***Primary Sources of the Old Kingdom***

*By Jaromir Malek BBC News: History February 17, 2011*

Questions

1. In what way does the author describe the Egyptian Old Kingdom?

* Line 4: over 4000 years ago
* Line 7: 2686-2160 BC
* Line 8: lasted 500 years
* Line 17: great concern with death and rituals surrounding death
* Line 22: situated along the Nile Valley

1. Why do traditional sources of information about the Old Kingdom seem to be preoccupied with death?

* Line 11: no historical records of history
* Line 16: most of our traditional sources of information are concerned with death and rituals surrounding death
* Line 21: evidence of funeral rites and death are the only remnants left
* Line 66: examination of human remains informs us of the Egyptians’ state of health

1. What limitations do Egyptologists face when constructing a history of the Old Kingdom?

* Lines 29-54: brief records, no astronomical dates, incomplete king reign timelines, unreliable carbon dating, scenes that show real events are rare, contemporary reality did not exist

1. Why does the author warn us against taking the history of the Old Kingdom at “face value” (lines 52-53)?

* Lines 51-54: cannot accept things always as they are, not accurate records, perception is not reality, writing not available-we value written history

1. What are Egyptologists currently using to understand different aspects of the Old Kingdom society? What deductions can be drawn from this new information?

* Lines 55-70: pottery, plants, modern scientific methods, stone and metal, animal and human remains

Pottery-chronology and trade

Plants and animal remains-what they farmed and ate, bred animals

Human remains-state of health

Stone and metal-trade, technology, exploration

Culminating Writing Activity:

The author claims “They [Egyptologists] must be scavengers of information, leaving no source of information neglected, and must be constantly searching for new approaches.” How does the article support this argument? Explain your reasoning with evidence from each of the three sections of text.

* Students will need to establish a claim, warrant and use evidence with their argument