

**GLOBAL HISTORY I
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2008**

I. Egypt: The Gift of the Nile

The Greek historian Herodotus called ancient Egypt the "gift of the Nile." He attributed the growth of Egypt's highly-developed civilization to the Nile River. Ancient Egypt would have been nothing more than a desert without the yearly overflow of this mighty river.

The Nile River begins in Central Africa and flows more than three thousand miles northward to the Mediterranean Sea. Each summer, the Nile overflows its banks and floods the land for approximately ten miles on each side. When the water recedes, the soil is left rich and fertile for farming. This rich soil enabled people long ago to settle in that area and, in time, develop one of the ancient world's greatest civilizations.

The annual overflow of the Nile River led the ancient Egyptians to develop history's first calendar. They noted that the flooding of the river occurred at the same time Sirius, the Dog Star, appeared in the sky. Counting 365 days between each sighting of the star, they devised a calendar of 12 months, each with 30 days. The extra five days per year were set aside for holidays and feasting.

The ancient Egyptians controlled the waters of the Nile through a series of canals, dikes, and irrigation ditches. Protected on all sides by either mountains, deserts, or water, they were free to build their society without fear of invasion. Farmers along the banks of the river grew wheat, barley, and cotton.

About 3400 B.C., all of Egypt was united under one ruler. This ruler was the pharaoh, or king. The word *pharaoh* means "royal or great house." Dynasties, or families, of pharaohs ruled Egypt for the next three thousand years.

Fill in the blanks to complete the following statements about ancient Egypt.

1. The Nile River flows northward to the _____ Sea.
2. The Nile overflows _____ a year.
3. The ancient Egyptian calendar consisted of twelve months divided into _____ days each. Five extra days were used for _____ and _____.
4. Ancient Egypt was protected from invasion by these geographical features: _____, _____, and _____.
5. Egyptian kings were called _____.
6. What role did the Nile River play in the development of Egyptian civilization?

7. The pharaoh of ancient Egypt was an absolute monarch. How does the power of such a ruler differ from that of a constitutional monarch like Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain?

II. Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian society was divided into a number of social classes. At the top, below the pharaoh, were nobles and priests. Next were government officials and soldiers, followed by scribes (clerks), artisans, and merchants. The lowest class consisted of peasants, who were mostly farmers. At the bottom of the social order were thousands of slaves obtained in war. Despite these clear-cut divisions, it was possible for people at all levels to move from one class to another.

Family life was important to the ancient Egyptians. Women were respected in their roles as wives and mothers, and children were treasured and pampered. Egyptian women also enjoyed more individual rights than women in other ancient societies. They could own businesses and buy and sell property.

Religion was also important to the ancient Egyptians. They worshiped the sun and other forces of nature. They were among the first people to believe in life after death. They attempted to preserve bodies for the afterlife through a process known as mummification. Pharaohs built huge pyramids as special tombs where they believed their spirits could travel undisturbed to the next world.

In addition, the ancient Egyptians were a fun-loving people who enjoyed games and sporting events. Wall paintings from tombs depict them hunting, fishing, and engaging in athletic contests. Other paintings show them playing senet, a game similar to checkers.

Decide whether the following statements are true or false. Write T or F in each blank.

1. ____ A person in ancient Egypt was not destined to stay in the same class for life.
2. ____ Ancient Egyptian women could buy and sell property.
3. ____ Merchants made up the highest social class in ancient Egypt.
4. ____ The ancient Egyptians were monotheistic; they believed in only one god.
5. ____ Religion played an important role in ancient Egyptian society.
6. ____ The ancient Egyptians enjoyed games and other forms of amusement.
7. ____ Unskilled laborers held the lowest position in ancient Egyptian society.
8. ____ Mummification and the building of pyramids were related to the ancient Egyptian belief in life after death.
9. ____ Life was difficult for ancient Egyptian children.
10. Would you have enjoyed living in ancient Egypt? Why or why not?

