



Ancient Lines in the Sand

Article

NAZCA, Peru (Achieve3000, January 3, 2020). The greatest wonders of the ancient world are usually hard to miss. For example, it's impossible to walk past the pyramids in Egypt or Stonehenge in Great Britain without noticing them. They're right in your face. But not the Nazca Lines in southern Peru.

These ancient drawings don't rise before you on enormous slabs of stone. They're geoglyphs ("ground drawings") in the desert sands. There are hundreds of them. Some are as large as the Statue of Liberty and Empire State Building. And they spread out over nearly 190 square miles (492 square kilometers). The best way to see them is from the window of an airplane. That's how thousands of visitors view them each year.

Yet these wonders went unnoticed for nearly 1,500 years. A Peruvian archaeologist first found some in 1927. But nearly 150 geoglyphs weren't discovered until many years later. It took technology such as drones to find them.

But researchers still have many questions about the geoglyphs. For example, why did people who lived long before air travel create drawings best viewed from above? And why were they created in the first place? But the answers remain largely a mystery.

So here's what we *do* know: The area's pre-Incan Nazca people created the geoglyphs. This was between 500 BCE and 500 CE. How did they make the ground drawings? By removing some of the dark, reddish rocks that covered the ground. This showed the lighter-colored desert sand underneath.

But why have the geoglyphs lasted so long? It's because there isn't much rain or wind in the area. Although many of the lines have, understandably, experienced some fading over the years. The biggest danger to these ancient masterpieces is posed by human activity like mining and unlawful farming.

Many of the geoglyphs show the natural world, such as animals and plants. And then there are the geoglyphs that aren't from nature. One example was uncovered in 2019. It shows a strange creature with many sets of eyes and mouths. Researchers say this suggests that the Nazca people had a taste for the magical.

So what purpose did the geoglyphs serve? Research suggests that the geoglyphs were part of rituals for rain and crops. Certain geoglyphs may have shown where the rituals were being held. Others may have been like signposts directing travelers to those places.

Then again, these are all guesses. Only one thing is clear: The Nazcas found a way to draw lasting lines in the ever-shifting sands of time.

Video credit: Achieve3000 from footage by maxuser/Creatas Video+/Getty Images

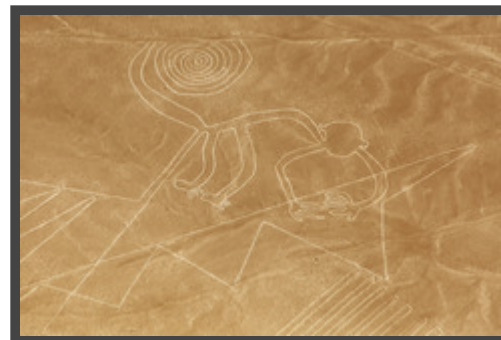


Photo credit: Daniel Prudek/Shutterstock

A monkey geoglyph is seen from above. It's one of the many ground drawings known as the Nazca Lines.

Dictionary

archaeology (*noun*) a science that deals with past human life and activities by studying the bones, tools, etc., of ancient people

drone (*noun*) a type of small aircraft that flies without a pilot

mining (*noun*) the process or business of digging in mines to obtain minerals, metals, jewels, etc.

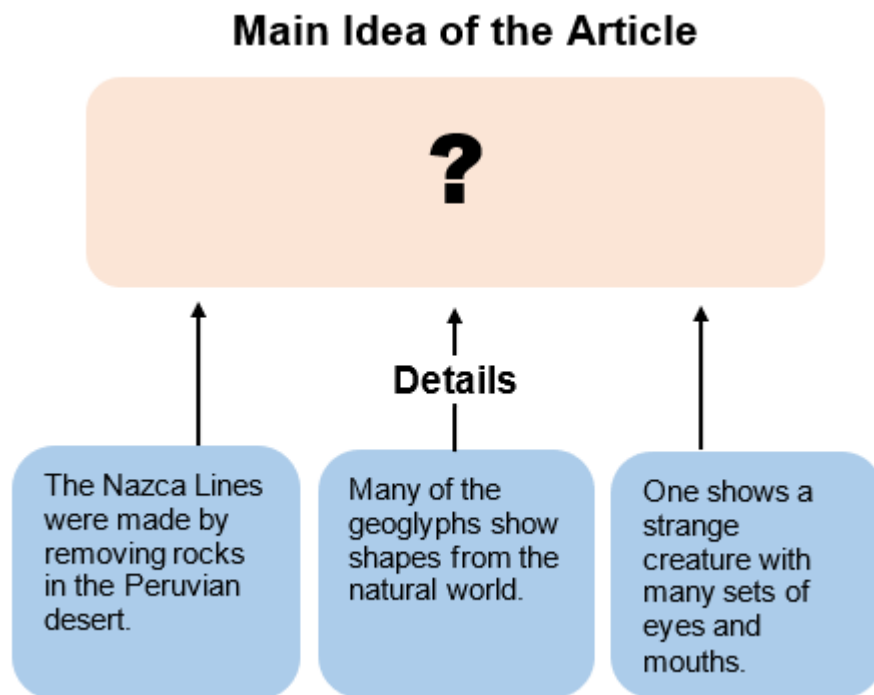
research (*verb*) to study (something) carefully

ritual (*noun*) an act or series of acts done in a particular situation and in the same way each time

Activity

PART 1

Question 1



Based on the Article, which best replaces the question mark in the diagram above?

- (A) The Nazca Lines that are drawn in the sands of Peru show plants, animals, and more.
- (B) The geoglyphs might have played an important part in rituals for rain and crops.
- (C) Research suggests that certain geoglyphs may have shown where rituals were being held.
- (D) A Peruvian archaeologist saw the Nazca Lines in 1927 but didn't discover all of them.

Question 2

Which of these is an opinion?

- (A) The geoglyphs were made between 500 BCE and 500 CE by the Nazca people of Peru.
- (B) Some of the geoglyphs are recognizable from the window of an airplane.
- (C) The geoglyphs have lasted until today due to the small amount of rain and wind in the area.
- (D) Researchers are wasting their time in trying to figure out why the Nazca Lines were made.

Question 3

The Article states:

So here's what we do know: The area's pre-Incan Nazca people created the geoglyphs. This was between 500 BCE and 500 CE. How did they make the ground drawings? By removing some of the dark, reddish rocks that covered the ground. This showed the lighter-colored desert sand underneath.

Why did the author include this passage?

- A To explain how the Nazca people created the geoglyphs by making lines on the desert floor
- B To offer some proof that explains what the mysterious geoglyphs were used for long ago
- C To say that it is easier to figure out what the lines show from high in the air than on the ground
- D To point out the fact that the Nazca Lines changed a lot between 500 BCE and 500 CE

Question 4

Which two words are the closest **antonyms**?

Only some of these words are used in the Article.

- A slabs and blocks
- B creature and ancestor
- C enormous and tiny
- D created and viewed

Question 5

The reader can tell from the Article that _____.

- A some of the Nazca Lines are so faded that they are now very hard to see
- B the Nazca Lines are as hard to miss as many of the wonders of the ancient world
- C some of the Nazca Lines point to the best places to grow crops in the dry area
- D the Nazca Lines were created by removing white sand from the desert floor

Question 6

Look at the events below. Think about the Article. Which happened *last*?

This question asks about when events happened. It does not ask where in the Article the events appear. Reread the Article for clues, such as dates.

- A The Nazca lines went unnoticed in the desert sands of Peru for nearly 1,500 years.
- B A geoglyph of a strange creature with many sets of eyes and mouths was discovered.
- C A Peruvian archaeologist discovered groups of lines drawn on the desert floor.
- D The Nazca people created drawings in the desert sand by taking away the top layer of rocks.

Question 7

Read this passage from the Article:

Yet these wonders went unnoticed for nearly 1,500 years. A Peruvian archaeologist first found some in 1927. But nearly 150 geoglyphs weren't discovered until many years later. It took *technology* such as drones to find them.

In this passage, the word *technology* means _____.

- (A) information learned through experience
- (B) goods that are bought or sold in a store
- (C) modern machines or pieces of equipment
- (D) careful study that's done to find new knowledge

Question 8

Which passage from the Article best supports the idea that the Nazca Lines might have served more than one purpose?

- (A) Research suggests that the geoglyphs were part of rituals for rain and crops. Certain geoglyphs may have shown where the rituals were being held. Others may have been like signposts directing travelers to those places.
- (B) The area's pre-Incan Nazca people created the geoglyphs. This was between 500 BCE and 500 CE. How did they make the ground drawings? By removing some of the dark, reddish rocks that covered the ground. This showed the lighter-colored desert sand underneath.
- (C) Many of the geoglyphs show the natural world, such as animals and plants. And then there are the geoglyphs that aren't from nature. One example was uncovered in 2019. It shows a strange creature with many sets of eyes and mouths.
- (D) Yet these wonders went unnoticed for nearly 1,500 years. A Peruvian archaeologist first found some in 1927. But nearly 150 geoglyphs weren't discovered until many years later. It took technology such as drones to find them.