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As humans, we tend to measure time in relation to our own life span. Something fifty years ago may feel 'ancient'. Even Greek or Roman civilisation, a little over two thousand years old, can seem impossibly distant. Imagine then the discovery of a truly ancient culture, whose story has been buried in a dry lake bed for over 40,000 years.

Lake Mungo, situated in outback New South Wales, around 760 kilometres west of Sydney, has become one of the richest, most significant archaeological sites in the world. The discovery of human remains and stone tools has provided a rare glimpse into the lives of the Indigenous Australian people who inhabited the area.

Already, limited excavation of Lake Mungo's enormous sand dunes has unearthed some of the oldest human bones outside of Africa's Great Rift Valley. The remains of Mungo Man, found in 1974, suggest a sophisticated burial practice where the corpse was sprinkled with red ochre which must have been transported from 200 kilometres away.

Mungo Woman, found in 1969, has become a controversial figure in her own right. Her finding indicates a cremation ceremony where the body was burnt, then broken apart, then burnt again, and finally sprinkled with the same red ochre as Mungo Man. In her book, *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, Dr Josephine Flood argues that the discovery of Mungo Woman, "at least shows that 26,000 years ago women were considered worthy of complex burial rites. What emotions inspired those rites – love, fear, or religious awe – we will never know but all show a concern for the deceased, which is the essence of humanity."¹

This is precisely why these fossil records have become so important to current Indigenous Australian people. Not only is it proof that they were the first to walk this great land; it also shows that many of their ancient beliefs and practices have continued down through the ages. It is also compelling evidence of the length and complexity of the Indigenous Australian story, a story that non-Indigenous people are just starting to understand.

1. cited in B Elder, 'Bare bones of history', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 March 2009, <http://www.smh.com.au/travel/activity/great-outdoors/bare-bones-of-history-20090318-91gp.html>

Read each question carefully and circle one answer.

- 1 Which word is spelled correctly?
 - excuvation
 - considered
 - situated
 - glimse
- 2 Which word is spelled incorrectly?
 - deceased
 - sophsticated
 - Australian
 - Indigenous
- 3 Which word can be used to complete this sentence correctly?
*Lake Mungo is the * of a truly ancient culture.*
 - sight
 - cite
 - situation
 - site
- 4 What does the word *archaeological* mean?
 - related to the study of fossilised birds
 - related to the science of buildings
 - related to the study of cultures through excavating and describing remains
 - related to the study of the original patterns or forms of objects
- 5 Which word is missing from this sentence?
*Archaeologists have found evidence of sophisticated burial * at Lake Mungo.*
 - practices
 - practises
 - practise
 - practice
- 6 What kind of words are *rights* and *rites*?
 - homophones
 - homographs
 - synonyms
 - antonyms
- 7 What does the word *deceased* mean?
 - living
 - ill
 - dead
 - dying
- 8 Which word means native to a particular country or region?
 - indigenous
 - African
 - Australian
 - human
- 9 Which relative pronoun correctly completes the sentence?
*The fossils found at Lake Mungo tell us about the people * lived there.*
 - that
 - which
 - what
 - who
- 10 What type of noun is *fear*?
 - a collective noun
 - a proper noun
 - an abstract noun
 - a common noun
- 11 What kind of word is *enormous* in this sentence?
There has been limited excavation of Lake Mungo's enormous sand dunes.
 - an adverb
 - a contraction
 - a conjunction
 - an adjective
- 12 Which word is a past-tense form of the verb *to transport*?
 - transported
 - transport
 - transporter
 - transportation

13 Which conjunction can be used to combine these sentences into one complex sentence?
Dr Flood wrote the book. She wanted to share her findings.

- because
- yet
- but
- and

14 Which preposition correctly completes this sentence?
*Many ancient rituals have continued * the ages.*

- along
- through
- under
- in

15 Which word is an antonym of *sophisticated*?

- supernatural
- complex
- elegant
- primitive

16 Which word can be made into an adverb by adding *-ly*?

- emotional
- burial
- today
- story

17 Why are the words *Archaeology* and *Dreamtime* written with capital letters in this sentence?
The title of Dr Flood's new book is Archaeology of the Dreamtime.

- They look better this way.
- The word *Archaeology* is the first word in the title, and *Dreamtime* is a proper noun.
- All the nouns in this sentence are written with a capital letter.
- They are technical words.

18 What does the abbreviation *km* stand for?

- kilometres
- years
- centimetres
- kilograms

19 What do the words *controversial*, *most significant* and *so important* have in common?

- They are all factual adjectives.
- They can all be used to describe the amount of something.
- They can all be used to express a positive or negative judgement about something.
- They are all verbs.

20 Which punctuation marks have been used in this sentence?

What emotions inspired those rites – love, fear, or religious awe – we will never know.

- a full stop and ellipses
- two dashes, two colons and a full stop
- a full stop and brackets
- a full stop, two commas and two dashes

Text type: Exposition

NAPLAN*-style questions: Language conventions

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|--|---|
| 1 situated | |
| 2 sophisticated | 13 because |
| 3 site | 14 through |
| 4 related to the study of cultures through excavating and describing remains | 15 primitive |
| 5 practices | 16 emotional |
| 6 homophones | 17 The word <i>Archaeology</i> is the first word in the title, and <i>Dreamtime</i> is a proper noun. |
| 7 dead | 18 kilometres |
| 8 indigenous | 19 They can all be used to express a positive or negative judgement about something. |
| 9 who | 20 full stop and two dashes |
| 10 an abstract noun | |
| 11 an adjective | |
| 12 transported | |