The Burning of Benin

February 1897

Reading Comprehension Answers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Questions 1 – 9 are about page 1

1. In paragraph 1, look for and copy a word which has the same meaning as defended: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*guarded*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. *It is not unlikely that it was the* ***walking place*** *of the king, …* Tick the most likely noun for the words in bold:

Garden

X

Market

Ocean

Building 

1. List two things the officers did on Saturday 20th February.

*Include any two from: burnt down Ochudi’s compound, burnt down Queen mother’s palace, captured an old Benin woman, destroyed many houses in Benin, saved a parrot (looted many houses is also acceptable).*

1. What does the word demolition mean as used in this passage? \_\_\_*They destroyed or pulled down houses*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Look at the entry beginning with: *Early next morning* … What does this tell us about why the soldiers burnt down some compounds?

\_\_\_\_*They acted in retaliation*. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Find evidence from paragraph 2 to support the claim that the mud houses were difficult to demolish. List three.
2. \_*Dust from the hard mud irritated the soldiers noses badly.*
3. *\_Gunpowder could not be used except in small quantities.*
4. *\_Tamping rendered the charges useless.*
5. Find and copy a phrase that shows that the old Benin woman was unhelpful to the soldiers.

\_\_\_ *Her information was not much.*

1. What message was this old woman given for the Benin people?

\_\_*That any Benin who wanted to live in peace in the town could do so.*

1. Find one evidence which supports the impression that the soldiers were enjoying burning down the houses.

\_*They burnt down one hundred houses easily. They did not have time to explore the local area.*

Questions 10 – 14 are about page 2

1. Look at this sentence: *The usual demolitions were proceeded with, and a great deal of work done.*

What impressions do you get from this statement about what the soldiers have been doing in the city that morning?

Give two:

1. *They were working to a plan to demolish the houses.*
2. *They had done a lot of destroying houses.*
3. Write down one word or phrase to describe how you think Benin City was looking like at this stage:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*E.g. Devastated, in ruin etc*.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. At 4 o’clock the soldiers were feeling:

**Tick two**

Disenchanted

Cheerful x

Hungry

Angry

Excited x

1. Find and copy the time of the day that the fire started.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*4 o’clock \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. Give a phrase in the last paragraph of page 2 which shows that the fire spread very quickly.

 *\_\_\_\_ Soon everything seemed in a blaze* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Questions 15 – 20 are about page 3

1. How can you tell that the British soldiers did not do anything to try to put out the fire?

Give 2 points.

1. \_\_\_\_*The Admiral said nothing could be done, let it burn itself out.*
2. *\_\_\_They tried to save their things and did not tackle the fire.*
3. The author gives the impression of delight at this raging fire.

Write down three views he gave about the fire which support this statement.

1. *\_\_\_He felt the city was being punished by fate. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
2. *\_\_\_\_He used the words ‘dim grandeur’ for the blaze. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
3. *\_\_\_\_He thought* *the fire was a retribution for the millions of lives sacrificed.*
4. Write down three things the soldiers lost in the fire:

*Any three from: water, provision, personal effects, blankets, clothes, waterproof sheets, boots, socks, provision boxes.*

1. What does: *The march to start on the morrow, ... mean*?

They will begin their march to the coast tomorrow. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How many days would the match back to the coast take the soldiers? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_*5 days (four nights and one day).*
2. What does the word *forte* mean as used in this passage?

\_\_\_*Military base* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Questions 21 – 28 are about pages 4 and 5

1. When all seemed lost, describe what happened to change the soldiers’ fortune.

\_\_ *Lieutenant Harrold came in with a train of carriers carrying boxes of provisions for the men. This meant that they could replace their lost clothing and other items and that they had plenty of food to eat. \_\_\_*

1. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | True  | False |
| Some of the soldiers had little clothes left from the fire. | x |  |
| The fire stopped three hours before nightfall. |  | x |
| A search party was sent out to find the missing soldiers.  |  | x |
| The soldiers were very happy to see Lieutenant Harrold. | x |  |

1. Mr. Seppings Wright was:

**Tick two**

Naval officer

A news reporter x

The Queen’s politician

An artist x

A photographer

1. *Nor did the good deeds of this marvellous man of many things end here.*

Explain what this statement suggests about the soldiers’ feelings about Mr. Wright.

\_\_\_*They saw him as a very generous man for giving them the provision that he had brought for himself. They were grateful to him for saving them from hunger and possibly dying from the cold for lack of clothes.\_\_\_\_\_*

1. Do you think that Mr Wright was disappointed that he missed the campaign?

Tick one

Yes

No

Maybe

Explain your choice fully, using evidence from the text.

**\_\_\_\_\_Answers may vary including:**

***Yes:*** *He may have wanted to be on the scene when things happened and not be told of them afterwards. He may have wanted to report what he saw with his one eyes. He may have wanted to see events with his own eyes and to see Benin the way it was before it was destroyed. Plus he may have wanted to contribute and help out.\_\_*

***NO****: he may not have wanted to be in the fire because he could also have lost all his provisions and everything. He would not have been able to sketch during the fire.*

***Maybe:*** *he went early next morning to sketch the places of interest in the city even though they had been burnt down.*

1. Draw lines to match each part with the correct quotation

Good luck go with them

Saturday 20th

The rafters were still glowing

The zest with which we dined that night was not greed,

resulting in the capture of one parrot

Monday 22nd

Sunday 21st

1. Below are some summaries of different paragraphs from the diary extract.

Number them 1 – 6 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

The first one has been done for you.

3

The Admiral took in the position at a glance.

We had all dined well.

6

The water party bring back an old Benin woman.

2

We carted our twenty-five kegs of powder away.

4

We burn Ochudi’s compound.

1

5

The first thing was to send out a water party.

1. *marched off cheering the Houssa officers and men, who returned it heartily.* (Page 5)
2. Who do you think the author was referring to in this paragraph? \_\_*Some of the people who helped them.*
3. Why do you think he included this information?

*To show that the people they left behind were in good spirits and that they had good relationship with them. He may also have wanted to show that the soldiers were supportive of those left behind.*