1-1 History Maker - The "Iceman"

In 1991, a German tourist found a frozen body in the Ötztal Alps. The body, nicknamed Ötzi, is more than 5,000 years old. It is the oldest mummified human body ever found intact. Whatever the cause of his death, his body can tell scientists a great deal about climate and vegetation. The fact that his body is so well preserved shows that the climate when he died was very cold—the ice kept his body from decaying.

1. What discovery was made in 1991? What can we learn from his body?
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2. How did climate determine the well-preserved state of his body?
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Vegetation found with Ötzi came from very far away, indicating that he had traveled a great distance. The “Iceman’s” clothes and weapons revealed some information about his culture and journey. He was prepared for the cold, as he had a fur robe (made of ibex (wild goat), chamois (goat/antelope), and deer skins), a woven grass cape, a furry cap, and grass-insulated leather shoes. Scientists analyzed a minute particle of his stomach contents and learned even more. The pollens that he had ingested helped the scientists pinpoint the area to the south that he must have left several hours before dying. The pollens also proved that he was traveling sometime between March and June.

3. Identify the details that reveal information about his culture and journey.
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4. What did the pollens in his stomach reveal about the Iceman and the time of his death?
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5. Critical Thinking: Why was the discovery of the Ice Man an important event? What can be learned from this information?
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