

THE NILE AND HOW IT INFLUENCED SETTLEMENT Date: _____

Vocabulary

Nile Valley: The area on either side of the Nile River.

Flood watermark: The highest level the water reaches when a river floods its banks.

Shaduf or shadoof: A pulley system to lift water out of the river.

Delta: an area of low, flat land, sometimes shaped like a triangle, where a river divides into several smaller rivers before flowing into the sea: the Nile **delta**.

Irrigation: the supply of water to land or crops to help growth, usually by means of ditches or canals.

flood watermark: the highest level that water from a river reaches especially during a **flood**

inundation: another word used for the flooding season

Interesting facts about the Nile River

Without water from the Nile River, Ancient Egypt would never have been such a successful country because the area would have been too dry for people to settle and live there.

The Nile River is the reason that the ancient Egyptians developed their civilization. The surrounding areas of Egypt are desert, and the Nile River brought **water** and **rich soil** called **silt** that could be used to fertilize and grow crops. The Nile River is the longest river in the world at nearly 6 700 km.

When we see pictures of the Nile River on a map, we might think of it as one huge long river, but it actually has two tributaries. These are smaller rivers that run separately and then join into one big river. The names of the two tributaries are the White Nile and the Blue Nile.

The Nile River flows through the desert and then ends in what is called a 'delta' in Egypt where it runs into the Mediterranean Sea.

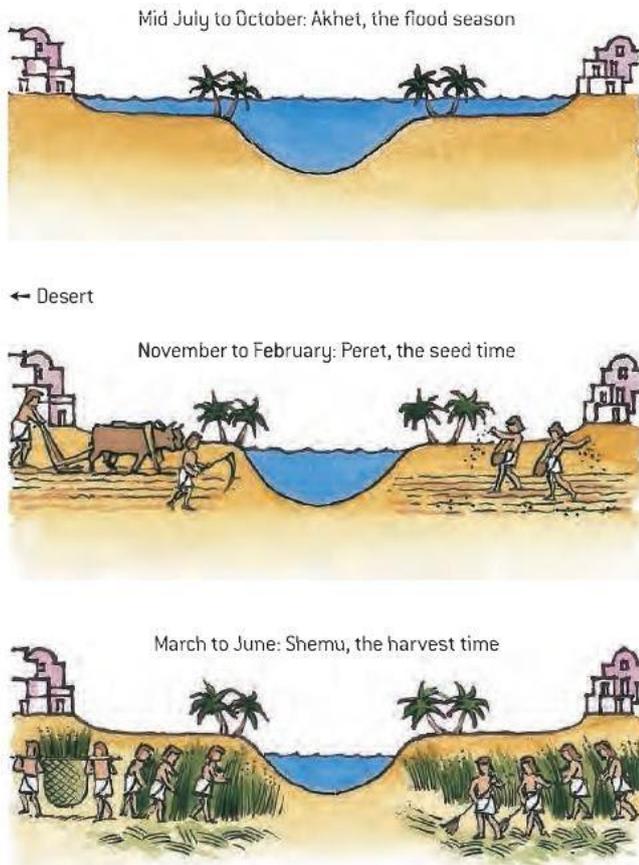
Each spring, snow on the Ethiopian Highlands mountains would melt. The Nile River would flood. The water flowed down the river and flooded over the land. When the flood waters soaked away, a rich layer of mud covered the land. This mud was very fertile. The ancient Egyptians planted seeds in the mud.

ACTIVITY: Find Egypt on the continent of Africa and find the Blue and White Nile that join to form the Nile River. Find where it runs into the Mediterranean Sea.



The Egyptians knew the time of the year that the Nile River would flood. They depended on the flooding to bring extra water and the rich fertile soil and silt that fertilized the fields for growing crops. Since the rains happened almost at the same time every year, the Egyptian civilization and everyday life was based on the flooding of the Nile. The Nile flooded the area for about three months. After the floods, the Egyptians planted and harvested the crops. There were three seasons: **flooding, planting and harvesting.**

Source 2 A diagram showing the importance of the Nile flood and the three distinct seasons it created



As a result of the flooding, thick black mud would coat the land on either side of the river. The thick black mud was very rich in nutrients and made the land very fertile and ideal for growing crops. The ancient Egyptians called this area of Egypt the “Black Land”. The ancient Egyptian word for Nile is “Aub” which means black. The mud was so fertile the farmers could grow two harvests each year.

Very little rain fell in ancient Egypt. Farmers used the water from the Nile River to make their crops grow. The farms next to the Nile River grew enough food to feed many people. The farmers planted barley and wheat after the flood waters had drained away, and they harvested their crops in summer. The farmers also kept sheep, goats and cattle.

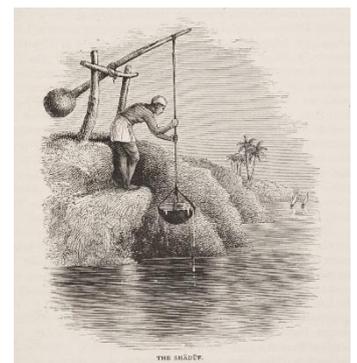


The majority of ancient Egyptians lived along the banks of the Nile. There was not enough land to plant crops next to the river for everybody and some farmers had to settle away from the river. They needed water for their crops, so they built canals and ditches to transport water from the river to their farms. We call this **irrigation.**

The **shadoof or shaduf** was a simple wooden tool consisting of a pole with a bucket on one end and a weight on the other that was used to raise water above the level of the Nile River, and which was then redirected to a canal or ditch.

Many people needed to work together to build irrigation canals and ditches because it was such a big job. They needed leaders to direct the building work and to decide where the canals and ditches had to be dug. The people who lived in the villages had to choose leaders. As the villages grew bigger, the leaders became more powerful. Sometimes a few villages joined together under the most powerful leader.

They used the water to water their crops, to drink and to wash. They travelled up and down the Nile on boats. Boats carried people, food and goods to trade from one end of Egypt to the other.



Just above the **flood watermark**, the Egyptians built flat-roofed houses. The bricks used to build the houses were made of mud which was baked hard in the sun. Stone was only used to build tombs, palaces and temples.

Why Egypt is called the gift of the Nile

As we know, the Nile River flooded yearly, leaving behind fertile soil. Crops could easily be grown in this black, rich soil. The ancient Egyptians called this soil the "The Gift of the Nile". The population of Egypt increased because they were able to use the Nile River to support agriculture and many other important activities.

The Nile provided other gifts to the ancient Egyptians. Papyrus, used for everything, grew wildly along its banks. It provided water for cooking and bathing. Fish and waterfowl were plentiful. Wild vegetables could be found, along with bird eggs. Egypt is located in the middle of a desert. Without the Nile River, Ancient Egypt would never have been such a successful country.

The Nile River is the reason that the ancient Egyptians were able to develop their civilization.

Egyptians used the river in many ways:

- △ Irrigation for their fields
- △ Drinking water
- △ Fishing
- △ Transportation and good for trade
- △ Papyrus reeds which grew along the riverbanks were used for building materials, making the first Egyptian boats and for making paper
- △ Mud to make bricks and pottery
- △ Hunting of hippos and river birds for food.

ACTIVITY 1

The Gift of the Nile

Read the text carefully and try to fit in the missing words.

The River _____ runs through the middle of Egypt. On both sides of the Nile is desert where nothing will _____.

People could not live in Egypt if the River Nile did not exist. Every year, in ancient times, the River Nile _____. The water brought with it the rich black _____. When the flood water went down or receded, the _____ planted seeds in the mud. This mud helped the seeds grow very well. They watered the seeds using _____ from the Nile. They _____ the fields using canals and ditches and lifted or raised water from the Nile using a _____.

During the time of the flood the farmers could not do their farm work, so they had to work for the _____. They built statues and _____.

You will need some of these words

field	Nile	pyramids	camels	flooded	mud
Pharaoh	water	trees	farmers	grow	irrigated
canals	shaduf				