Ellie’s Expedition: Uncovering Ancient Egypt

Learning objective: To understand the significance of the Nile and the social structure of Ancient Egypt.

Read the passage below carefully. Use evidence from the text to answer the questions that follow. Write your answers in full sentences.

Ellie the elephant, known for her incredible memory, loves to share stories about the cradle of civilisation: Ancient Egypt. Thousands of years ago, life in Egypt revolved entirely around the River Nile. Every year, the river flooded, leaving behind a thick layer of dark, fertile silt. This allowed farmers to grow abundant crops in the desert, which was essential for the population to thrive.

At the top of the social pyramid sat the pharaoh, who was considered a god on earth. Below them were the scribes and priests, followed by skilled craftspeople and farmers. Ellie often points out how clever the Egyptians were; they invented a complex system of writing called hieroglyphics and built massive stone tombs known as pyramids to protect their pharaohs for the afterlife. Because the Egyptians kept meticulous records on papyrus scrolls, historians like Ellie can piece together exactly how they lived, worked, and traded goods. By studying their art and architecture, we gain a window into a world that laid the foundations for many modern human achievements.

Word bank: civilisation · pharaoh · irrigation · silt · hieroglyphics · dynasty

1. What natural event provided the fertile soil needed for Egyptian farming? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what was the primary purpose of building pyramids? (2 marks)

3. Why might the pharaoh have relied heavily on the scribes mentioned in the text? (2 marks)

4. How does the author imply that the River Nile was the most important feature of the Egyptian landscape? (2 marks)

5. If you could ask an Ancient Egyptian one question about their daily life, what would it be and why? Justify your choice. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of the Ancient Egyptian social pyramid, showing the pharaoh at the top and the farmers at the bottom, including labels for each group.

Extension challenge: Research one invention from Ancient Egypt (such as the shaduf or the calendar) and write a short paragraph explaining how it helped the people of the time.