Interpreting the Source
Popular interest in ancient Egypt soared with the discovery in 1922 of the sealed tomb of the young ruler Tutankhamen. Well hidden in the rocks of the Valley of the Kings, near Thebes, Tutankhamen's tomb was unusual because it was almost untouched by vandals or grave robbers. British archaeologist Howard Carter spent more than 10 years searching for the tomb. Carter's sponsor, Lord Carnarvon, was about ready to abandon the project.

Reader's Dictionary
subterranean: below ground
effigies: statues
cache: supply room
sentinal: guardian
aperture: an opening
pious: religious
panoply: a ceremonial covering

Guided Reading
The excerpt below is from Carter's diary. Read to learn what he saw when he first opened Tutankhamen's tomb. Then answer the questions that follow.

From Howard Carter's Diary

Sunday, November 26
Feverishly we cleared away the remaining last scraps of rubbish on the floor of the passage before the doorway, until we had only the clean sealed doorway before us. In which, after making preliminary notes, we made a tiny breach in the top left hand corner to see what was beyond. Darkness and the iron testing rod told us that there was empty space. Perhaps another descending staircase, in accordance to the ordinary royal Theban tomb plan? Or maybe a chamber? Candles were procured—the all important tell-tale for foul gases when opening an ancient subterranean excavation—I widened the breach and by means of the candle looked in, while Ld. C., Lady E, and Callender with the Reises waited in anxious expectation.

It was sometime before one could see, the hot air escaping caused the candle to flicker, but as soon as one's eyes became accustomed to the glimmer of light the interior of the chamber gradually loomed before one, with its strange and wonderful medley of extraordinary and beautiful objects heaped upon one another.

There was naturally short suspense for those present who could not see, when Lord Carnarvon said to me 'Can you see anything.' I replied to him Yes, it is wonderful. I then with precaution made the hole sufficiently large for both of us to see. With the light of an electric torch as well as an additional candle we looked in. Our sensations and astonishment are difficult to describe as the better light revealed to us the marvellous collection of treasures: two strange ebony-black effigies of a King, gold sandalled, bearing staff and mace, loomed out from the cloak of darkness; gilded couches in strange forms, lion-headed, Hathor-headed, and beast infernal; exquisitely painted, inlaid, and ornamental caskets... Our sensations were bewildering and full of strange emotion. We questioned one another as to the meaning...
Primary Source Reading B
continued

of it all. Was it a tomb or merely a cache? A sealed doorway between the two sentinel statues proved there was more beyond. . . .

Monday, November 27

It soon became obvious that we were but on the threshold of the discovery. The sight that met us was beyond anything one could conceive. . . . As the better light fell upon the objects we endeavoured to take them in. It was impossible. They were so many. Beneath one of the couches . . . we perceived an aperture in the rock-wall which proved to be nothing less than another sealed-doorway broken open as by some predatory hand. With care Ld. C. and I crept under this strange gilded couch, and we peered into the opening. There we saw that it led into yet another chamber (afterwards called the Annexe) of smaller dimensions than the Ante-chamber and of a lower level. . . .

It was full of one mass of furniture. An utter confusion of beds, chairs, boxes, alabaster and faience vases, statuettes, cases of peculiar form, and every sort of thing overturned and searched for valuables. . . .

In neither of these two chambers could we see any traces of a mummy or mummies—the one pious reason for making a cache. With such evidence, as well as the sealed doorway between the two guardian statues of the King, the mystery gradually dawned upon us. We were but in the anterior portion of a tomb. Behind that closed doorway was the tomb-chamber, and that Tut.ankh.Amen probably lay there in all his magnificent panoply of death. . . .


Document-Based Questions

Directions: Use information from the primary source to answer the questions below.

1. **Identifying** When and by whom was the tomb found?

2. **Listing** What were some of the objects that could be seen by electric torch (flashlight)?

3. **Explaining** What was the importance of the doorway between the two black statues?

4. **Drawing Conclusions** Why was the discovery of Tutankhamen’s tomb an unusual event?