Ancient Egypt
Queen of the Nile

Illustration by Rebekah Hanousek-Monge

Cleopatra is one of the most *legendary*1 rulers of ancient Egypt. One reason she is very famous is that she was a female ruler. She is also famous because she was an incredibly gifted ruler.

Cleopatra lived from 69 B.C to 30 B.C. She lived in Alexandria, which was then the capital city of Egypt. She was intelligent, charming, witty, and *ambitious*.2

Cleopatra’s love and care for her people won Egypt’s affections. Under her rule, many Egyptian people lived comfortable lives. Their kingdom was fairly peaceful.

Cleopatra’s qualities lured two of Rome’s most famous leaders. First, she fell in love with Julius Caesar. Then, after Caesar’s death, she fell in love with Mark Antony. These romances linked the two empires.

At the age of 39, Cleopatra found herself unprotected by Rome. The Egyptian queen was afraid of being captured and tortured by her enemies. She chose to kill herself instead of surrendering. Legend has it that she allowed a poisonous snake called an asp to bite her.

1 *legendary*: famous through the ages
2 *ambitious*: having great plans for the future
1. How is Cleopatra NOT described in the passage?
   a. A legendary and gifted ruler
   b. An intelligent and ambitious person
   c. A caring leader
   d. A ruler who started many wars

2. Based on the text, how did many of the people under Cleopatra’s rule view her?
   a. They liked her.
   b. They disliked her.
   c. They distrusted her.
   d. They had mixed feelings about her.

3. According to the passage, what does “lured” mean?
   a. Attracted
   b. Drove away
   c. Went fishing
   d. Begged for

4. Which of these happened first?
   a. Cleopatra found herself unprotected by Rome.
   b. Cleopatra committed suicide.
   c. Cleopatra fell in love with Julius Caesar.
   d. Cleopatra fell in love with Mark Antony.

5. What is the passage mainly about?
   a. Cleopatra’s romances
   b. How Cleopatra died
   c. The threats Ancient Egypt faced
   d. Cleopatra’s rule
6. Based on the information in the passage, how would you describe the rule of Cleopatra towards the end of her life?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
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7. How did the people of Ancient Egypt benefit from Cleopatra’s rule? Use examples from the text.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

__________, Cleopatra committed suicide because she was afraid of being captured and tortured by her enemies.

   a. However
   b. Furthermore
   c. In the end
   d. On the other hand
9. Read the following sentence.

Cleopatra won the affection of many Egyptian people because they were able to live comfortable lives during her rule.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. Who is the subject of the sentence? Cleopatra

2. Cleopatra did what?

3. Why?

4. When?

5. **Vocabulary Word**: commit: to act upon or do something.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence:

____________________________________________________________________
Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 650

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The passage discusses the rule of Cleopatra by describing her as a legendary figure who was a very gifted and intelligent leader. It also briefly explains the circumstances of her downfall.

1. How is Cleopatra NOT described in the passage?
   a. A legendary and gifted ruler
   b. An intelligent and ambitious person
   c. A caring leader
   d. A ruler who started many wars

2. Based on the text, how did many of the people under Cleopatra's rule view her?
   a. They liked her.
   b. They disliked her.
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5. What is the passage mainly about?
   a. Cleopatra’s romances
   b. How Cleopatra died
   c. The threats Ancient Egypt faced
   d. Cleopatra’s rule
6. Based on the information in the passage, how would you describe the rule of Cleopatra towards the end of her life?

**Suggested answer:** It is clear that her relationship with the Roman empire had deteriorated and that she lacked the security from them that she once enjoyed. Thus by the end of her life, her rule was marked by a sense of uncertainty and anxiety over any impending attacks.

7. How did the people of Ancient Egypt benefit from Cleopatra’s rule? Use examples from the text.

**Suggested answer:** The passage states that Cleopatra loved and cared for her people which is one of the reasons she became popular. Many people of ancient Egypt lived comfortable lives, and the kingdom was fairly peaceful.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

__________, Cleopatra committed suicide because she was afraid of being captured and tortured by her enemies.

   a. However
   b. Furthermore
   c. In the end
   d. On the other hand

9. Read the following sentence.

Cleopatra won the affection of many Egyptian people because they were able to live comfortable lives during her rule.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. Who is the subject of the sentence? Cleopatra
2. Cleopatra did what? won the affection of many Egyptian people
3. Why? because they were able to live comfortable lives
4. When? during her rule

10. **Vocabulary Word:** commit: to act upon or do something.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.