

Diamonds

Diamonds have consistently been one of the most valuable and sought after gemstones for thousands of years. From the British Crown Jewels to emperor's rings, diamonds have decorated some of the most important people in history.

TOO MANY STONES

Until the middle of the 1800s, diamonds were very rare. This meant that they were too expensive for most people. Around that time, diamonds were discovered in South Africa in large quantities. Suddenly, there were far more diamonds available for sale: the price plummeted.

By 1888, a company called the De Beers mining company had bought all of the mines in South Africa. Because they owned most of the diamonds in the world, they could hold on to them and only release a few at a time. This meant that diamonds regained their value.



UNDER PRESSURE

Diamonds are very, very old. They formed deep within the Earth's crust over 3 billion years ago, around the time that the very first life was beginning to emerge. They are normally found a hundred miles underground, where the temperature can be between 900 and 1,300c. The pressure at that depth is around 50,000 times as much as on the surface. It is this combination of intense heat and pressure that forced carbon atoms to crystallise into diamonds.

When magma builds up under the surface and expands at a rapid rate, it pushes its way to the surface, taking diamond-bearing rocks with it. These form "kimberlite" pipes, which are one of the biggest sources of diamonds in the world.

A ROYAL TREASURE



The largest diamond ever mined was the Cullinan diamond. It was found in 1905 and was roughly the size of a fist. When a diamond is first dug up, it is classed as a "rough" diamond. This means that it is too sharp or not shaped to be put into jewellery. Rough diamonds will also have parts that aren't as high quality as the rest.

Before it could be placed into jewellery, it needed to be "cut". This is the process of breaking it into smaller pieces and polishing them. Cullinan produced over a hundred different, smaller stones. The largest, Cullinan I, was called the Great Star of Africa. This is the largest cut diamond in the world. Cullinan II is the second-largest and is known as the Second Star of Africa. Both diamonds are embedded in objects in the British Royal Crown Jewels.

A NEW DISCOVERY

In April 2019, the second-largest diamond ever discovered was found in Botswana. At 1,758 carats, the Sewelo stone is just over half as big as the Cullinan stone. In January 2020, it was bought for millions of dollars by the fashion brand Louis Vuitton.



1

What impression do you get about diamonds from reading this text?
Give two impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
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_____ **3 marks**

2

Which **two** of the following statements describe the history of diamonds according to the text?

Tick **two**.

De Beers controls how many diamonds are sold.

Diamonds have always been very rare.

Many famous and important people have worn diamonds.

The Sewelo stone is the largest diamond ever found.

_____ **2 marks**



3

Look at the section headed: ***A Royal Treasure.***

Find and **copy one** word that tells you part of the Cullinan diamond have been placed in the Crown Jewels.

1 mark

4

a) What is the name of the second largest diamond cut from the Cullinan stone?

1 mark

b) Using evidence from the text, explain why the Cullinan stone wasn't put into jewellery in its original form.

2 marks

5

Where was the second largest diamond ever found discovered?

1 mark

SATs Practice - Answers

1. **Give 1 mark for two correct impressions. Give an extra mark for each correct explanation with evidence from the text.**

Diamonds are valuable.

Diamonds have consistently been one of the most valuable and sought after gemstones for thousands of years.

Diamonds were too expensive for most people.

The Sewelo diamond was bought for millions of dollars.

Diamonds used to be rare.

Until the middle of the 1800s, diamonds were very rare.

Diamonds are very old/hard to produce.

They are produced deep underground.

They need high temperatures and lots of pressure.

They were formed billions of years ago.

2. **Give 1 mark for each correct answer.**

De Beers controls how many diamonds are sold.

Many famous and important people have worn diamonds.

3. Embedded

4. a) Second Star of Africa

b) **Give two marks for a details explanation using evidence from the text:**

i.e. When it was discovered, it was too rough. It had to be cut and polished to make it more suitable for jewellery. (Accept answers that mention it being too rough in addition to it needing to be polished or cut first).

Give one mark for a basic answer about size or quality:

i.e. It was too rough.

There were bits that weren't as high quality.

5. Botswana