

Britain to return 5,000 ancient artefacts to Iraq

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Great Britain has promised to return more than 5,000 ancient artefacts to Iraq over the next few months. The announcement was made by the British government during the visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister to London earlier this week. The repatriation marks the largest ever return of antiquities by the UK. Many of the items set to return to Iraq were stolen and smuggled out of Iraq over the past century, particularly after the Iraqi wars at the beginning of the century. There is a lucrative trade in stolen artefacts. Iraq's ambassador to the UK was appreciative of the UK's help. He said: "We extend our gratitude to the British Museum staff for their efforts and cooperation with us."

Many of the artefacts that will soon be on their way back to Iraq were unearthed by British archaeologists a century ago. One valuable item is a rare Sumerian plaque that dates back to around 2400BC. It was illegally smuggled out of Iraq and put up for auction in 2019. It was discovered and seized by police in London. The plaque will be put on public display at the museum before its repatriation. The British Museum said it would continue, "to work with our Iraqi colleagues to research these important collections, and in the fight against the illicit trade in antiquities". It added: "It is vital that we preserve and protect the world's cultural heritage for future generations to appreciate and enjoy."

Sources:
thenationalnews.com / arabnews.com / middleeastmonitor.com

Writing

All antiquities should be returned to their country of origin. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

promise / ancient / artefacts / visit / antiquities / smuggled / lucrative / ambassador / archaeologists / valuable / plaque / museum / repatriation / colleagues / heritage

True / False

- a) The UK will return artefacts to Iraq that are over 5,000 years old. T / F
- b) The announcement was made when the UK Prime Minister visited Iraq. T / F
- c) Many of the items were smuggled out of Iraq. T / F
- d) The article said the trade in stolen artefacts is very lucrative. T / F
- e) British archaeologists discovered the artefacts 300 years ago. T / F
- f) A Sumerian plaque dated back 2,400 years. T / F
- g) The plaque will be in storage until it returns to Iraq. T / F
- h) The British Museum will fight against the illicit antiquities trade. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. promised | a. value |
| 2. announcement | b. profitable |
| 3. items | c. discovered |
| 4. lucrative | d. thanks |
| 5. gratitude | e. statement |
| 6. unearthed | f. taken away |
| 7. valuable | g. vowed |
| 8. seized | h. coworkers |
| 9. colleagues | i. articles |
| 10. appreciate | j. precious |

Discussion – Student A

- a) How important are antiquities?
- b) What do you think of Britain returning the antiquities to Iraq?
- c) Should all countries return antiquities to their country of origin?
- d) What do you think of the return of the artefacts?
- e) Should the British Museum return everything to its original country?
- f) How can police stop the smuggling of antiquities?
- g) What do you think of archaeology?
- h) What do you think of museums?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. over the | a. trade in stolen artefacts |
| 2. The repatriation marks | b. generations |
| 3. stolen and smuggled | c. next few months |
| 4. There is a lucrative | d. to the British Museum |
| 5. We extend our gratitude | e. on public display |
| 6. artefacts that will soon be on | f. out of Iraq |
| 7. unearthed by British archaeologists | g. the largest ever return |
| 8. dates back | h. a century ago |
| 9. The plaque will be put | i. their way back to Iraq |
| 10. for future | j. to around 2400BC |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What valuable antiquities does your country have?
- How important are your country's antiquities to you?
- What can we learn from antiquities?
- Is looking at an antiquity in a museum better than looking at it online?
- How much do you value your cultural heritage?
- What parts of today's culture do you want future generations to see?
- What questions would you like to ask the British Museum?

Spelling

- more than 5,000 aeinctn artefacts
- the largest ever return of taeniquits
- There is a ricvtelua trade in stolen artefacts
- cpativeapier of the UK's help
- We extend our tuartdgie to the British Museum
- for their efforts and otpnaoeirc
- One luableva item
- a rare Sumerian geupal
- discovered and edzies by police in London
- at the museum before its nttraioatepi
- for future eeroitasngn
- rpitaaecpe and enjoy

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. i	4. b	5. d
6. c	7. j	8. f	9. h	10. a

Role Play

Role A – The Pyramids

You think the Pyramids is the best cultural site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): Angkor Wat, Petra or the Great Wall of China.

Role B – Angkor Wat

You think Angkor Wat is the best cultural site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): the Pyramids, Petra or the Great Wall of China.

Role C – Petra

You think Petra is the best cultural site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): Angkor Wat, the Pyramids or the Great Wall of China.

Role D – Great Wall of China

You think the Great Wall of China is the best cultural site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): Angkor Wat, Petra or the Pyramids.

Speaking – Artefacts

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| • The Pyramids | • Pompeii |
| • Machu Picchu | • Petra |
| • Angkor Wat | • Easter Island Moai |
| • Stonehenge | • Great Wall of China |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.