



Year Level: Year 7/8
Genre: Biography

Ramses II - Builder of Monuments - Part 1

Ramses II (c. 1303 BC - 1213 BC) was the third Egyptian pharaoh who reigned for 67 years during the 19th Dynasty. Renowned for being the most powerful, ambitious and enterprising pharaoh of the Egyptian Empire, Ramses II regarded himself as 'the king or kings'. He is often referred to as 'The Great' because of his major contributions to Ancient Egypt's history through his extraordinary building projects. Indeed, no other Egyptian king constructed more majestic temples and monuments, colossal statues and exquisite obelisks.

The twin temples of Abu Simbel in Nubia, southern Egypt, are amongst his most impressive architectural structures. These were carved from two massive sandstone cliffs on the western bank of Lake Nasser, about 300 km southwest of Aswan. The temples of Abu Simbel were commissioned as lasting monuments to himself and queen Nefertati, following his victory at the Battle of Kadesh.

Another one of his impressive architectural projects was the temple of Luxor. Devoted to God Amun, its monumental entrance features a magnificent obelisk and two 25 metre seated statues of Ramses II guarding the huge gateway or pylon. This leads into a large courtyard beyond which is a hall with gigantic columns, followed by the actual sanctuary where only pharaohs and priests were permitted. Colossal statues and extraordinary reliefs with hieroglyphic inscriptions, tell of the heroic deeds of the pharaohs and the history of Egypt.

About three kilometres away from the temple of Luxor lies another one of his magnificent structures, the Temple of Karnak. Known as the biggest temple complex in the world, it features the gigantic statue of Ramses II with his daughter, Princess Bintanath.

One of his most notable architectural achievements was the Ramesseum, a temple complex situated between Qurna and the desert. Although it now lies in ruins, a gigantic pylon and the menacing 17-metre statue of Ramses II once defended the royal palace. The shattered remains of two statues of the seated king now stand; one in pink granite and the other in black. Of the 48 columns in the great hypostyle hall, only 39 remain. These are adorned with the scenes of Ramses II before various gods. Scenes of war are also represented on the walls, boasting of the king's victorious battle at Kadesh.

Perhaps the ultimate testament to his power and status is the colossal 83 tonne statue of Ramses II, originally housed in a temple in Memphis. This 3,200-year-old statue of Ramses II encapsulates his mighty power and strength.

Ramses II commissioned the building of many extraordinary monuments and temples as reminders of his majesty and might. He was convinced that these monuments, like his legacy, would last for eternity. Whilst some have not stood the test of time, a significant number of architectural tributes credited to Ramses II still dominate the landscape of Egypt today.

QUESTIONS:

Main Idea (MI)

1) What is the main idea?

- a) Ramses II was a power hungry tyrant.
- b) Ramses II loved his wife and daughter.
- c) Ramses II commissioned the building of many extraordinary monuments.
- d) Ramses II loved himself.

Facts and Detail (FD)

2) Why was Ramses II given the nickname 'The Great'?

- a) He displayed excellent leadership skills.
- b) He had an enormous influence on Egypt and ruled for many years.
- c) He wanted to be remembered throughout history.
- d) Many people admired him.

Sequencing (S)

3) What happened first in relation to the building of Abu Simbel?

- a) Ramses II selected the site in Nubia.
- b) Ramses II won the Battle of Kadesh.
- c) Two huge sandstone cliffs were carved out.
- d) Queen Nefertati demanded Ramses II devote the temple to her.

Cause and Effect (CE)

4) As a result of his triumph at the Battle of Kadesh Ramses II...

- a) commissioned the building of Abu Simbel.
- b) started referring to himself as 'the king or kings'.
- c) devoted the Temple of Luxor to God Amun.
- d) constructed a statue to honour his daughter Bintanath.

Comparing and Contrasting (CC)

5) What do a pharaoh and a king have in common?

- a) They need to be elected by the people.
- b) They have many subjects who worship them.
- c) They need to be both wise and fair.
- d) They are rulers of a country.

Predicting (P)

6) Predict what would have happened if Ramses II was not victorious at the Battle of Kadesh.

- a) The Temple of Karnak would have portrayed scenes of his defeat.
- b) The hieroglyphic inscriptions and reliefs at the Temple of Luxor would falsify the Battle of Kadesh.
- c) He would not have built Abu Simbel.
- d) He would have killed thousands of his slaves.

Word in Context (WC)

7) What is meant by the phrase 'the king of kings'?

- a) Ramses believed that as pharaoh, it was his job to leave his mark.
- b) Ramses II thought of himself as the supreme ruler.
- c) Ramses considered himself a god.
- d) Ramses knew that he would be remembered for eternity.

Conclusion and Inferences (CI)

8) One reason why Ramses II was able to construct so many buildings was because...

- a) his slaves did all the work.
- b) he was extremely wealthy.
- c) Egypt was rich in sandstone and granite.
- d) his reign lasted for many years.

Fact and Opinion (FO)

9) Which of these is an opinion?

- a) 'his impressive architectural projects'
- b) 'the biggest temple complex in the world'
- c) 'two 25 metre seated statues of Ramses II'
- d) 'who reigned for 67 years during the 19th Dynasty'

Author's Purpose (AP)

10) The purpose of this article is to...

- a) persuade the reader to book a trip to Egypt.
- b) inform the reader about the incredible monuments that Ramses II built.
- c) boast about Ramses II.
- d) describe ancient Egyptian pharaohs.

Figurative Language (FL)

11) The extract says that seated statues of Ramses II were 'guarding the huge gateway or pylon'. This is an example of...

- a) a simile.
- b) hyperbole.
- c) paradox.
- d) personification.

Summarising (SM)

12) Which sentence best summarises why Ramses II was so significant?

- a) He was the most powerful and ambitious pharaoh in Egypt.
- b) He was extremely arrogant and cruel.
- c) He was egotistical and extravagant.
- d) The people of ancient Egypt respected and adored him.