

READING PI:

**Grades
4 & 5**

EGYPT



Nonfiction Comprehension Program

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READING PI

Nonfiction Comprehension Program

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THE NILE RIVER

The Nile River was very important to **ancient** Egyptians. It helped ancient Egyptians farm, travel, and **trade**. Without the Nile River, the kingdoms of ancient Egypt would not have been as rich and powerful.

The Nile is one of the longest rivers in the world! It is over 4,100 miles long. The Nile River flows through 10 African **countries**. It begins in central Africa and flows north. It empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

Ancient Egyptians built many cities near the Nile River. This is because Egypt is one big desert, except for the area around the Nile River. The Nile gave ancient Egyptians many things, including water to drink, food to eat, and a way to travel. Of course, they wanted to live near the river!

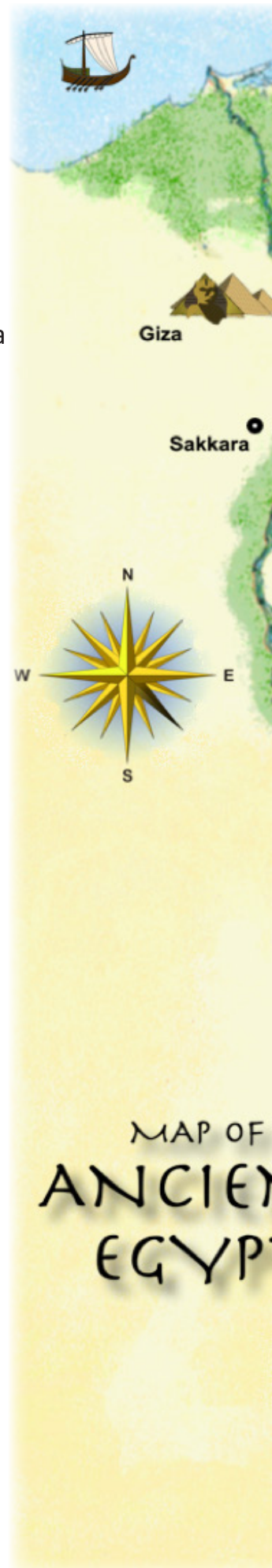
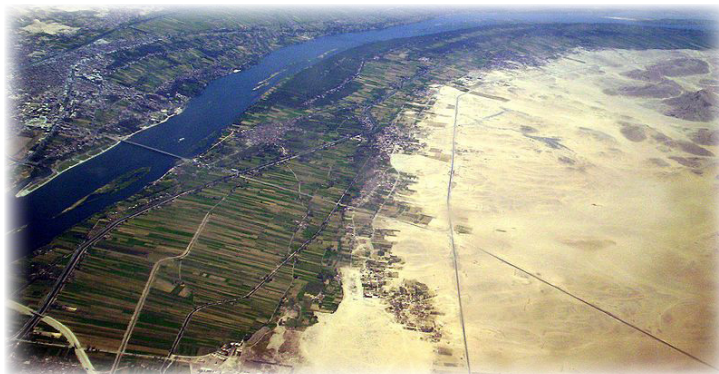
The Nile River helped the ancient Egyptians grow food. It's hard to grow food in the desert, but every year the Nile flooded. The river water that flooded the land made the soil good for growing food. Ancient Egyptians built **irrigation canals** and ditches to help water their crops during the flood. They also built containers to store the extra floodwater.

Travel and Trade

Every day, ancient Egyptians traveled up and down the Nile in boats. The Nile was like a giant water highway! The ancient Egyptians used it to travel through all of Egypt. They also used it to travel to different kingdoms. They met lots of different people by traveling on the Nile!

Thanks to the Nile, ancient Egyptians were able to trade with people from different lands. The Egyptians traded products that they grew or made in return for products that weren't in Egypt. For example, Egyptian farmers grew lots of food. They traded some of it for products that grew in other lands, like wood. Sometimes people from different lands paid ancient Egyptians for their crops using gold coins. Trading made many ancient Egyptians very rich.

Many cities were built around the Nile to farm, travel, and trade with one another



THE PYRAMIDS

When people think of Egypt, they think of the pyramids. These famous stone buildings were built thousands of years ago by ancient Egyptians. Most people agree that the pyramids are the most amazing buildings ever made. If you visit Egypt today, you can see them and explore them.

Why Did Ancient Egyptians Build the Pyramids?

Pyramids were built as **tombs** for the pharaohs. After the pharaohs died, they were **mummified** and buried inside the pyramids. The pyramids were also built as **monuments** to the pharaohs. It was an **honor** to be buried inside one. Pharaohs who built very large pyramids are remembered as rich and powerful.

What's Inside the Pyramids?

The ancient Egyptians buried their pharaohs with their belongings, such as food, clothes, and treasure. The ancient Egyptians believed the pharaoh would need these things in the **afterlife**.

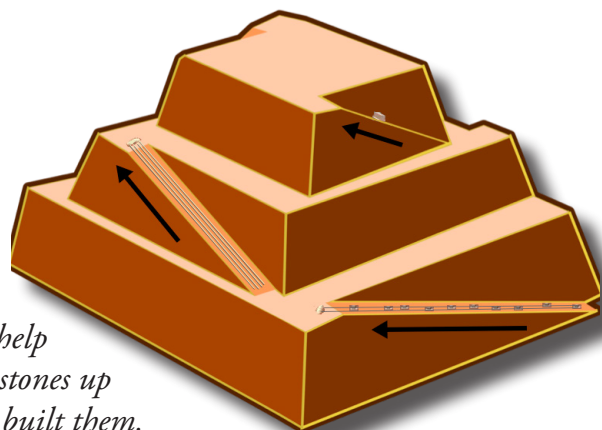
Grave robbers used to break into the pyramids. They wanted to steal the treasure. Some pyramids have interesting features to confuse and trick grave robbers. For example, some have fake rooms and hallways! But this didn't work very well. Grave robbers stole most of the treasure from the pyramids anyway.

How Big are the Pyramids?

The biggest pyramid is called the Great Pyramid of Giza /Gee-zuh/. It is 455 feet tall. That's bigger than a 42-story building! Scientists think that the Great Pyramid of Giza was made from 2.3 million blocks of rock.

How Were They Built?

It took about 23 years to build the Great Pyramid of Giza. Scientists don't know exactly how ancient Egyptians built the pyramids. But scientists do know that pyramids were built one block at a time. Workers had to cut huge stone blocks and move them up the pyramid. Scientists think they used ramps to move the large stones.



Ramps were used to help workers move heavy stones up the pyramids as they built them.

