NEWS LESSON

The Stone That Led to Two Giant Statues



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What is the most interesting old object you have seen?
2. If you found a strange object in your garden, what would you do first?
3. Would you rather uncover an ancient building or a tiny personal object?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**hieroglyphs**	☐	A	levels of material lying one on top of another
2	**granite**	☐	B	the pictures and symbols used in ancient Egyptian writing
3	**carving**	☐	C	a person who lives in a particular place
4	**layers**	☐	D	examined carefully to find out the facts
5	**excavation**	☐	E	a very hard stone, often grey or pink
6	**antiquities**	☐	F	a shape or picture cut into stone or wood
7	**investigated**	☐	G	objects and buildings from the ancient past
8	**resident**	☐	H	the careful digging of a site to find old objects

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

An unusual find near a home in Egypt brought officials to fragments of statues linked to Ramesses II. Where the pieces lay may matter as much as the stone itself.

1 An unusual stone near a home in Egypt led officials to something much larger. In October 2026, a resident of Bahbit al-Higara, in the Nile Delta, reported writing he had noticed on a stone while working on nearby land. Antiquities officials investigated. Beneath the everyday surroundings were fragments of two enormous royal statues linked to Ramesses II.

2 Specialists from Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities also uncovered a block of pink granite covered in hieroglyphs, the ancient Egyptian writing system. One statue head was about 1.6 metres tall. Officials believe it came from a figure that originally stood around 8.5 metres high. Even broken into pieces, it gives a sense of the scale the builders were working on.

3 Ramesses II ruled in the thirteenth century BC and commissioned monuments on a grand scale. A towering statue did more than show people what their king looked like: it made his power visible. The newly discovered pieces were found near a major ancient sanctuary associated with the goddess Isis. Researchers still need to work out how the statues fitted into the surrounding site.

4 That is where the ground around an object becomes part of its story. Archaeologists record the layers of earth, nearby buildings and other finds before moving a piece. Those details can help them understand where it stood and what happened to it. A head in a museum may be impressive, but its original position could answer questions the carving alone cannot.

5 For the same reason, finding something old is not simply a matter of lifting it out and taking it away. Moving a fragment before its position is recorded can destroy information that cannot be put back. The resident's decision to report the stone gave specialists the chance to investigate it in place. The discovery began with somebody noticing something; understanding it depends on what happens next.

6 There is plenty still to establish. The fragments do not yet give a complete picture of the statues or their original arrangement. Further excavation and comparisons with other finds may change the explanation. For now, the stone has opened a window onto a much larger site. The most striking object may be the giant head, but some of the best clues are still around it.

Sources: Ahram Online. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The writer implies that a head displayed in a museum may have lost part of its historical value. T F NG
2. The complete figure was more than five times taller than the head that was found. T F NG
3. The original arrangement of the statues is already well understood. T F NG
4. The resident was paid a reward by the Supreme Council of Antiquities. T F NG
5. Experts have ruled out changing their explanation of the site. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

associated	clues	comparisons	establish	fragments	layers	scale	uncovered

1. The festival is closely _____ with the harvest, though its exact origins remain unclear.
2. An internal audit _____ a pattern of irregular payments that nobody had noticed.
3. It took the inquiry months to _____ who had authorised the transfer.
4. Only _____ of the original manuscript survive, so scholars must reconstruct much of the argument.
5. Careful _____ between the two sets of figures revealed a small but consistent gap.
6. On that _____ , even a minor error would have serious consequences.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. Scholars have questioned the _____ of the traditional dating of the monument. (RELY)
2. The _____ of the fragments in the soil suggests they were moved long ago. (DISPLACE)
3. Several experts expressed _____ about the proposed interpretation. (SCEPTIC)
4. It would be _____ to draw firm conclusions from so few pieces. (ADVISE)
5. Thorough _____ of every layer is essential if the site is to be understood later. (DOCUMENT)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. At this level, many phrasal verbs are fairly formal. Check whether the meaning is literal or figurative: brush aside means to dismiss something.

bring	brush	bury	dig	play	rule	stem

1. Investigators refused to _____ aside the possibility that the damage was deliberate.
2. Many of the site's problems _____ from decades of neglect.
3. Officials were accused of trying to _____ down the seriousness of the damage.
4. The findings should not _____ out further excavation at the site.
5. Careful recording can _____ about a far better understanding of the site.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Who should decide what happens to something old found on private land?
2. Which everyday object from today might interest people in 3,000 years?
3. Would you enjoy living near a place where history keeps turning up?

9 Role-play: what should we do with the stone?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the neighbour

Your neighbour has found a strange stone with writing on it. You think it could be worth a lot of money. Try to persuade your neighbour to keep it or sell it. Ask at least two questions.

Student B · the finder

You found a strange stone with writing on it near your home. You want to report it to the experts. Explain why, and answer your neighbour's ideas politely.

Useful phrases

I think it could be worth a lot of money.

What if it's really important?

I'd rather call the experts first.

That's not a good idea, because we don't know what it is.

Let's find out what it is before we decide.

We could both agree to ask for advice.

Afterwards, tell the class: what did you decide to do with the stone, and why?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 E · 3 F · 4 A · 5 H · 6 G · 7 D · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 T · 3 F · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 associated · 2 uncovered · 3 establish · 4 fragments · 5 comparisons · 6 scale

6 Word forms

1 reliability · 2 displacement · 3 scepticism · 4 inadvisable · 5 documentation

7 Language focus

1 brush · 2 stem · 3 play · 4 rule · 5 bring

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