

Ellie's Expedition: Uncovering Ancient Egypt

Learning objective: To retrieve, infer, and evaluate information regarding the significance of the River Nile and societal structures in Ancient Egypt.

Read the following passage carefully. Ensure you refer back to the text to justify your answers. Write your responses in full sentences.

Ellie the elephant, known for her extraordinary memory, stood before the swirling currents of the River Nile. She explained to her friends that Ancient Egypt was not merely a kingdom of sand; it was a flourishing civilisation built entirely upon the life-giving waters of the Nile. Every year, the river would flood, depositing a rich, dark mud called silt onto the banks. This natural fertiliser allowed farmers to transform the arid desert into lush, green fields of wheat and flax.

Beyond agriculture, the river served as a vital highway for trade, connecting distant settlements. While the Pharaoh held absolute authority as the divine ruler, the organisation of the society was complex. Skilled scribes meticulously recorded grain stores, while artisans crafted intricate jewellery and monumental statues to honour their deities. Ellie noted that the Egyptians were masters of engineering, using clever irrigation channels to redirect water, ensuring their crops survived the scorching summers. Without the Nile's predictable cycle, the grand pyramids might never have cast their shadows across the golden horizon. It was a perfect harmony between human ingenuity and the natural world.

Word bank: civilisation · fertile · pharaoh · silt · irrigation · tributary · dynasty · monumental

1. Identify two specific ways the River Nile supported the daily lives of the Ancient Egyptians. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what was the role of the scribes in Ancient Egyptian society? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author describe the Nile as a 'vital highway'? (3 marks)

4. Explain why the annual flooding of the Nile was considered a necessity for the survival of the civilisation. (3 marks)

5. To what extent do you agree that the success of Ancient Egypt was due more to the river than to the skill of its people? Justify your answer. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of the Nile riverbank during flood season. Include labels showing the 'fertile silt', an 'irrigation channel', and a small 'trading boat'.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the importance of the Nile to Ancient Egyptians with the importance of a modern-day river to a city of your choice. What might happen to a civilisation if their primary water source suddenly changed its path?