

Name: _____

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The Phoenicians and Carthage

The Phoenicians came from the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea; land that is present-day Lebanon. Their homeland was arid and inhospitable for farming, so the Phoenicians turned to the sea to become the greatest travelers and traders of their time. The Phoenicians invented the alphabet and taught several cultures their advanced system of writing.

The Phoenicians built a trading post in North Africa they called Carthage.

The Phoenicians chose Carthage because it was located in the center of North Africa, a short distance away from Sicily and the Italian Peninsula. When the Assyrians and the Persians conquered the original homeland and of the Phoenicians, Carthage became an independent state.

Carthage grew to become one of the mightiest cities of the ancient world, but the city was destroyed after three brutal wars with the



Italian city-state of Rome. The wars were known as the Punic Wars because Punica was the Roman name for Carthage. The Roman Navy surprised the sea trading people by winning the first war in 238BCE. The Carthaginians acquired a new base in Spain from which a great military leader named Hannibal led a team of elephants across southern France and into Italy. Hannibal won some early victories, but his forces were outnumbered, allowing Rome to win the brutal fifteen-year war that ended 204BCE.

Carthage lost all political and military power by the end of the second Punic War, but the Romans moved a half-century later to destroy what was left of the city. The Roman army did not attempt to break down the walls surrounding Carthage, but they did surround the city and lay siege to Carthage for three years. Finally, in 146BCE, the Romans broke through Carthage's city walls and went from house to house slaughtering the Carthaginians. The few survivors were sold into slavery, and the Romans destroyed Carthage and its harbor.

Answer in Complete Sentences

*1. Why did the Phoenicians become greatest travelers and traders of their time?

*2. Why did the location Carthage's location help it to become one of the mightiest cities of the ancient world?

*3. Why do you think Hannibal's army used elephants instead of horses in the Second Punic War?
