

Academic Essay, Subject overview

Subject Hanging Gardens

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were located on the east bank of Euphrates, South of Baghdad in Iraq. King Nebuchadnezzar built the gardens over 2,000 years ago. Nebuchadnezzar was married to Amyitis of Media. Babylon's flat desert made her miss the mountains of Media where she was brought up, and so according to legend, Nebuchadnezzar built the gardens for his wife, who felt homesick.

The king decided to build a ziggurat, a rectangular pyramid, which had many beautiful trees and flowering plants growing on its terraces. The ziggurat was thought to be about 400 feet wide, 400 feet long, and over 80 feet high. The gardens consisted of hollow terraces filled with earth to allow large trees to be planted. There were also all kinds of beautiful flowers brought from different countries in the garden.

The gardens needed a lot of water to keep the trees and plants alive. Getting water to the top of the ziggurat on which the garden was planted was a serious problem. Creating a workable watering system was more difficult than building the gardens. Babylon was a dry region, and water from the Euphrates River had to be used to irrigate the gardens.

A chain pump was used to lift water to each level. A chain pump is two large wheels on top of each other. Buckets are hung on a chain that connects the wheels. The bucket goes into the water then comes up and goes into a new pool. The empty buckets go back into the water to be refilled. The water at the top flowed like an artificial stream (a falaj) to water the gardens. Special care had to be taken because the garden ran the risk of collapsing if water leaked into the brick columns supporting the gardens.

Considering the size and beauty of the Hanging Gardens, the romantic reasons for its creation, the engineering skills needed to build such a huge ziggurat and to design the irrigation system and the agricultural knowledge required to keep the plants and trees alive, it is not surprising that the gardens have been included in the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Source: Ali, A. (1997). What is a Ziggurat? *Journal of Architectural History*. 26(3), pp. 25–33.

Reading Tasks

1. Skim read each paragraph and match the paragraph to the main idea in the box below. Paragraph 1. Has been done for you.

Paragraph 1	B	a. <i>The system used for watering The Hanging Gardens.</i>
Paragraph 2		b. General information about The Hanging Gardens. Who built them? Where? Why?
Paragraph 3		c. <i>The reason why The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are one of the ancient wonders of the world.</i>
Paragraph 4		d. <i>A brief description of The Hanging Gardens.</i>
Paragraph 5		e. <i>The problem of watering The Hanging Gardens.</i>

2. Match the words from the text (in bold) to the correct meaning. Write your answer in the middle column.

Located		<i>Unnatural or man-made</i>
Hollow		<i>Water (verb)</i>
Terrace		<i>Placed or situated</i>
Irrigate		<i>Empty</i>
Artificial		<i>Open area of a building above the ground</i>

3. Descriptive Essay Question

After reading the text, can you guess what a possible descriptive essay question could be for the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. For example think what the 3 main body paragraphs could be?

Write a possible question below and highlight the **task**, **topic** and **control** in your question.

Writing Tasks

Skim read each paragraph and match the paragraph to the main idea in the box below.
 Paragraph 1. Has been done for you.

Writing a Summary

- Underline the key points in each paragraph.
- Write the important information for each paragraph in the box below.
- Use notes *not* sentences.

The first paragraph has been done as an example. Notice that only the most important information is included. Notice how synonyms are used for some of the key words.

Paragraph	Important Information
1	<p><i>HG - constructed > 2,000 ago - nr. Euphrates, Baghdad</i> <i>>> by <u>K. Neb.</u> - for homesick wife</i></p>
2	
3	
4	
5	

