Ancient Egypt Notes Packet

Teacher’s Edition – Answer Key
Geography & Early Settlement of Egypt

Introduction:
• The Egyptians settled along the Nile River, in the northeast corner of Africa.
• The Egyptian civilization lasted from 3,100 BCE to 350 CE.

Environmental Factors:
• There were three important environmental factors that led to the Egyptian civilization: water, topography, and vegetation.
  o Topography means the shape of the land.
  o Vegetation means plant life.
• Environmental factors depended on physical features. These are things like: rivers, mountains, valleys, deserts, climate, and the fertility of the soil.

Water:
• Rivers, lakes, and inland seas are all good sources of fresh water.
• Water was important to ancient civilizations for many reasons.
• Water was a good source of food through hunting and through farming.
Farmers settled by rivers. The river’s natural flooding helped to irrigate crops.

**Topography**
- Topography refers to the shape of the land, and includes mountains, hills, plains, and deserts.
- Farmers usually settled in flat, and open areas such as plains and valleys. These large spaces gave their crops room to grow.

**Vegetation**
- There are a lot of kinds of vegetation such as: trees, bushes, flowers, grass, and reeds.
- Mild weather, regular rain, and fresh water are good for plant life.
- Vegetation influenced human settlement in many ways:
  - People ate wild plants and crops.
  - People made products out of plants such as: medicine, baskets, rope, tools, and paper.
Environmental Factors & the Settlement of Egypt

Physical Features:
• The Nile River created a long, fertile valley that ended in a marshy delta near the Mediterranean Sea.
• Delta: An area of sediment deposited at the mouth of a river.
• In your own words a delta is: _______________________
  _______________________
  _______________________
• The deserts created a natural barrier that protected people who lived along the Nile.

Environmental Factors:
• The Nile was a source of fresh water in an area that was mostly desert.
• The Nile River provided natural irrigation and fertilization.
• Fertilization: The process of adding fertilizer or plant food to the soil.
• Use the word fertilization in a sentence.
  __________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________.
• Plants were very plentiful in the Nile River valley. Some of the useful plants included reeds, and papyrus.
• **Papyrus** is a tough water plant. Papyrus was used to make rope and paper.
Pharaoh Khufu: The Pyramid Builder

- Pharaoh Khufu ruled from 2551 to 2528 BCE during the Old Kingdom period.
- He built the famous pyramid.
- Khufu helped to establish the pharaoh as a central authority. He declared himself a god.
- Khufu kept strict control over Egypt’s food supplies by overseeing the harvest and storing extra grain.
- Pharaoh Khufu built the Great Pyramid of Giza as a tomb for himself and his family.

The Great Pyramid

- The Great Pyramid was built with over 2 million stone blocks.
- It took twenty years for the pyramid to be completed by thousands of workers.
Pharaoh Senusret I: Patron of the Arts

- Senusret I ruled from 1971 to 1926 BCE during the Middle Kingdom.
- Art, literature, and architecture flourished while he was pharaoh.
- Senusret controlled mines filled with gold, copper, and gems.
- Pharaoh Senusret built and improved many temples, shrines, and religious monuments.

Pharaoh Hatshepsut & Egyptian Trade

- Hatshepsut ruled from 1473 to 1458 BCE; she was Egypt’s first female pharaoh.
- While she was pharaoh, art and architecture flourished, and trade was encouraged.
- Hatshepsut encouraged trade with other countries. Her biggest trading expedition was to an African kingdom called Punt.
- During Hatshepsut’s reign, trade helped spread Egyptian influence along the Nile and in the Middle East.
Egyptian Social Pyramid

Directions: Using page 81, with a partner fill out this pyramid. Then discuss what you think that each class did.
Egyptian Social Classes

Directions: With your group research your assigned social class using your textbook only, and then write down notes that you think are important that the rest of the class will need to write copy down.

Government Officials:
  •
  •
  •

Priests:
  •
  •
  •

Scribes:
  •
  •
  •

Artisans:
  •
Research Project Directions
* For the rest of this week, you will be researching your assigned social group. For this research project, you will be using your textbook, books from the library, and the Internet.

* On Friday your group will be presenting the information you have found using a PowerPoint presentation. Your presentation must be at least 6 minutes long, and must include text and pictures.

*Everyone in the group will be graded on their participation in both the research portion and the presentation portion of the project.

*Be sure to use the following page to help outline your research. IF YOU NEED HELP, BE SURE TO ASK EITHER THE LIBRARIAN OR ME, WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HELP!
Social Class Research Project

Name of Social Class:

Importance of Social Class:
  •
  •
  •

What did people in this social class do?

What was their daily life like?

Other important facts:
Government Officials

- The three important officials in the Egyptian government were the vizier, the general of the armies, and the chief treasurer.
- The vizier was the second in command, after the pharaoh. It was the vizier’s job to carry out the pharaoh’s commands, he also hired and supervised other government officials.
- The vizier was also the chief judge. He was expected to be fair.
- The chief treasurer looked after the government’s money.
- The general of the armies was the top military commander in Egypt. He advised the pharaoh about war and national security. He also helped the pharaoh form alliances with other nations.
- Many government officials led lives of luxury with great wealth, and large homes. They also held very lavish banquets.

Priests

- Priests were powerful and highly respected in Egypt.
- The pharaoh was the highest ranked priest of all.

Duties of the Priests

- The High Priest advised the pharaoh and oversaw all religious ceremonies.
- Temple priests were in charge of the temples scattered throughout Egypt.

Duties of the Temple Priests
• Every temple in Egypt was home to a god or goddess. The temple priest’s main job was to take care of the god.

**Burial Practices**

• Since Egyptians believed that a person needed their body in the afterlife, burial was very important.

• Priests practiced embalming.
  o **Embalming**: To use preservatives to keep a dead body from decaying.
  o **Embalming Steps**:
    ▪ Embalmers removed the body’s organs, such as the brain, lungs, and liver.
    ▪ The heart was left in the body.
    ▪ The removed organs were kept in canopic jars.
    ▪ After 70 days, the embalmers washed and oiled the body.
    ▪ Then, they wrapped the body in hundreds of yards of linen.
    ▪ They decorated the body with jewels and protective charms. They would often place a mask over the head.
    ▪ Finally, the priests spread a black, gooey gum over the body and wrapped it again.

• After all those steps, the dead body was placed in a wooden box that was placed in a sarcophagus.
  o **Sarcophagus**: A large stone coffin.
  o The sarcophagus was often filled with items such as food, games, gold, jewelry, and clothes.
Artisans

Artisan: A highly skilled laborer who created beautiful works of art.

What Did Artisans Do?

• Artisans could have been: carpenters, jewelers, leatherworkers, metalworkers, painters, potters, sculptors, and weavers.
• Painters portrayed scenes from everyday life.
• Weavers made fabric and cloth.
• The most skilled artisan was a stone carver. They had to carve statues from stone. They were also very important in tomb building.

Daily Life of an Artisan

• Artisans worked very hard. They would often work for ten days before they would take a day off.
• Although artisans were very skilled and creative, the upper classes often viewed them as common laborers.

Peasants

Peasants made up the largest class in the Egyptian social system.

Three Seasons of the Nile

• Flooding Season: This is when the Nile overran its banks and fertilized the soil. Since the farmers had to wait to plant, they would work on royal projects.
• Planting Season: Began in October and was when farmers planted their crops such as wheat and barley. Planting was a two person job. One person would soften the ground with a plow pulled by cattle, while the second person (usually the
(The farmer’s wife) followed behind and scattered the seeds. Farmers had to make sure that their land was carefully irrigated.

- **Harvest Season:** Men would cut down the plants with sickles, and women and children would collect the grain. During this time, everyone worked from dawn until dusk.

**Taxes:**

- At the end of the harvest season, peasants were either rewarded or punished for their crop production.
- If the peasant worked hard and grew a lot of grain they were rewarded. The pharaoh allowed them to gather up as much leftover grain as they could. The peasant was able to keep this grain and use it for food.
- However, if the peasant did not grow enough food, they were punished, and sometimes brutally beaten.
- All of the peasants were required to pay taxes to the pharaoh in the form of crops.