

Name: _____

Date: _____

Assignment

2A

Isis, Osiris and the Egyptian Afterlife

The people of ancient Egypt did not have scientific explanations for natural phenomena. They believed sunshine and the great Nile River were gifts from many gods. The beliefs of the ancient Egyptians slowly changed over time, but many of the legends remained important for thousands of years.

The ancient Egyptians believed that Ra was the sun god who came to earth as the first ruler of Egypt. Egypt became very rich during Ra's rule, but the people grew lazy and neglected to honor the sun god, so Ra used his magic to create a bloodthirsty lioness god named Sekhmet. Sekmet terrorized the Nile River Valley, reminding the Egyptian people of the power of Ra. When the people showed their appreciation, Ra used magic to tame Sekhmet and turn her into Hathor, the goddess of love. This lesson tells us the Egyptian people both valued and feared the sun. The sun made it possible for Egyptian crops to grow, but the sun could also turn good farmland into desert where no crops would grow.

Ra's many children included Osiris and Isis, the brother and sister who ruled the Nile River Valley after they taught the Egyptians to farm and domesticate animals. The people of Egypt praised Osiris and Isis, but their admiration enraged Seth. Seth was the god of storms and the jealous brother of Osiris and Isis. Seth invited all of the gods to a great party. Near the end of the feast, Seth brought in a beautiful cedar chest.

"I will give this chest to whosoever fits in it most exactly!" Everyone at the party tried to fit into the chest, but everyone was too big or too small. Seth had carefully measured his brother and invited nobody to the party who had his brother's shape. Osiris was the last of the guests to lay down in the chest.

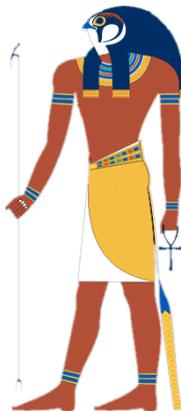
"I am the exact fit, so the chest is

mine," cried Osiris and he climbed into the chest.

"It is your chest and it is where you will be forever," replied Seth as he and the other guests sealed the lid and cast the chest and Osiris into the Nile. Isis recovered her brother's body and returned it to Egypt. When Seth discovered what Isis had done, he ripped open the chest, tore the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces, and scattered the pieces along the whole length of the Nile. Isis traveled up and down the great river. Once again she found the pieces of her brother, but this time she buried Osiris in a secret place where Seth could not find him. The body of Osiris had to be intact and buried in Egyptian sand, or according to the ancient legend, Osiris would not be able to reach the afterlife.

The people of ancient Egypt believed that when their gods left this world, they could live in an afterlife. The afterlife was a perfect version of ancient Egypt. In order to get to the afterlife, however, the gods first had to pass through the underworld. The underworld was a strange and dangerous place filled with fantastic and dangerous creatures. Traveling through the afterworld required the Egyptian gods to be very clever because they had to complete many tasks. The Egyptians believed that their gods could not reach the afterlife unless their bodies remained in one piece and in Egypt.

Seth was defeated in a great battle with Horus. Horus was the son of Isis and the god of the sky. Horus took the form of a falcon and brought the sun with him each day as he flew across the sky. The eyes of Horus were said to be the sun and the moon, but the moon was not as bright because it was damaged by Seth in their battle. Horus subdued Seth, but he was never able to kill his uncle. This legend helps to explain why the Egyptians believed that they could never completely defeat evil and chaos.



Horus is often depicted as having the body of a man and the head of a falcon.

*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.

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2B



Fill in the Blanks

The people of ancient Egypt believed in many g_____ and g_d_e_s_s. They believed that Ra, their god of the s_____, came to e_r_h as the first r_l_r of Egypt. When the Egyptian people began to disregard Ra, the sun god unleashed a terrible l_o_e_s god named S_k_et on the people, but when the Egyptians showed their *a_p_e_i_t_on to Ra, the sun god used his m_g_c to turn Sekmet into H_t_or, the goddess of l_____.

Osiris, Isis and Seth were c_i_d_en of Ra. Seth tricked O_i_is into climbing into a giant c_____ and then threw the chest into the N_____. Isis *r_t_i_v_d the chest, so the enraged Seth tore his brother's body into f_u_t_en pieces. Isis recovered the pieces of Osiris' body because the E_y_t_a_s believed their gods had to be b_r_ed in one piece in order to travel to the a_t_r_i_e.

Seth was finally defeated in a great battle H_r_s. Horus was Seth's *n_p_ew and the god of the s_____. The legends say that Horus would take the form of a f_l_on and fly across the sky each day. The eyes of Horus eyes were the s_____ and the m_____, but the moon was not as bright as the sun because it had been damaged in Horus' battle with S_____.

Answer in complete sentences

*1. Why do you think Ra was one of the most important of the Egyptian gods?

2. Why was it necessary for Isis to find and rebuild the body of Osiris?

3. How was the underworld different from the afterlife?

4. According to Egyptian mythology, why were the Egyptians never able to completely defeat evil and chaos?

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