

## The Seven Ancient Wonders of the World

The ancient Greeks made a list of places they thought people should see. This list was named the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Greeks chose seven wonders, because in their culture this number symbolized perfection. The only one of the ancient wonders that still exists is in Giza, Egypt. This wonder is the Great Pyramid of Giza. It was one of three great pyramids built around 2500 B.C. It is the oldest wonder of the seven. People do not know how these pyramids were built but we know that they took over 20 years to complete. For a long time, the Great Pyramid was believed to be the tallest structure in the world. Pyramids were built as tombs for the leaders of Egypt called Pharaohs. Many travelers still visit the Great Pyramid today.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are another ancient wonder. This wonder is special because people do not know for sure if it existed. Old books say the garden was built around 600 B.C. It was located on the bank of the Euphrates River. Today, this area is near Baghdad, Iraq. These gardens were built by a king for his wife. Living in the desert, she missed the plants at her old home. The king wanted to make his queen like their new home more. It may never be known if the Hanging Gardens of Babylon truly existed, but the descriptions of this beautiful place have made their place in history.

The Greeks also added a couple of their own structures on the list of ancient wonders. The Statue of Zeus was built in Olympia, Greece in 457 B.C. This statue was built to honor the Greek god Zeus. The statue was as tall as a four-story building! It was made of wood and decorated with gold and ivory. Unfortunately, the statue was destroyed by a fire and no longer exists for us to see.

In addition to Zeus, the Greeks also built a very big statue to honor the Greek sun god, Helios. This wonder is known as the Colossus of Rhodes. The Colossus of Rhodes took twelve years to build. It was finished in 226 B.C. It was 110 feet high. That is about the same size as the Statue of Liberty. Also like the Statue of Liberty, the Colossus of Rhodes was placed at the entrance to a harbor.

Built around 550 B.C., the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was considered the most beautiful structure on earth. It was built to honor the goddess of hunting, nature, and fertility. Ephesus was an ancient city that was located in what is now Turkey. The temple was made of marble and had many bronze statues. People used to come from all over the world to worship Artemis. The temple was later burned down and now there is only a marshy field where this wonder once stood.

Another wonder was also located in what is now Turkey. It was the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. This tomb was built for King Mausolus of Caria. Some of the best artists and craftsmen of the time period helped build and decorate this beautiful tomb. The mausoleum was finished around 350 B.C. Later, several earthquakes damaged the mausoleum. A group called the Knights of St. John later used the ruins to build a castle. King Mausolus's name and his connection with such a special tomb led people to use the word mausoleum.

The only wonder built for a practical use was the Pharos of Alexandria. This was a lighthouse off the coast of Egypt. It was once the tallest building in the world. There was a very large mirror inside this lighthouse. It was used to reflect sunlight to help warn ships that they were getting close to the shoreline. At night, a fire was lit inside the Pharos of Alexandria to help sailors. The design and building of this lighthouse started in 290 B.C. It was later ruined by earthquakes. However, it remained longer than any of the wonders, other than the Great Pyramid.

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World are unknown to many people because most of these structures were destroyed so long ago. While it is sad people cannot see most of these wonders in person, the detailed stories about them help people know how special they were.

1. Which of the following countries did not have one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World?

- A. Greece
- B. United States
- C. Egypt
- D. Turkey

0% \_\_\_\_\_ 100%

Confident

Confident

2. What is a *mausoleum*?

- A. A large tomb
- B. Coffin
- C. A kind of fabric
- D. A country

0% \_\_\_\_\_ 100%

Confident

Confident

3. Why were the places and structures described in the passage considered wonders?

- A. They were extraordinary.
- B. People would visit them to think.
- C. They were holy.
- D. They were old.

0% \_\_\_\_\_ 100%

Confident

Confident

4. Based upon the passage you know that ALL of the Seven Wonders were:

- A. Built by the Greeks
- B. Built by humans
- C. Destroyed by natural disasters
- D. Made of wood

0% \_\_\_\_\_ 100%

Confident

Confident

5. Why can't people visit most of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the Ancient World?

- A. They no longer exist.
- B. They are imaginary.
- C. It is dangerous to go to those places.
- D. They are well guarded.

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Confident

Confident

On a scale between 1 and 10 with 1 being low and 10 being how well did you like this passage?

Didn't

Like It

At All

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

I Really  
Liked It

**Connections:** Name three structures to include in a Modern Wonders list?