

Unit 3: Ancient River Valley Civilizations – Ancient Egypt

Standard(s) of Learning:

WHI.3 – The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient river valley civilizations, including those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus River Valley, and China and the civilizations of the Hebrews, Phoenicians, and Nubians, by

- a) Locating these civilizations in time and place
 - b) Describing the development of social, political, and economic patterns, including slavery
 - c) Explaining the development of religious traditions
 - d) Describing the origins, beliefs, traditions, customs, and spread of Judaism
 - e) Explaining the development of language and writing
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WHI.3a-c : Ancient River Valley Civilizations



Location of Early River Valley Civilizations:

- During the New Stone Age, permanent settlements appeared in **river valleys** and around the **Fertile Crescent**
- River valleys provided **water** and rich **soil** for crops as well as **protection** from invasion
- River Valley Civilizations (about 3500 to 500 BC/BCE)
 - Mesopotamian civilization: **Tigris** and **Euphrates** River Valleys (Southwest Asia)
 - Egyptian civilization: **Nile River** Valley and Nile Delta (Africa)
 - Indian civilization: **Indus River** Valley (South Asia)
 - Chinese civilization: **Huang He** Valley (East Asia)
- These river valleys offered rich **soil** and **irrigation** water for agriculture, and they tended to be in locations easily protected from **invasion** by nomadic peoples
- Other early civilizations (about 2000 to 500 BC/BCE)
 - **Nubia** was located on the upper (southern) Nile River (Africa)

Development of Social, Political, and Economic Patterns

- River valleys were the “**Cradles of Civilization.**”
- Early Civilizations made major contributions to social, political, and economic progress.

Development of Social Patterns

- **Hereditary** rulers: Dynasties of kings, pharaohs
- **Rigid** class system where **slavery** was accepted

Development of Political Patterns

- World’s first **states** (i.e. city-states, kingdoms, empires)
- **Centralized** government, often based on **religious** authority
- Written **law codes** (i.e. Ten Commandments, Code of Hammurabi)

Development of Economic Patterns

- Use of **metal** (i.e. bronze, iron) **tools** and **weapons**
- Increasing **agricultural surplus**: better tools, plows, irrigation
- Increasing **trade** along rivers by sea (Phoenicians)
- Development of the world’s first **cities**
- Development of the practice of **slavery** within most cultures in the ancient world, taking various forms

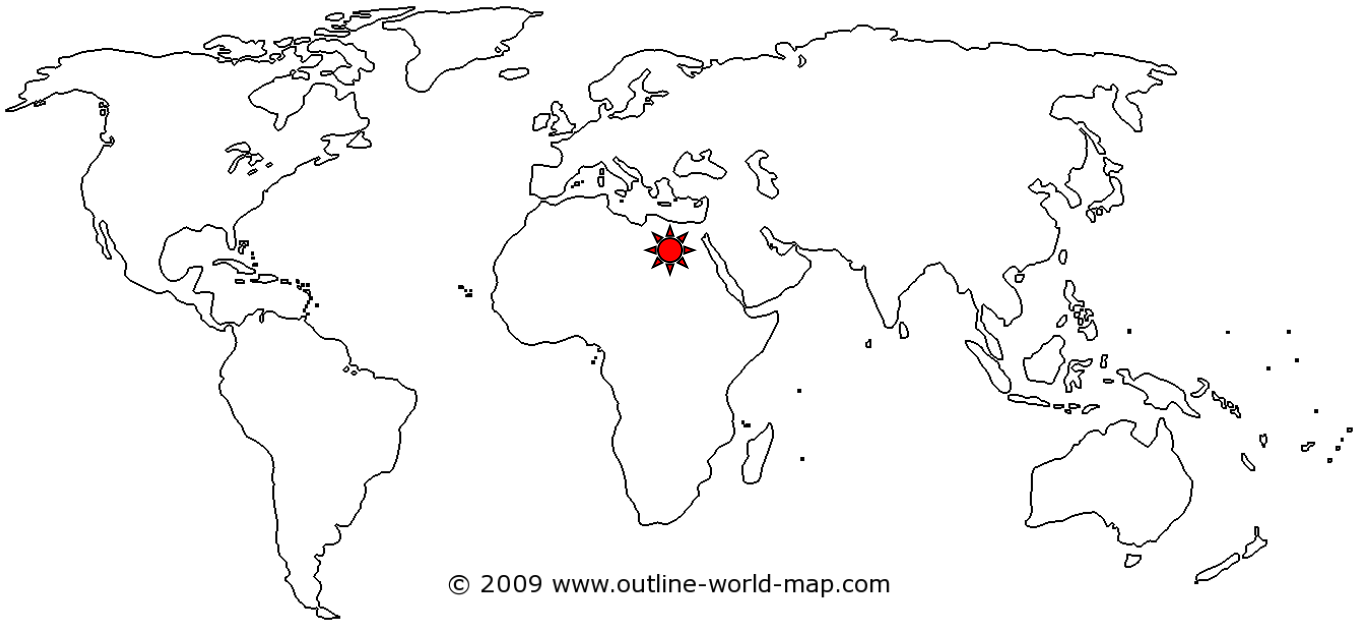
Development of Religions Traditions

- Religion was a major part of life in all early civilizations.
 - **Polytheism** was practiced by most early civilizations.
 - **Monotheism** was practiced by the Hebrews.

Development of Language and Writing

- Language and Writing were important cultural innovations.
 - **Pictograms**: Earliest written symbols
 - Hieroglyphics: **Egypt**
 - Cuneiform: **Sumer**
 - Alphabet: **Phoenicia**

WHI.3 a – Location & Geography of Ancient Egypt



Locate and color Ancient Egypt RED

Geography of Ancient Egypt

- Egypt is located in northeast **Africa**. The **Mediterranean Sea** is to its north. **Libya** borders Egypt on its west and the **Sudan** is to its South. The **Red Sea** and **Sinai Peninsula** are on the east coast of Egypt.

The Mighty Nile

- The **Nile River** is the longest river in the world (4,100 miles long) and dominates Egypt's geography
- The Nile River has two sources: White Nile from Lake Victoria in Uganda and the Blue Nile out of Ethiopia
- The river flows from **South** to **North** and empties into the Mediterranean Sea
- During ancient times the river was broken by six **cataracts** (rapids) – Ancient Egyptians built their civilization between the first cataract and the **delta**
- The river flooded during the summer months providing fertile **soil** and **irrigation**

Other Advantages

- **Frost** free climate – allowed the Egyptians to grow a variety of **crops**
- **North wind** from Mediterranean Sea – ease of travel
- Deposits of granite, limestone, and sandstone – **building materials**
- Surrounding deserts and seas – **natural protection**

WHI.3b, c – Life in Ancient Egypt

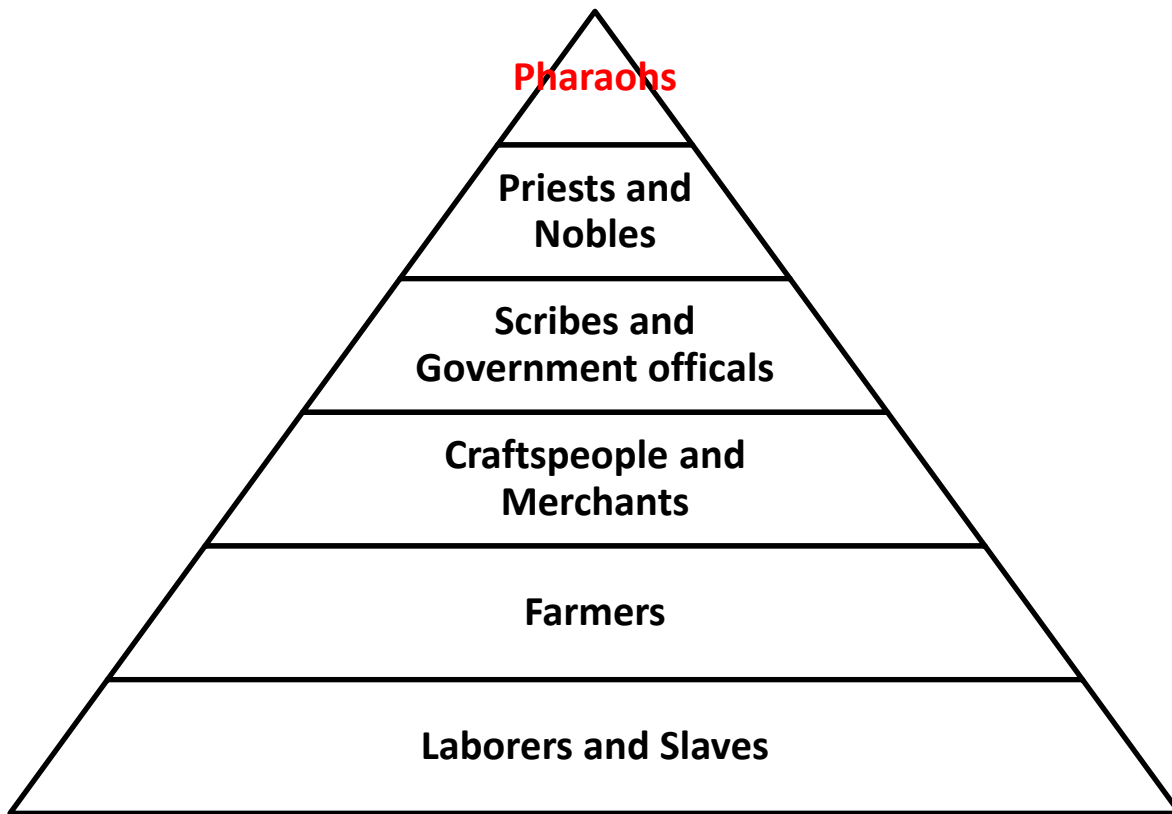


Ancient Egyptian Government

- **Theocracy**: centralized government that is based on religious authority
- Ancient Egypt was ruled by **pharaohs**
 - Pharaohs were considered **gods** and were both political and spiritual leaders
 - Pharaohs were **hereditary** rules – the crown was passed down within the family

Ancient Egyptian Society

- Social classes were **rigidly divided**, however there was some social mobility
- Women were equals to their husbands in social and business affairs
- Women could own property and leave that property to her daughter

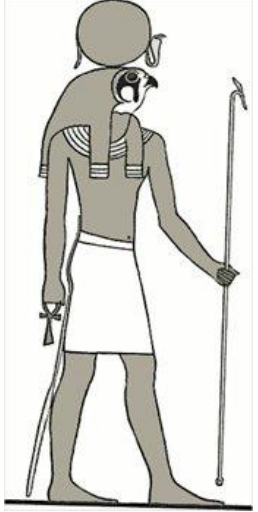
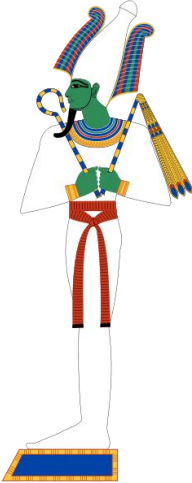
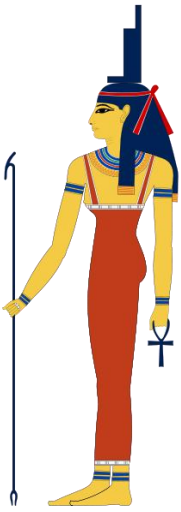
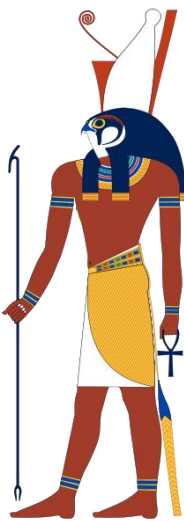
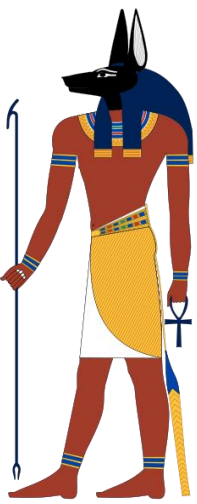


Ancient Egyptian Education

- Education was largely reserved for the **scribes** who learned to read and write **hieroglyphics**

Ancient Egyptian Religion

- The Egyptian religion was **polytheistic** – they believed in many gods
- **Pharaohs** were also considered gods
- The Egyptians believed in an **afterlife** and developed **mummification** to preserve the body for the afterlife

Amon (Amon-Re)	Osiris	Isis	Horus	Aunbis
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God of creation • King of the gods • Identified with the sun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God of the afterlife • Judge people after death • Associated with the Nile River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goddess of motherhood and fertility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God of the sky 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God of the afterlife • He was the guide of the dead in the afterlife

Ancient Egyptian Economy

- Egypt's economy was based on **agriculture** and **trade (barter system)**
- Merchants formed **caravans** for safety
 - Traded with **Asia** by crossing the **Sinai Peninsula**
 - Traded by **sea** with the islands in the **Mediterranean Sea**

WHI.3 e – Ancient Egyptian Achievements



Architecture

- The **pyramids** showcase Ancient Egypt's skills as architects and engineers
- Pyramids were built as **tombs** for pharaohs
- The most well known is the **Great Pyramid** of Giza
- The **Great Sphinx** is another example of Egyptian architecture

Written Language

- The Egyptians invented **hieroglyphics** to keep records
- There are over **700** hieroglyphic symbols
- The **Rosetta Stone** is the key to understanding hieroglyphics

The Arts

- Sculptors crafted lifelike **statues** of rulers and animals
- Buildings were decorated with **paintings** of everyday life

Science, Mathematics, and Medicine

- Developed a **calendar** based on the moon
- Developed a **number system** based on ten – similar to the decimal system used today
- Used **fractions** and **whole numbers**
- Used **geometry** to build pyramids and rebuild fields after floods
- Used their knowledge of the human body to treat **illnesses** and to **preserve** bodies after death