

The River Nile

For over 3000 years, between 3150 BC and 30BC, ancient Egypt was the greatest and most powerful civilization in the world. The pyramids are a long lasting symbol of the wealth they once enjoyed. Their secret to success was simple: the River Nile.

The Nile is the longest river in the world. It flows over 4,132 miles (6650 km) through ten African countries. Egypt is the final country that it flows through before reaching the Mediterranean Sea.

The river is still very important to Egyptians today, but in ancient times it was the key to ancient Egypt's fortunes. Take a look at the map of Egypt. You'll notice that most of the major cities are located right next to the river. This is not by chance. The river and its banks were essential for farming, transportation and providing building materials.

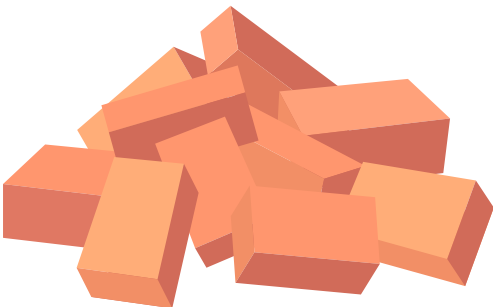
Most of Egypt is desert. The soil is too dry and doesn't contain the nutrients that plants need to survive. However, along the Nile, the soil is rich in nutrients and good for growing crops. This is why the first settlers came to live by the river. Their crops grew well and they could also use the water from the Nile to water the crops during the dry season. This meant that there were always enough crops to feed the people. The Egyptians could also sell any excess crops.

As there weren't many roads in ancient times, the river was the main transport route. Boats were used to transport people and their goods so that they could trade. As well as the crops that were grown on the farms, Egyptians traded a lot of gold and papyrus (used to make paper). Many of the traders they met came from outside of the Egyptian empire. This meant that, in return, the Egyptians could get



other goods, such as tin and copper. Trading made the Egyptians very wealthy.

The River Nile also provided many building materials for the ancient Egyptians. They used the mud from the river banks to make sun-dried bricks. These bricks were used to build homes, walls and other buildings.



Questions

03

- 1 According to the text, how long was Egypt the most powerful civilisation in the world?
-

- 2 What was the secret to ancient Egypt's success?

- ☐ the River Nile
- ☐ the Pyramids
- ☐ their wealth
- ☐ being the greatest and most powerful civilization

- 3 Which sea does the River Nile flow into?
-

- 4 What does the phrase 'it was the key to ancient Egypt's fortunes' tell us about the River Nile?

- ☐ The River Nile is shaped like a key.
- ☐ A key to one of the pyramids was found in the river.
- ☐ Egypt's fortunes were found at the end of the river.
- ☐ The Nile was the main reason why ancient Egypt was so wealthy.

- 5 Select a word that could replace the word 'essential' in the sentence below.

'The river and its banks were essential for farming, transportation and providing building materials.'

- ☐ made
- ☐ important
- ☐ made
- ☐ good

6 Why is the soil along the Nile good for growing crops?

- ☐ It is rich in nutrients.
- ☐ It doesn't contain nutrients.
- ☐ The soil is dry.
- ☐ There were always enough crops to feed the people.

7 Why was the River Nile used to transport people and their goods?

- ☐ They didn't have cars in ancient Egypt.
- ☐ It was illegal to transport people and their goods by road.
- ☐ There weren't many roads so it was easier to travel by boat.
- ☐ Ancient Egyptians were only allowed to trade on the River Nile.

8 Which of the goods that the Egyptians traded could be used to make paper?

9 Name two of the goods that Egyptians could get in return for trading their goods.

10 What did the Ancient Egyptian's use to make sun-dried bricks?

Score:

Answers

A

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over 3000 years
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☒ the River Nile
- 3 Which sea does the River Nile flow into?

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☒ The Nile was the main reason why ancient Egypt was so wealthy.
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☒ important
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- 7 Why was the River Nile used to transport people and their goods?

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papyrus
- 9 Name just one of the two goods that Egyptians could get in return for trading their goods.

tin and copper
- 10 What did the Ancient Egyptian's use to make sun-dried bricks?

mud