

Buried Evidence

Use details and limits to analyze an archaeological source.

9-10W5 “Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. Apply grade 9/10 Reading standards to both literary and informational text, where applicable.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that support a claim about life in Pompeii, and circle one sentence that explains a limit of evidence, so you can judge how strongly the evidence supports a conclusion.

What Pompeii Can Show

- ① In 79 CE, Mount Vesuvius erupted near the Roman city of Pompeii in southern Italy. Ash and pumice buried streets, houses, shops, and gardens. For centuries, the city remained hidden. When excavations began in the eighteenth century, archaeologists did not find a perfect snapshot of Roman life. They found evidence that required interpretation. Objects had been moved by earthquakes, looters, and early diggers. Still, the buried city preserved details that written histories, often focused on emperors and wars, rarely recorded about ordinary people at home and at work.
- ② At one Pompeian bakery, excavators found a large mill, an oven, and dozens of carbonized loaves. This cluster supports the idea that the building produced bread for customers, not only for one household. Graffiti on a nearby wall includes prices and political messages, suggesting that commercial and civic life overlapped in busy neighborhoods. Yet each source has limits. The loaves show what was left behind, not who bought them. Graffiti may represent one person's view, so it cannot prove that every resident agreed with its message.
- ③ Evidence also challenges the claim that Pompeii was frozen at a single, ordinary moment. Some buildings contain repairs made after an earthquake in 62 CE, while others show unfinished construction when the eruption occurred. These details indicate a city still changing, rather than a place preserved exactly as it had been for years. A careful historian combines physical remains with letters, inscriptions, and records from other Roman sites. By comparing sources, the historian can make a stronger claim while acknowledging what Pompeii's evidence cannot fully reveal.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What claim about the bakery is supported by the mill, oven, and carbonized loaves? Use the details as evidence in your answer.

2 Why can the carbonized loaves not prove who bought bread at the bakery?

3 Which two details challenge the idea that Pompeii was frozen at one ordinary moment? Explain what those details suggest.

4 Why does the passage say that a historian should compare Pompeii with letters, inscriptions, and records from other sites?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90- to 120-word paragraph that answers this question: How should a historian use Pompeii's remains to make a reliable claim about Roman life? State a claim, use at least two specific pieces of evidence from different parts of the passage, and explain one limit on the evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that support a claim about life in Pompeii, and circle one sentence that explains a limit of evidence, so you can judge how strongly the evidence supports a conclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What claim about the bakery is supported by the mill, oven, and carbonized loaves? Use the details as evidence in your answer.	The bakery likely produced bread for customers, not just for one household. The mill, oven, and many carbonized loaves support this claim.
2	Why can the carbonized loaves not prove who bought bread at the bakery?	The loaves show what remained at the site, but they do not identify the people who bought them.
3	Which two details challenge the idea that Pompeii was frozen at one ordinary moment? Explain what those details suggest.	Buildings had repairs made after the earthquake in 62 CE, and some buildings had unfinished construction when the eruption occurred. These details suggest that Pompeii was still changing.
4	Why does the passage say that a historian should compare Pompeii with letters, inscriptions, and records from other sites?	Comparing sources can strengthen a historian's claim and help account for what Pompeii's physical evidence cannot reveal.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A historian should use Pompeii as valuable but incomplete evidence about Roman life. The mill, oven, and carbonized loaves in one bakery suggest that some buildings made bread for customers. Repairs after the 62 CE earthquake and unfinished construction also show that Pompeii was changing before Vesuvius erupted. However, the loaves do not identify the people who bought bread, and one piece of graffiti cannot represent every resident. A historian should therefore compare Pompeii's physical remains with letters, inscriptions, and evidence from other Roman sites before making broad conclusions about the past.

Accept paraphrased claims when students connect a specific detail to a reasonable conclusion. For the open response, require a clear claim, at least two accurate details from different paragraphs, and an explanation of an evidence limit.