**Stage 1 Ancient Studies**

**Assessment Type 1: Skills and Applications**

**Topic 1: Understanding Ancient History - Cultural heritage, ownership, and the role of museums**

**A History of the World in 100 Objects** was a joint project of BBC Radio 4 and the British Museum, comprising a 100-part radio series written and presented by British Museum director Neil MacGregor. In 15-minute presentations broadcast on Radio 4, MacGregor used objects of ancient art, industry, technology and arms, all of which are in the British Museum's collection.

To begin your research, listen to at least three episodes from the series, possibly using the list below and then complete an individual task such as a

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| * Narrative
* Podcast
 | * Debate
* Scripted role play
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You might use this question to direct your 800-word or 5 minute oral presentation:

“Is the British Museum a repository celebrating humanity’s achievements, or an unethical shelter for looters?”

**Egyptian Clay Model of Cattle**

A History of the World in 100 Objects, After the Ice Age: Food and Sex (9000 - 3500 BC)

Neil selects four miniature clay cows to show the major changes that early man was undergoing at the end of the Ice Age. These four frail-looking cows were made from Nile mud in Egypt 5,500 years ago, long before the time of the pyramids or the pharaohs. Why did the Egyptians start burying objects like this one with their dead? Neil goes in search life and death on the Nile and discovers how the domestication of cattle transformed human existence.

**Rosetta Stone**

A History of the World in 100 Objects, Empire Builders (300 BC - 1 AD)

Today's programme finds Neil MacGregor in the company of one of the best known inhabitants of the British Museum - the Rosetta Stone. Throughout this week he is exploring shifting empires and the rise of legendary rulers around the world over 2000 years ago and here he takes us to the Egypt of Ptolemy V. He tells the story of the Greek kings who ruled in Alexandria. He also explains the struggle between the British and the French over the Middle East and their squabble over the stone. And, of course, he describes the astonishing contest that led to the most famous decipherment in history - the cracking of the hieroglyphics on the Rosetta Stone. Historian Dorothy Thompson and the writer Ahdaf Soueif help untangle the tale.

**Gold Coin of Kumaragupta I**

A History of the World in 100 Objects, The Rise of World Faiths (200 - 600 AD)

This week Neil MacGregor is exploring how several of the great religions around the world, less than 2000 years ago, began creating sophisticated new images to represent their beliefs and their deities. Many of the images created then are still with us today and remain essential forms of veneration. These include the images of the gods and goddesses of Hinduism, whose recognisable modern form can be seen on coins from the Gupta empire which flourished in India from around 320 to 550 AD. The Gupta period is regarded by many Indians as a golden age, a time when Indian cultural life and religion came together to create temples and texts that are central to Hinduism today.

**Standard of Ur**

A History of the World in 100 Objects, The First Cities and States (4000 - 2000 BC)

Neil MacGregor examines the first great civilisations and one of the most spectacular discoveries of ancient royal goods. The magnificent gold and silver jewellery was found nearly 100 years ago at a royal burial site in the City of Ur in southern Iraq, at the heart of one of the first great civilisations in the world. It leads Neil to contemplate the nature of kingship and power in Mesopotamia. The Standard of Ur is a set of mosaic scenes that show powerful images of battle and regal life and that remain remarkably well preserved given its 4,500-year-old history.

**Maya Maize God Statue**

A History of the World in 100 Objects, After the Ice Age: Food and Sex (9000 - 3500 BC)

Neil focuses on the world of the Mayan civilisation and a stone Maize God, discovered on the site of a major Mayan city in present-day Honduras. This large statue is wearing a headdress in the shape of a giant corn cob. Maize was not only worshipped at that time but the Maya also believed that all their ancestors were descended from maize. Neil reveals why maize, which is notoriously difficult to refine for human consumption, became so important to the emerging agriculture of the region.

**Chinese Han lacquer cup**

A History of the World in 100 Objects, Empire Builders (300 BC - 1 AD)

In a week of programmes exploring the nature of power and the emergence of new rulers around the world 2000 years ago, Neil MacGregor takes us to Han Dynasty China. He tells the story of how the Chinese maintained loyalty and control by dispensing luxury gifts. He describes the world of the imperial Han through an exquisite lacquer wine cup that was probably given by the emperor to one of his military commanders in North Korea. The historian Roel Sterckx underlines the importance of lacquer for the period while writer Isabel Hilton looks at how the production of goods under state control has remained a consistent interest of the Chinese.

In this task you should demonstrate-

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of texts, artefacts, ideas, events, and/or people

KU3 Knowledge and understanding of the nature of historical and/or archaeological evidence

RA2 Research into and understanding of ideas and innovations that emerged from the ancient world, and consideration of their influence

A2 Communication of ideas and arguments, using subject-specific language