Name: _____

Date: _____

ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria became the cultural and commercial center of the ancient world. It began as a small fishing village before the arrival of a young general who would become one of history's greatest commanders. For nearly two centuries before his arrival, Egypt had been under the control of Persia, a powerful empire in western Asia. In 332 BCE, a Greek army led by the twenty-two-year-old Alexander the Great defeated the Persians. The grateful people welcomed the young general, and some Egyptians even worshipped him as a pharaoh.

Alexander soon left Egypt to continue his conquests, but before departing, he established a new capital named for himself on a Mediterranean port. He left his general, Ptolemy, in charge of Egypt. After Alexander's death, Ptolemy became king and founded the Ptolemaic dynasty, which ended with Cleopatra in 30 BCE.

The Ptolemies made Alexandria a center of trade and research. Many of the greatest minds of their era gathered there to study and conduct research. They constructed the Royal Library at Alexandria, which became the greatest library of the ancient world. The library collected books from across the known world and attempted to gather all knowledge in one place.

Because books had to be copied manually, they were scarce before Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press around 1450 CE. A Greek writer named Galen wrote that library officials seized books from ships sailing into Alexandria's port. Scribes at the library then copied the books. The library would keep the original volumes and return only the copies to their owners.

Interest in the Royal Library weakened once Rome conquered the Ptolemies. Julius Caesar's army is believed to have accidentally burned one of the primary buildings in the library. The final destruction of the Royal Library appears to have occurred around 265 CE. We don't know the details in part because the place that held the knowledge of the ancient world is now gone.

Alexandria is no longer Egypt's capital, but it is still the country's largest seaport and remains a tourist attraction. The modern Bibliotheca Alexandrina was constructed in Alexandria in 2002. Similar to the ancient institution's mission of gathering all knowledge, today's version partners with the Internet Archive, a vast network collection that aims to preserve nearly anything ever posted on the Internet. You can access the archive and view archived copies of how websites looked in the past at www.archive.org.

Fill in the Blanks

A Greek warrior named A__e__a__d__r rescued Egypt from P__r__i__n rule in 332BCE. Alexander established a new c__p__t__l in a city he called A__e__a__d__ia, where his successors later constructed the greatest l__b__a__y of the ancient world.

The Royal Library at Alexandria attempted to gather all of the world's k__o__l__dge in one place. Legends say books were *c__n__i__c__t__d from ships sailing into Alexandria's p_____. The library lasted almost a *m__l__e__n__um before it was destroyed. A modern library constructed in A__e__a__d__ia in 2002 houses a collection of nearly every In__e__n__t website ever created.

Answer in complete sentences

*Irony can be defined as an occurrence that is the opposite of what you would expect to happen. Why is it ironic that we do not know why the Royal Library at Alexandria was destroyed?

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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