

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE GIFT OF THE NILE

Like a giant snake, the Nile River slithers through some of the driest desert land on earth to isolate a narrow green valley. The ancient Greeks called this land Egypt. For more than five thousand years, great and often mysterious civilizations have thrived along the banks of the Nile. About 450BC, a Greek historian named Herodotus called Egypt the “Gift of the Nile” because the Egyptian civilization depended on the resources of the great river.

Every spring, the snow in the mountains of East Africa melted, sending a torrent of water that overflowed the banks of the Nile and flooded the river valley. The rushing river picked up bits of soil and plant life called silt. As the flood receded, a strip of black soil emerged every year along the banks of the Nile. The silt was rich in nutrients, and it provided the people of Egypt with two or three crops every year.

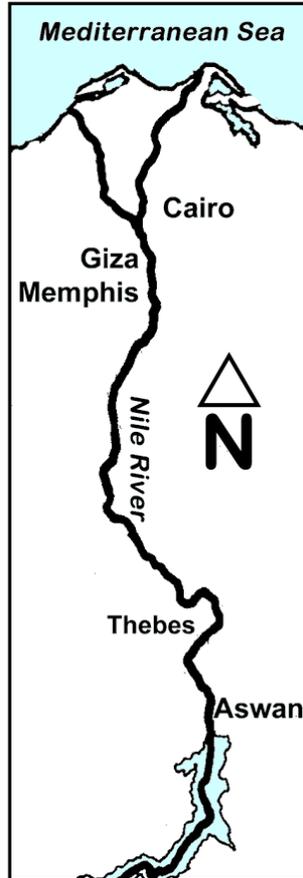
The Nile made it possible for the people of ancient Egypt to form the first nation in history because the Egyptian people were isolated from the rest of the world. A nation may refer to a community of people who share a common language, culture, ethnic background or history. The land beyond the Nile River Valley is the Sahara Desert. A desert is land that receives less than ten inches of rain in a typical year.

Since it is nearly impossible to grow much food in the desert, few people lived far from the banks of the Nile. Giant boulders blocked the Nile and formed a natural border at the

southern Egyptian city of Aswan. The Nile flows into the vast Mediterranean Sea, which formed Egypt’s border to the north. Egypt’s isolation led to its unification. People living along the banks of the Nile River spoke the same language and worshipped many of the same gods more than five thousand years ago.

The Nile no longer overflows its banks because modern Egyptians built a huge dam in Aswan. The Aswan High Dam was completed in 1970. It holds back water in Lake Nasser during the spring, and provides a reliable flow of water for Egyptian farmers in the dry season. The people of Egypt are now able to convert the predictable flow of the Nile into electricity. When the Aswan High Dam was first completed, it provided electricity to more than half of the villages along the Nile. The population of Egypt has grown since

then, but the Aswan High Dam still contributes about fifteen percent of Egypt’s electricity. Unlike oil, the flowing water is renewable, which means that the river will not run out. Even today, the Nile River continues to provide for the Egyptian people.



### Map Skills

1. The Nile River Delta is a rich farming area where the Nile spreads out before draining into the Mediterranean Sea. The Delta is shaped like a triangle, which reminded the Greeks of a letter in their alphabet called delta. ( $\Delta$ ) Please write the word **DELTA** in the correct location.
2. We know the Nile flows into the Mediterranean Sea. In what direction does the Nile flow along most of its course? Circle the correct answer: **NORTH SOUTH EAST WEST**

\*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment

1B



**Fill in the Blanks**

An ancient Greek historian named H\_\_r\_\_d\_\_t\_\_s called Egypt the “G\_\_\_\_\_ of the N\_\_\_\_\_” because the E\_\_y\_\_t\_\_an people have depended on the great r\_\_v\_\_r for more than five t\_\_o\_\_s\_\_nd years. Until 1970, the Nile would o\_\_e\_\_f\_\_ow its b\_\_n\_\_s every year. When the flood \*s\_\_b\_\_i\_\_ed, it left behind bits of s\_\_\_\_\_ and p\_\_a\_\_t\_\_i\_\_e called silt. The silt was rich in n\_\_t\_\_i\_\_n\_\_s that allowed the people of ancient Egypt to grow c\_\_o\_\_s on land that would have otherwise have been dry d\_\_\_\_\_. The Nile no longer overflows its bank because Egypt constructed a huge dam in A\_\_w\_\_n. While the Nile no longer provides t\_\_p\_\_o\_\_l, the p\_\_e\_\_i\_\_t\_\_b\_\_e flow of the r\_\_v\_\_r supplies the Egyptian people with a r\_\_n\_\_w\_\_b\_\_e source of e\_\_e\_\_t\_\_i\_\_i\_\_y.

**Answer in Complete Sentences**

3. A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things. Copy the sentence in the passage that contains a simile.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is silt?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*5. Write a paragraph that explains how ancient Egypt was isolated from other cultures by natural borders. Your paragraph must have a topic sentence, a least two support sentences and a conclusion sentence that restates but does not repeat the topic sentence.

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\*6. Explain why the Nile River no longer overflows its banks.

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\_\_\_\_\_

\*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.