



Grade 5 Term 3 History Summary

An Ancient African Society: Egypt The Nile River and how it Influenced Settlement

How Farming Started Along the Nile River

- Long ago, people living along the Nile River collected seeds from wild grasses that grew nearby.
- They ground these seeds to make flour for a kind of bread.
- Eventually, they began planting and growing the grasses that produced the best seeds.
- In Egypt, people grew crops like wheat and barley, while further south, they grew millet and sorghum.
- Besides growing crops, they also started keeping animals like wild cattle, goats, and sheep for their meat and milk.
- About 8,000 years ago, some of the first farmers settled along the Nile River.
- The abundance of water and fertile soil made it an excellent place for growing crops and grazing animals.
- Over time, more and more people came to live in the Nile Valley, coming from Nubia in the south, Libya in the west, and Palestine and Syria in the east.



The Importance of the Flooding of the Nile

- The Nile River begins in central Africa.
- When it rained in the central African mountains, the river carried the water and flooded its banks as it flowed through Egypt.
- This flooding brought fertile mud that covered the river valley, making it excellent for farming.
- Year after year, the soil along the Nile River remained rich and perfect for growing crops.



Settlements Along the Nile

- When the Nile River flooded a lot, it could destroy farmers' houses.
- To avoid this, Egyptians built their homes on higher ground away from the river.
- These permanent houses were made of clay bricks and formed small towns further from the riverbanks.
- Not every farmer could have fields right next to the river, so some had to plant their crops further away.
- To get water to these distant fields, Egyptian farmers dug deep canals from the river, creating a system of irrigation.
- They also invented the shaduf, a device for lifting water out of the canals and pouring it into smaller irrigation channels.
- The shaduf used a bucket to lift the water, which was then directed through channels dug across the fields to water the crops.
- This system helped ensure that all the fields received enough water to grow their crops successfully.



Way of Life in Ancient Egypt

Social Structure in Ancient Egypt

- When ploughs were invented, farmers in ancient Egypt could grow more food than they needed for their families.
- This surplus allowed some people to take up other jobs, like making pottery, weaving, or leatherwork.
- These artisans traded their goods, like pots and clothes, with farmers for food.
- As the population increased, leaders or chiefs became necessary to organize food supplies and manage tasks such as maintaining canals.
- Eventually, a strong leader united Lower Egypt, near the sea, and Upper Egypt, stretching 700 km south of the delta, under one king about 5000 years ago.
- Farmers had to give part of their crops and livestock as taxes to the king.



The social structure in Egypt included:

- **The Pharaoh:** The king who received taxes from the farmers.
- **Tax Collectors and Officials:** Employed by the Pharaoh to collect taxes and organize tasks like building and repairing irrigation canals.

- **Farmers and Skilled Workers:** Farmers grew food, while skilled workers like pottery makers and basket weavers traded their goods for food.

Belief and Religion

- The ancient Egyptians believed in many gods and considered the Pharaohs as gods too.
- They believed in an afterlife, a place they would go to after death, with Osiris as the god of the Afterlife.
- Skilled builders, artists, and craftsmen created grand tombs for Pharaohs and important people.
- These tombs contained preserved bodies, or mummies, along with furniture, pottery, jewellery, clothes, and food to use in the afterlife.
- Tomb walls were decorated with scenes of the person's life.



Pharaohs

- The Pharaohs were the kings of Egypt and were believed to be both gods and men.
- Egypt had a centralized government under the Pharaohs, who employed many people, including servants and government officials to collect taxes.
- Farmers also worked on building projects for the Pharaohs when they weren't busy with their crops.



Sphinx, Pyramids, and Temples

The ancient Egyptians built impressive structures out of limestone and sandstone.

- **Sphinx:** Huge stone statues, like the Great Sphinx, with the body of a lion and the head of a Pharaoh, were carved to guard tombs and pyramids at Giza, Egypt's first capital.
- **Pyramids:** These were enormous tombs for Pharaohs, starting with step pyramids. Thousands of farmers helped build them during the flood season. The Great Pyramid at Giza, built for Pharaoh Khufu, took twenty years to complete.
- **Temples:** Temples were built near pyramids for people to visit in the afterlife. Pharaoh Ramses II built a massive temple for the god Amun-Ra at Karnak (Luxor) near the Valley of the Kings.



Hieroglyphics and Writing

Hieroglyphics was the writing system of ancient Egypt, using pictures as letters.

- **Writing on Paper:** Officials and scribes recorded taxes on papyrus, a type of paper made from reeds. They used reed pens dipped in ink made from soot, plant gum, and water. Initially, they drew pictures of animals and crops, but later they developed symbols for sounds, creating an alphabet of 24 consonants.
- **Writing on Stone:** Pharaohs had their lives documented in stone, with hieroglyphics carved into tomb and pyramid walls.



Mathematics and Astronomy

- Egyptians used math and astronomy to understand farming seasons and predict the Nile's floods.
- They created the first twelve-month calendar of 365 days.
- They also measured the floodplain to estimate harvest sizes and used geometry to build the pyramids.

Keeping Records and Taxes

- Taxes were collected in produce, as Egyptians didn't use money.
- Officials kept detailed records of the farmers' taxes, which included animals and crops stored in large granaries and paddocks.
- The produce was used to support the Pharaoh's household and pay government officials.

Medicine and Physicians

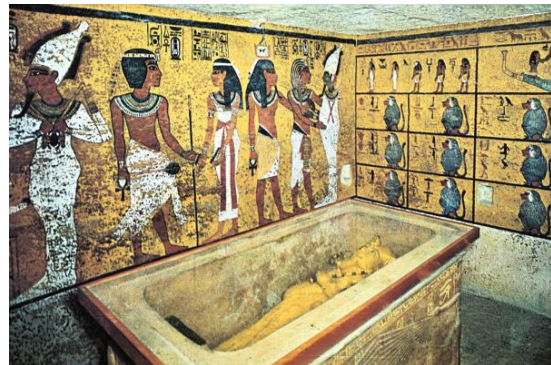
- The Egyptians gained medical knowledge from preparing bodies for the afterlife.
- They believed in keeping their bodies clean to prevent diseases and recorded medical information on papyrus.
- They also performed clinical examinations and treatments, understanding some diseases could be caused by evil spirits but also recognizing the importance of cleanliness.



The Tomb of Tutankhamen

Discovery of the Tomb

- Around 2400 BC, Egyptians stopped building pyramids because tomb robbers kept stealing from them.
- Instead, they started hiding Pharaohs' tombs in caves carved into the mountainside of the Valley of the Kings, near the capital of Thebes in Upper Egypt.
- In 1922, an archaeologist named Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun in this valley.
- Carter was looking for ancient buildings when he made this incredible find. It was the first time an archaeologist found a Pharaoh's tomb that had not been robbed.
- Carter wrote a book about his discovery.
- At the entrance to Tutankhamun's tomb were two statues of the Pharaoh, along with furniture, weapons, many walking sticks, and even a chariot, all decorated with gold.
- Deeper inside the tomb was the burial room, where Tutankhamun's mummy lay in a solid gold coffin, inside two more gold-covered wooden coffins.
- Covering the Pharaoh's face was a golden mask.



Tomb Robbers

- To protect the treasures inside, pyramid builders created false passages and rooms to confuse thieves and robbers.
- Despite these efforts, robbers often managed to find and steal the valuable items meant for the Pharaoh's afterlife.
- Later, Pharaohs' tombs were hidden in caves, but even these were usually found and robbed.
- Tutankhamun's tomb remained hidden because another tomb was built above it, and the builders discarded so much soil and rock that it covered the entrance to Tutankhamun's tomb.
- During this time, Egypt was at war, and Tutankhamun and his tomb were forgotten.



What We Know About Tutankhamun

- Tutankhamun, often called the "boy-king," lived about 3300 years ago.
- He became Pharaoh when he was about nine years old.
- He was not very healthy and needed a stick to walk.
- He died when he was around 19 years old.

What the Discovery Revealed About Ancient Egyptian Society

- The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb showed us the incredible art and skills of the ancient Egyptians.
- It revealed a society with talented artists, jewelers, goldsmiths, potters, weavers, and furniture-makers.
- The contents of the tomb highlighted the wealth of ancient Egypt and provided a glimpse into the luxurious lifestyle of a Pharaoh.



The Spread of Egypt's Advanced Knowledge

Societies Learn from One Another

- People living in the western part of Asia and southeastern Europe learned many things from the ancient Egyptians.

Hieroglyphics

- The Phoenicians, who lived in the Middle East and were famous traders, needed a simple and quick way to write.
- About 3000 years ago, they started using the sound symbols of the Egyptians.
- They adapted these symbols to fit the Phoenician language, creating 22 symbols for the consonant sounds of their alphabet.
- Later, the Greeks from Europe adopted the alphabet from the Phoenicians.
- They modified it to fit the Greek language and added new symbols for the vowel sounds.
- This alphabet eventually evolved into the one we use today.

Astronomy and Mathematics

- More than 6200 years ago, the Egyptians first figured out that a year was 365 days long.
- Between 2000 and 3000 years ago, the Chaldeans, who lived in the Middle East, learned from the Egyptians.
- The Chaldeans became great astronomers and kept careful records of the positions of the Sun and the Moon over hundreds of years.

- One Chaldean astronomer and mathematician, Nabu-rimannu, calculated that a year was 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes, and 41 seconds long.
- Using modern technology, we now know that his calculation was very accurate.
- Learning from other cultures has helped societies develop better systems for writing, keeping time, and understanding the world around them.