCEPT:
- (A) Access to metal tools and weapons created greater social equality.
  - (B) Metal weapons increased the power of warriors.
  - (C) Iron tools helped increase the food supply.
  - (D) Technical knowledge gave religious power to its holders.
7. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- (A) While American iron makers developed the latest furnaces, African iron makers continued using earlier techniques.
  - (B) Africans produced iron much earlier than Americans, inventing technologically sophisticated heating systems.
  - (C) Iron making developed earlier in Africa than in the Americas because of the ready availability of carbon and iron ore.
  - (D) Both Africa and the Americas developed the capacity for making iron early, but African metallurgy developed at a slower rate.
8. Paragraph 6 mentions all of the following as possible causes of the “Bantu explosion” EXCEPT
- (A) superior weapons
  - (B) better hunting skills
  - (C) peaceful migration
  - (D) increased population



9. In the paragraph below, there is a missing sentence. Look at the paragraph and indicate (A, B, C and D) where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

**These people had a significant linguistic impact on the continent as well.**

Where would the sentence best fit?

The diffusion of agriculture and later of iron was accompanied by a great movement of people who may have carried these innovations. These people probably originated in eastern Nigeria. **(A)** Their migration may have been set in motion by an increase in population caused by a movement of peoples fleeing the desiccation, or drying up, of the Sahara. **(B)** They spoke a language, proto-Bantu (“bantu” means “the people”), which is the parent tongue of a large number of Bantu languages still spoken throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Why and how these people spread out into central and southern Africa remains a mystery, but archaeologists believe that their iron weapons allowed them to conquer their hunting-gathering opponents, who still used stone implements. **(C)** Still, the process is uncertain, and peaceful migration—or simply rapid demographic growth—may have also caused the Bantu explosion. **(D)**

- (A) Option A
- (B) Option B
- (C) Option C
- (D) Option D



10. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by choosing the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Write your answer choices in the spaces where they belong. You can either write the letter of your answer choice, or you can copy the sentence.

Agriculture and iron working probably spread to Africa from neighboring regions.
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Answer Choices

- (A) Once Africans developed their own native crops, they no longer borrowed from other regions.
- (B) The harshness of the African climate meant that agriculture could not develop until after the introduction of iron tools.
- (C) The use of livestock improved transportation and trade and allowed for new forms of political control.
- (D) As the Sahara expanded, the camel gained in importance, eventually coming to have religious significance.
- (E) The spread of iron working had far-reaching effects on social, economic, and political organization in Africa.
- (F) Today's Bantu-speaking peoples are descended from a technologically advanced people who spread throughout Africa



## Reading Practice Set 2

*The passage below is based on information published in 2005.*

### Running Water on Mars?

- 1 Photographic evidence suggests that liquid water once existed in great quantity on the surface of Mars. Two types of flow features are seen: runoff channels and outflow channels. Runoff channels are found in the southern highlands. These flow features are extensive systems—sometimes hundreds of kilometers in total length—of interconnecting, twisting channels that seem to merge into larger, wider channels. They bear a strong resemblance to river systems on Earth, and geologists think that they are dried-up beds of long-gone rivers that once carried rainfall on Mars from the mountains down into the valleys. Runoff channels on Mars speak of a time 4 billion years ago (the age of the Martian highlands), when the atmosphere was thicker, the surface warmer, and liquid water widespread.
- 2 Outflow channels are probably relics of catastrophic flooding on Mars long ago. They appear only in equatorial regions and generally do not form extensive interconnected networks. Instead, they are probably the paths taken by huge volumes of water draining from the southern highlands into the northern plains. The onrushing water arising from these flash floods likely also formed the odd teardrop-shaped “islands” (resembling the miniature versions seen in the wet sand of our beaches at low tide) that have been found on the plains close to the ends of the outflow channels. Judging from the width and depth of the channels, the flow rates must have been truly enormous—perhaps as much as a hundred times greater than the 105 tons per second carried by the great Amazon river. Flooding shaped the outflow channels approximately 3 billion years ago, about the same time as the northern volcanic plains formed.
- 3 Some scientists speculate that Mars may have enjoyed an extended early period during which rivers, lakes, and perhaps even oceans adorned its surface. A 2003 Mars Global Surveyor image shows what mission specialists think may be a delta—a fan-shaped network of channels and sediments where a river once flowed into a larger body of water, in this case a lake filling a crater in the southern highlands. Other researchers go even further, suggesting that the data provide evidence for large open expanses of water on the early Martian surface. A computer-generated view of the Martian north polar region shows the extent of



what may have been an ancient ocean covering much of the northern lowlands. The Hellas Basin, which measures some 3,000 kilometers across and has a floor that lies nearly 9 kilometers below the basin's rim, is another candidate for an ancient Martian sea.

- 4 These ideas remain controversial. Proponents point to features such as the terraced “beaches” shown in one image, which could conceivably have been left behind as a lake or ocean evaporated and the shoreline receded. But detractors maintain that the terraces could also have been created by geological activity, perhaps related to the geologic forces that depressed the Northern Hemisphere far below the level of the south, in which case they have nothing whatever to do with Martian water. Furthermore, Mars Global Surveyor data released in 2003 seem to indicate that the Martian surface contains too few carbonate rock layers—layers containing compounds of carbon and oxygen—that should have been formed in abundance in an ancient ocean. Their absence supports the picture of a cold, dry Mars that never experienced the extended mild period required to form lakes and oceans. However, more recent data imply that at least some parts of the planet did in fact experience long periods in the past during which liquid water existed on the surface.
  
- 5 Aside from some small-scale gullies (channels) found since 2000, which are inconclusive, astronomers have no direct evidence for liquid water anywhere on the surface of Mars today, and the amount of water vapor in the Martian atmosphere is tiny. Yet even setting aside the unproven hints of ancient oceans, the extent of the outflow channels suggests that a huge total volume of water existed on Mars in the past. Where did all the water go? The answer may be that virtually all the water on Mars is now locked in the permafrost layer under the surface, with more contained in the planet's polar caps.





**Directions: Now answer the questions.**

11. The word “merge” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- (A) expand
  - (B) separate
  - (C) straighten out
  - (D) combine
12. The word “relics” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- (A) remains
  - (B) sites
  - (C) requirements
  - (D) sources
13. In paragraph 2, why does the author include the information that 105 tons of water flow through the Amazon river per second?
- (A) To emphasize the great size of the volume of water that seems to have flowed through Mars’ outflow channels
  - (B) To indicate data used by scientists to estimate how long ago Mars’ outflow channels were formed
  - (C) To argue that flash floods on Mars may have been powerful enough to cause tear-shaped “islands” to form
  - (D) To argue that the force of flood waters on Mars was powerful enough to shape the northern volcanic plains
14. According to paragraph 2, all of the following are true of the outflow channels on Mars EXCEPT:
- (A) They formed at around the same time that volcanic activity was occurring on the northern plains.
  - (B) They are found only on certain parts of the Martian surface.
  - (C) They sometimes empty onto what appear to have once been the wet sands of tidal beaches.
  - (D) They are thought to have carried water northward from the equatorial regions.



15. All of the following questions about geological features on Mars are answered in paragraph 3 EXCEPT:
- (A) What are some regions of Mars that may have once been covered with an ocean?
  - (B) Where do mission scientists believe that the river forming the delta emptied?
  - (C) Approximately how many craters on Mars do mission scientists believe may once have been lakes filled with water?
  - (D) During what period of Mars' history do some scientists think it may have had large bodies of water?
16. According to paragraph 3, images of Mars' surface have been interpreted as support for the idea that
- (A) the polar regions of Mars were once more extensive than they are now
  - (B) a large part of the northern lowlands may once have been under water
  - (C) deltas were once a common feature of the Martian landscape
  - (D) the shape of the Hellas Basin has changed considerably over time
17. What can be inferred from paragraph 3 about liquid water on Mars?
- (A) Lakes on early Mars were likely as large as some on Earth's surface today.
  - (B) If there is any liquid water at all on Mars' surface today, its quantity is much smaller than the amount that likely existed there in the past.
  - (C) Small-scale gullies on Mars provide convincing evidence that liquid water existed on Mars in the recent past.
  - (D) The small amount of water vapor in the Martian atmosphere suggests that there has never been liquid water on Mars.
18. According to paragraph 4, what do the 2003 Global Surveyor data suggest about Mars?
- (A) Ancient oceans on Mars contained only small amounts of carbon.
  - (B) The climate of Mars may not have been suitable for the formation of large bodies of water.
  - (C) Liquid water may have existed on some parts of Mars' surface for long periods of time.
  - (D) The ancient oceans that formed on Mars dried up during periods of cold, dry weather.



19. In the paragraph below, there is a missing sentence. Look at the paragraph and indicate (A, B, C and D) where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

**These landscape features differ from runoff channels in a number of ways.**

Where would the sentence best fit?

Outflow channels are probably relics of catastrophic flooding on Mars long ago. **(A)** They appear only in equatorial regions and generally do not form extensive interconnected networks. **(B)** Instead, they are probably the paths taken by huge volumes of water draining from the southern highlands into the northern plains. **(C)** The onrushing water arising from these flash floods likely also formed the odd teardrop-shaped “islands” (resembling the miniature versions seen in the wet sand of our beaches at low tide) that have been found on the plains close to the ends of the outflow channels. **(D)** Judging from the width and depth of the channels, the flow rates must have been truly enormous—perhaps as much as a hundred times greater than the 105 tons per second carried by the great Amazon river. Flooding shaped the outflow channels approximately 3 billion years ago, about the same time as the northern volcanic plains formed.

- (A) Option A
- (B) Option B
- (C) Option C
- (D) Option D



20. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Write your answer choices in the spaces where they belong. You can either write the letter of your answer choice, or you can copy the sentence.

There is much debate concerning whether Mars once had water.
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Answer Choices

- (A) Various types of images have been used to demonstrate that most of the Martian surface contains evidence of flowing water.
- (B) The runoff and outflow channels of Mars apparently carried a higher volume of water and formed more extensive networks than do Earth's river systems.
- (C) Mars' runoff and outflow channels are large-scale, distinctive features that suggest that large quantities of liquid water once flowed on Mars.
- (D) Although some researchers claim that Mars may once have had oceans, others dispute this, pointing to an absence of evidence or offering alternative interpretations of evidence.
- (E) While numerous gullies have been discovered on Mars since 2000, many astronomers dismiss them as evidence that Mars once had liquid water.
- (F) There is very little evidence of liquid water on Mars today, and it is assumed that all the water that once existed on the planet is frozen beneath its surface



## Reading Practice Set 3

### Ancient Rome and Greece

- 1 There is a quality of cohesiveness about the Roman world that applied neither to Greece nor perhaps to any other civilization, ancient or modern. Like the stones of a Roman wall, which were held together both by the regularity of the design and by that peculiarly powerful Roman cement, so the various parts of the Roman realm were bonded into a massive, monolithic entity by physical, organizational, and psychological controls. The physical bonds included the network of military garrisons, which were stationed in every province, and the network of stone-built roads that linked the provinces with Rome. The organizational bonds were based on the common principles of law and administration and on the universal army of officials who enforced common standards of conduct. The psychological controls were built on fear and punishment—on the absolute certainty that anyone or anything that threatened the authority of Rome would be utterly destroyed.
- 2 The source of the Roman obsession with unity and cohesion may well have lain in the pattern of Rome's early development. Whereas Greece had grown from scores of scattered cities, Rome grew from one single organism. While the Greek world had expanded along the Mediterranean Sea lanes, the Roman world was assembled by territorial conquest. Of course, the contrast is not quite so stark: in Alexander the Great the Greeks had found the greatest territorial conqueror of all time; and the Romans, once they moved outside Italy, did not fail to learn the lessons of sea power. Yet the essential difference is undeniable. The key to the Greek world lay in its high-powered ships; the key to Roman power lay in its marching legions. The Greeks were wedded to the sea; the Romans, to the land. The Greek was a sailor at heart; the Roman, a landsman.
- 3 Certainly, in trying to explain the Roman phenomenon, one would have to place great emphasis on this almost animal instinct for the territorial imperative. Roman priorities lay in the organization, exploitation, and defense of their territory. In all probability it was the fertile plain of Latium, where the Latins who founded Rome originated, that created the habits and skills of landed settlement, landed property, landed economy, landed administration, and a land-based society. From this arose the Roman genius for military organization and orderly government. In turn, a deep attachment to the land, and to the stability which rural life engenders, fostered the Roman virtues: gravitas, a sense of responsibility, pietas, a sense of devotion to family and country, and iustitia, a sense of the natural order.



- 4 Modern attitudes to Roman civilization range from the infinitely impressed to the thoroughly disgusted. As always, there are the power worshippers, especially among historians, who are predisposed to admire whatever is strong, who feel more attracted to the might of Rome than to the subtlety of Greece. At the same time, there is a solid body of opinion that dislikes Rome. For many, Rome is at best the imitator and the continuator of Greece on a larger scale. Greek civilization had quality; Rome, mere quantity. Greece was original; Rome, derivative. Greece had style; Rome had money. Greece was the inventor; Rome, the research and development division. Such indeed was the opinion of some of the more intellectual Romans. “Had the Greeks held novelty in such disdain as we,” asked Horace in his Epistles, “what work of ancient date would now exist?”
- 5 Rome’s debt to Greece was enormous. The Romans adopted Greek religion and moral philosophy. In literature, Greek writers were consciously used as models by their Latin successors. It was absolutely accepted that an educated Roman should be fluent in Greek. In speculative philosophy and the sciences, the Romans made virtually no advance on early achievements.
- 6 Yet it would be wrong to suggest that Rome was somehow a junior partner in Greco-Roman civilization. The Roman genius was projected into new spheres—especially into those of law, military organization, administration, and engineering. Moreover, the tensions that arose within the Roman state produced literary and artistic sensibilities of the highest order. It was no accident that many leading Roman soldiers and statesmen were writers of high caliber.



**Directions: Now answer the questions.**

21. According to paragraph 1, all of the following are controls that held together the Roman world EXCEPT
- (A) administrative and legal systems
  - (B) the presence of the military
  - (C) a common language
  - (D) transportation networks
22. According to paragraph 2, which of the following was NOT characteristic of Rome's early development?
- (A) Expansion by sea invasion
  - (B) Territorial expansion
  - (C) Expansion from one original settlement
  - (D) Expansion through invading armies
23. Why does the author mention "Alexander the Great" in the passage?
- (A) To acknowledge that Greek civilization also expanded by land conquest
  - (B) To compare Greek leaders to Roman leaders
  - (C) To give an example of a Greek leader whom Romans studied
  - (D) To indicate the superior organization of the Greek military
24. The word "fostered" in the passage is closest in meaning to
- (A) accepted
  - (B) combined
  - (C) introduced
  - (D) encouraged



25. Paragraph 3 suggests which of the following about the people of Latium?
- (A) Their economy was based on trade relations with other settlements.
  - (B) They held different values than the people of Rome.
  - (C) Agriculture played a significant role in their society.
  - (D) They possessed unusual knowledge of animal instincts.
26. Paragraph 4 indicates that some historians admire Roman civilization because of
- (A) the diversity of cultures within Roman society
  - (B) its strength
  - (C) its innovative nature
  - (D) the large body of literature that it developed
27. According to paragraph 4, intellectual Romans such as Horace held which of the following opinions about their civilization?
- (A) Ancient works of Greece held little value in the Roman world.
  - (B) The Greek civilization had been surpassed by the Romans.
  - (C) Roman civilization produced little that was original or memorable.
  - (D) Romans valued certain types of innovations that had been ignored by ancient Greeks.
28. Which of the following statements about leading Roman soldiers and statesmen is supported by paragraphs 5 and 6?
- (A) They could read and write the Greek language.
  - (B) They frequently wrote poetry and plays.
  - (C) They focused their writing on military matters.
  - (D) They wrote according to the philosophical laws of the Greeks.





29. In the paragraph below, there is a missing sentence. Look at the paragraph and indicate (A, B, C and D) where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

**They esteem symbols of Roman power, such as the massive Colosseum.**

Where would the sentence best fit?

Modern attitudes to Roman civilization range from the infinitely impressed to the thoroughly disgusted. **(A)** As always, there are the power worshippers, especially among historians, who are predisposed to admire whatever is strong, who feel more attracted to the might of Rome than to the subtlety of Greece. **(B)** At the same time, there is a solid body of opinion that dislikes Rome. **(C)** For many, Rome is at best the imitator and the continuator of Greece on a larger scale. **(D)** Greek civilization had quality; Rome, mere quantity. Greece was original; Rome, derivative. Greece had style; Rome had money. Greece was the inventor; Rome, the research and development division. Such indeed was the opinion of some of the more intellectual Romans. “Had the Greeks held novelty in such disdain as we,” asked Horace in his Epistles, “what work of ancient date would now exist?”

- (A) Option A
- (B) Option B
- (C) Option C
- (D) Option D



30. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Write your answer choices in the spaces where they belong. You can either write the letter of your answer choice or you can copy the sentence.

The Roman world drew its strength from several important sources.
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Answer Choices

- (A) Numerous controls imposed by Roman rulers held its territory together.
- (B) The Roman military was organized differently from older military organizations.
- (C) Romans valued sea power as did the Latins, the original inhabitants of Rome.
- (D) Roman values were rooted in a strong attachment to the land and the stability of rural life.
- (E) Rome combined aspects of ancient Greek civilization with its own contributions in new areas.
- (F) Educated Romans modeled their own literature and philosophy on the ancient Greeks.



## Reading Answer Key

<b>Agriculture, Iron, and the Bantu Peoples</b>	
1	B
2	D
3	D
4	B
5	C
6	A
7	B
8	B
9	B
10	C,E,F
<b>Running Water on Mars</b>	
11	D
12	A
13	A
14	C
15	C
16	B
17	B
18	B
19	A
20	C,D,F
<b>Ancient Rome and Greece</b>	
21	C
22	A
23	A
24	D
25	C
26	B
27	C
28	A
29	B
30	A,D,E

