**Making an Ancient Egyptian Mummy**

 The ancient Egyptians believed that, after death, the body was the home of the individual's spirit as he or she journeyed through the after-life. If the body was destroyed through decomposition, there was danger that the spirit would also be destroyed. "Mummification," the process of preserving the ***integrity*** of an individual through ***embalming*** the body of the deceased, was the ancient Egyptian answer to the problem.

…The process included four phases: the removal of the internal organs, the use of a salt compound to dry the hollow body, filling the dried body with a stuffing to restore its original shape and finally, tightly wrapping the body with strips of linen… All of the social classes employed the ***ritual***, with the level of elaborateness of the mummification serving as a symbol of a family’s status.

*The Greek historian Herodotus described the ancient Egyptian methods of mummification around the year 450 BC.*

**Three levels of mummification**:

"The embalmers, when a corpse is brought to them, show the relatives wooden models of dead bodies, as accurate as a painting. They also show a second, slightly inferior to the first and less expensive, and a third as well, the cheapest of the lot… They ask the relatives in which style they want the corpse prepared. The latter agree on a price and go off home…

**Royal Treatment**

"First, they remove the brain through the nostrils with a curved iron ***implement***, getting some of it out like this and the rest by pouring in ***solvents***. Then they cut open the side of the corpse with a sharp Ethiopian stone, remove the intestines, and wash out the belly, cleaning it with palm wine and again with pounded ***aromatics***. They fill up the body with pure crushed myrrh, cassia and other herbs (except frankincense) and sow it up again. After this, they pickle the body in natrum, [salt] hiding it away for seventy days, the longest time possible. After the seventy days, they wash the body and wrap it up completely in cut bandages of linen muslin, smearing it with gum which the Egyptians use instead of glue. The relatives then get the body back and make a man-sized wooden image, into which they insert the mummy and then store it away in a burial chamber, standing it upright against the wall."

**Deluxe Treatment**

"That is the most expensive way. The method for those wanting the middle way, to escape great expense, is as follows. They pack syringes with cedar-oil and fill the stomach of the corpse with the oil, not cutting it open and taking out the intestines, but inserting the oil through the anus and stopping it flowing out. Then they soak the body in spices for the prescribed number of days, on the last of which they remove from the belly the cedar-oil which they put in before. This has such strength that it brings out with it all the dissolved stomach and intestines. The natrum dissolves the flesh and only the skin and bones are left. When this is over, they return the body, their job completed."

**Bargain Treatment**

"The third method of embalming is the one used by the poorer classes. They just wash out the inside with a solvent, then pickle it for seventy days and return it to the relatives."

"Making an Ancient Egyptian Mummy" EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2008).

**Vocabulary:** *integrity:* wholeness, *embalming:* preservation of a dead body*, ritual*: religious ceremony, *implement*: tool, *solvent:* a liquid substance that dissolves other substances, *aromatics:* something that smells good

1a. How do the words *body* and *destroyed* on line 3 help you to better understand the author’s use of
 the word *decomposition*? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1b. Which other words in the next sentence reinforce this idea? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. According to the text, why were there three levels of mummification? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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3. On lines 16-17, the sentence states, “*They* ask the relatives in which style *they* want the corpse
 prepared.” Who is the first they referring to and who is the second they referring to? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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4. Who does the word *latter* refer to on line 17? Why is this word important to notice? Explain your
 choices using evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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5. The word pickle on line 23 has multiple meanings. What is the meaning of the word in the context
 of this document?
 a. keep b. preserve
 c. relish d. difficult

6. The word *prescribed* on line 32 has multiple meanings. What does this word often mean? How is it
 used differently in this context? Underline the words on lines 32-33 that support your answer.
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7. Describe the differences between the three levels of mummification. Support your answer with four
 pieces of evidence from the text. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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