

# The Egyptian Civilization

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## Keywords

1. **Herodotus:** He was the ancient Greek historian who said that Egypt was 'The Gift of the Nile'.
2. **Hyksos tribes:** They invaded and ruled Egypt for about a hundred years (1,700 bce – 1,600 bce).
3. **Ptolemy:** He was one of the generals of Alexander the Great. He was also the founder of the last dynasty of Egypt. Pharaoh He was an Egyptian King.
4. **Cleopatra:** She was the famous queen of Egypt whose death in 30 bce also marked the end of the Egyptian civilization.
5. **Great Pyramid at Giza:** Great Pyramid of Giza is the largest pyramid in Egypt, built by King Khufu or Cheops. It is also among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Sphinx It is an architectural marvel of ancient Egypt. It is a mythological figure with the body of a lion and the face of a man.
6. **Mummification:** This is a the preservation of dead bodies by embalming them. The preserved dead bodies are called mummies.
7. **Ra:** He was the sun God of the Egyptian civilization. He was the most important god of the Egyptians.  
Osiris He was the god of the blessed dead.
8. **Nomes:** These were the provinces of the Egyptian civilization.
9. **Nomarch:** He was the official who governed each province.
10. **Hieroglyphic Script:** It was writing developed by the Egyptians. Hieroglyphic means 'sacred writing'.
11. **Papyrus:** Papyrus Plant is a water reed from which the ancient Egyptians made paper. The word paper is derived from papyrus.

## EXERCISES

### A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Nile provided water for **irrigation** and also served as a **national highway**.
2. Egyptian women were treated with **respect**.
3. The staple diet of the ancient Egyptians consisted of **wheat** and **beer**.
4. Egyptian houses had small windows high up on the walls to keep out the **sun** and let in the **daylight**.
5. The chief occupation of the ancient Egyptians was **agriculture**.
6. Two examples that prove that the Egyptians were great builders are **Pyramids** and **Sphinx**.
7. Two important gods of the Egyptians were **Ra** and **Osiris**.

**B. Match the following.**

- | <b>A</b>     | <b>B</b>                            |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Herodotus | (a) rulers of Egypt                 |
| 2. Pharaohs  | (b) preserved dead body             |
| 3. Pyramids  | (c) a mythological animal           |
| 4. Sphinx    | (d) tombs of ancient Egyptian kings |
| 5. Mummy     | (e) ancient Egyptian script         |

**Answer:**

- |              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Herodotus | (e) ancient Egyptian script         |
| 2. Pharaohs  | (a) rulers of Egypt                 |
| 3. Pyramids  | (d) tombs of ancient Egyptian kings |
| 4. Sphinx    | (c) a mythological animal           |
| 5. Mummy     | (b) preserved dead body             |

**C. Choose the correct answer:**

1. Ptolemy/Herodotus/Alexander called Egypt the 'Gift of the Nile'.

**Ans. Herodotus** called Egypt the 'Gift of the Nile'.

2. The history of ancient Egypt was divided into three/six/ eight

**Ans.** The history of ancient Egypt was divided into **three** periods.

3. The father/mother/grandfather was the head of the family in ancient Egypt.

**Ans.** The **father** was the head of the family in ancient Egypt.

4. Men and women in ancient Egypt wore dresses made of white linen/silk/satin.

**Ans.** Men and women in ancient Egypt wore dresses made of **white linen**.

5. Ra/Orisis/Pharaoh was worshipped as the sun god.

**Ans.** **Ra** was worshipped as the sun. god.

**D. State whether the following are true or false.**

1. Women were more or less equal to men in the eyes of law.  
**True**
2. Only the woman in ancient Egypt wore jewellery.  
**False.**  
Correct: Men and women both in ancient Egypt wore jewellery.
3. The Egyptians followed the barter system.  
**True.**
4. The ruler of Egypt was known as the pharaoh.  
**True**
5. The city of Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great.  
True

**E. Answer the following questions in one or two words/ sentences:**

**Question 1.**

How did the Egyptian desert help in the development of Egyptian culture and civilization?

**Answer:**

These deserts served as natural barriers to foreign invasions. So the early Egyptian settlers enjoyed many years of peace and security. This atmosphere help in the development of Egyptian culture and civilization.

**Question 2.**

What are the periods in which the history of ancient Egypt is divided?

**Answer:**

**The history of ancient Egypt is divided into three periods.**

1. The Old Kingdom approximately 3,000 bce- 2,000 BCE
2. The Middle Kingdom approximately 2,000 bce -1,700 BCE
3. The New Kingdom approximately 1,600 bce – 1,100 bce.

**Question 3.**

Which Egyptian monument is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World?

**Answer:**

Great Pyramid at Giza, built by King Khuruf or Cheops.

**Question 4.**

What is a mummy?

**Answer:**

The preserved dead body is called Mummy.

**Question 5.**

How was a body mummified?

**Answer:**

A dead body was embalmed with spices and wrapped in a fine linen.

**Question 6.**

Why did the ancient Egyptians preserve the bodies of the dead?

**Answer:**

The Egyptians believed in life after death, So they preserve the body of the dead.

**Question 7.**

Name the most important nature god of the Egyptians.

**Answer:**

The Egyptians worshiped many gods and goddesses connected with nature. Ra, the sun god, and Osiris, the god of the dead, were among the most important gods.

**Question 8.**

Name the founder of the city of Alexandria.

**Answer:**

The Great Alexander founded the city of Alexandria.

**F. Answer the following questions briefly:**

**Question 1.**

Why was Egypt called the 'Gift of the Nile'?

**Answer:**

Nile has proved a great boon for Egypt. The river Nile makes the land quite fertile. The Egyptian farmers can grow crops on the same fields year after year. Nile also served as a highway and made navigation possible. This way promoted trade and commerce within the country as well as with other countries of the world. Rightly Egypt has been called 'The Gift of Nile.'

**Question 2.**

Describe the structure of dwelling houses in ancient Egypt.

**Answer:**

Dwelling Houses— Houses were built around the crossing of two major roads. They were made of sun-baked bricks. Almost all the houses had flat roofs. The number of rooms in each house depended on whether the family was rich or poor. While most of the people lived in a one or two-room house without bathrooms, the richest people lived in three storied houses, usually made of stone, with as many as thirty rooms with bathrooms, gardens and pools.

An average house had three rooms, a courtyard and a kitchen area. A narrow staircase led to the roof. The windows were small and were placed high up close to the ceiling to keep out the sun and let the daylight enter.

**Question 3.**

Describe briefly the social structure of ancient Egypt.

**Answer:**

**The Egyptians were divided into three distinct classes. These are following**

1. **The upper class:** The upper class consisted of the royal family, rich landowners, high ranking priests, government officials and doctors.
2. **The middle class:** The middle class consisted of merchants, manufacturers, crafts persons and the lower clergy.
3. **The lower class:** This class consisted of the peasants, At the bottom of the social hierarchy were the slaves who were mainly prisoners of war.

**Question 4.**

Describe the family life of the ancient Egyptians.

**Answer:**

The families were close -knit groups. The relationship between the husband, wife and children was usually close. The father was the head of the family. Women were treated with respect and their property rights were protected. Children enjoyed carefree and happy lives. Wealthy families lived lives of luxury and pleasure.

**Question 5.**

State the main occupations of the ancient Egyptians. Discuss any two.

**Answer:**

Agriculture, Domestication of Animals, Art and craft, Architecture and Engineering, Trade and commerce, mummification are the main occupation of the ancient Egyptians.

**Agriculture:** The chief occupation of the Egyptians was agriculture. The Nile provided water for irrigation. The Egyptians farmers can grow crops on the fertile land year after

year. Their chief crops were wheat, barley and millet. Vegetable and fruits were also grown.

**Domestication of Animals:** The second occupation of Egyptian was domestication of Animals. Pigs, Cows, Sheep, goats, camels, doves and geese were domesticated.

**Question 6.**

Give an account of trade in ancient Egypt.

**Answer:**

Trade was earned on both by land and sea routes. For internal trade, goods were transported by boats and barges along the Nile and by road on camels and donkeys. For foreign trade, the Egyptians built the world's first seafaring ships. They exported linen, wheat, glassware, jewelry and furniture. They imported gold, ivory, copper and cedar wood. The king controlled foreign trade. The barter system was used and the mediums of exchange were usually grain, silver and copper.

**Question 7.**

Describe the religion of people in ancient Egypt.

**Answer:**

The Egyptians worshiped many gods and goddesses connected with nature. Ra, the sun god, and Osiris, the god of the dead, were among the most important gods.

The pharaohs, the rulers of Egypt, were also worshiped as gods. Each god had his own temple and priest. Every city, town and village had its own favourite god. Certain animals and birds such as the jackal, crocodile, bull and hawk were also worshiped.

The Egyptians believed in life after death. So they preserved the body of the dead. A dead body was embalmed with spices and wrapped in fine linen. Such a preserved body is known as a mummy. Food, wine, clothes, furniture, jewellery and weapons were put into the tombs. The pyramids were the tombs of the pharaohs.

**Question 8.**

Why did the Egyptian civilization decline ?

**Answer:**

The decline of the Egyptian empire set in with the collapse of the New Kingdom. Egypt was repeatedly invaded by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians and finally by Alexander the Great. Alexander founded the city of Alexandria. It later, became one of the greatest cultural centers of the ancient world during the reign of Ptolemy, one of the generals of Alexander. Ptolemy was the founder of the last dynasty of Egypt.

**G. Picture study.**

The figures on the right are of gods and goddesses.



**Question 1.**

The people of which civilization worshiped these gods and goddesses? What kind of temples did they build?

**Answer:**

The Egyptians worshiped these gods and goddesses.

The Egyptian Architects and engineers built remarkable temples which was known as Pyramid and Sphinx.

**Question 2.**

How do we know that they believed in life after death?

**Answer:**

The Egyptians believed in life after death. So they preserved the body of the dead. Food, wine, clothes, furniture, jewellery and weapons were put into the tombs.

**Question 3.**

**With reference to this civilization answer in one or two words.**

- (a) One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world:.....
- (b) Embalming a corpse:.....
- (c) Sun god:.....
- (d) God of the dead :

**Answer:**

- (a) The Great Pyramid at Giza
- (b) Mummification
- (c) Ra
- (d) Osiris

**OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS**

**Question 1.**

Who called Egypt 'Gift of the Nile'.

**Answer:**

The ancient Greek historian. 'Herodotus' called Egypt the 'Gift of the Nile'.

**Question 2.**

Who was the founder of the last dynasty of Egypt?

**Answer:**

Ptolemy was the founder of the last dynasty of Egypt.

**Question 3.**

How many parts Egypt was divided into from the earliest times?

**Answer:**

From the earliest times Egypt was divided into two parts.

1. Lower Egypt
2. Upper Egypt

**Question 4.**

What is 'Sphinx'?

**Answer:**

'Sphinx is an architectural marvel of ancient Egypt. It is a mythological figure with the body of a lion and the face of a man.

**Question 5.**

What is the one of the Seven Wonders of the world of Egyptians?

**Answer:**

The 'Great Pyramid at Giza' is one of the seven wonders of the world of Egyptians.

**Question 6.**

Write the names of exported and imported products of Egyptians?

**Answer:**

Egyptians exported linen, wheat, glassware, jewellery and furniture. They imported gold, ivory copper and cedar wood.

**Question 7.**

Write on Political life and Administration of Egyptians?

**Answer:**

The Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. He was a hereditary ruler and was believed to be God's representative on earth. He was at the head of an advanced administration.

The country was divided into provinces called 'nomes', each governed by an official called 'nomarch'. The king was assisted, by officials. They supervised every aspect of the administration, including tax collection. The government controlled all the resources.

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