

A Marvelous Mahal

This historic site took 20 years to build. One thousand elephants helped build it. It is the most famous building in India. Can you guess what it is?

That's right - it's the Taj Mahal!

The Taj Mahal is a majestic building. It was built by the Mogul Emperor. Construction lasted from 1632 to 1653. The word mahal means palace. The word taj means crown.

The Emperor built the Taj Mahal to honor his wife Mumtaz. He and Mumtaz are both buried in the beautiful palace. The columns were built in a special way so they won't fall on the graves if they are knocked down.

The Taj Mahal is square shaped. Each side has a large arch. On top is a dome that looks like an onion. Gardens and ponds surround the building.

The walls are made of white marble. Gems like crystal, jade, and amethyst are set into the walls. They form patterns of shapes and flowers.

It is hard to keep the marble clean. Pollution makes it dirty. So there is a rule that cars can't drive close to the building.

Even though you can't drive there, forty thousand people visit the building every day. Many consider it to be the most beautiful palace in the world. Maybe you will be lucky enough to see it one day too!



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Which word means palace?
 - a. Taj
 - b. Mogul
 - c. Mahal
 - d. Mumtaz

2. What is set into the walls of the Taj Mahal?
 - a. Onions
 - b. Marbles
 - c. Gems
 - d. Flowers

3. Why was it called the Taj Mahal?
 - a. Because it is an Indian name
 - b. Because it is a palace for the emperor who wears a crown
 - c. Because it is shaped like a square
 - d. Because it is made out of marble

4. Why can't cars go close to the building?
 - a. Because they make it dirty
 - b. Because they are loud
 - c. Because they are dangerous
 - d. Because it is a sacred site

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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