

Geography in Ancient Egypt

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about the impact of geography on the development of civilization in Ancient Egypt.

Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

- 6.2.1 Analyze the relationship between geographical features and early settlement patterns using maps and globes
- 6.2.3 Describe the characteristics and achievements of the ancient river valley civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley and China
- 6.4.1 Identify and describe physical features and climate conditions that contributed to early human settlement in regions of the world
- 6.4.3 Explain the connection between physical geography and its influence on the development of civilization

Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Scoring Notes](#)
- [Printable Student Version](#)

Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 6.

Primary and Authentic Sources

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about Ancient Egypt. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 5 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 5.

Source 1: Paragraphs 2 - 3 of the section entitled "Inundation" from [Harnessing the Nile](#)

Source 2: [Map of the Nile](#)

Source 3: [Painting from Tomb of Nakht](#)



Source 4: "[Hymn to the Nile](#)," 2100 B.C.E.

Hail to thee, O Nile!
Thou showest thyself in this land,
Coming in peace, giving life to Egypt;
O Ammon, thou leadest night unto day,
A leading that rejoices the heart!
Overflowing the gardens created by Ra;
Giving life to all animals;
Watering the land without ceasing:
The way of heaven descending:
Lover of food, bestower of corn,
Giving life to every home, O Phthah!...

O inundation of Nile, offerings are made to thee;
Oxen are slain to thee;
Great festivals are kept for thee;
Fowls are sacrificed to thee;
Beasts of the field are caught for thee;
Pure flames are offered to thee;
Offerings are made to every god,
As they are made unto Nile.
Incense ascends unto heaven,
Oxen, bulls, fowls are burnt!
Nile makes for himself chasms in the Thebaid;
Unknown is his name in heaven,
He doth not manifest his forms!
Vain are all representations!

Mortals extol him, and the cycle of gods!
Awe is felt by the terrible ones;
His son is made Lord of all,
To enlighten all Egypt.
Shine forth, shine forth, O Nile! shine forth!
Giving life to men by his omen:
Giving life to his oxen by the pastures!
Shine forth in glory, O Nile!

Item 1: Multiple Choice

Based on the map in Source 2, Lower Egypt supported a greater concentration of cities in a smaller geographic area than Upper Egypt. Which statement best explains this settlement pattern?

- A. Upper Egypt was often attacked by its neighbors to the south.
- B. Upper Egypt was further away from most of the temples.
- C. Lower Egypt had more fertile farmland.
- D. Lower Egypt had more lakes for fishing.

Item 2: Multiple Choice

According to the passage in Source 1, farming was crucial to the development of the Egyptian civilization. What is the most critical aspect of the farming process in Egypt?

- A. planting different types of seeds each year
- B. planning around and managing the inundation
- C. harvesting the crop in the spring
- D. spraying the crops with pesticides

Item 3: Multiple Choice

Which of the activities portrayed in the tomb painting (Source 3) is **least** dependent upon the Nile?

- A. hunting
- B. fishing
- C. storing food
- D. growing crops

Item 4: Multiple Choice

How is the Nile portrayed in Source 4?

- A. as an evil ruler
- B. as a fair king
- C. as an ordinary river
- D. as a life-giving god

Item 5: Extended Response

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on pages 6 and 7 in this answer document.

Explain how the development of Egyptian civilization was influenced by its geographic location.

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.

Use page 5 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on pages 6 and 7 in this answer document.

Remember: The prewriting activities on page 5 will not be scored. Only your response on pages 6 and 7 will be scored.

Scoring Rubric

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

| Dimension: Content | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Score | Description |
| 4 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects thorough knowledge of how Egyptian civilization was impacted by its geographic location by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response; • Fully addresses all parts of the prompt. |
| 3 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects general knowledge of how Egyptian civilization was impacted by its geographic location by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses all parts of the prompt. |
| 2 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects limited knowledge of how Egyptian civilization was impacted by its geographic location by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses part of the prompt. |
| 1 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects minimal knowledge of how Egyptian civilization was impacted by its geographic location by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Minimally addresses part of the prompt. |
| 0 | <p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p> |

Dimension: Claims

| Score | Description |
|-------|---|
| 4 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a valid claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic; • Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources; • Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place. |
| 3 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a relevant claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic; • Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources; • Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place. |
| 2 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an inadequate claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic. • Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources; • Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place. |
| 1 | <p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; OR develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources; • Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place. |
| 0 | <p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p> |

Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

Characteristics of a Strong Response

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- Egyptian society was shaped by the Nile in many ways. As they became more proficient in agriculture, the use of the Nile encouraged Egypt's job specialization (e.g. digging irrigation canals, harvesting crops, etc.). This specialization allowed Egyptians to pursue other efforts beyond just meeting their basic needs. The Nile's impact on agriculture also allowed for the production of papyrus which promoted the development of their written language. The religious beliefs of the Egyptians were also influenced by the Nile; they revered the Nile as their source of life.
- The Nile was a source of water for Egyptians which was important because of the desert area that surrounded the civilization; without water from the Nile, the Egyptians would not have been able to settle in this area. The Nile River supported animal life. Egyptians were able to hunt and fish for food. The Nile River also allowed Egyptians to irrigate the land to grow crops. Without the Nile River to support food sources,

they Egyptian civilization wouldn't have been able to thrive.

- The Nile River contributed to many of the achievements for which the Egyptians are known. The Nile River was used to develop irrigation systems which enabled the Egyptians to engage in agriculture and create a stable food supply for their civilization. The Nile River served as a mode for transportation which led to the development of watercraft, enabled a centralized government, and allowed for trade. The Egyptians developed a 365-day calendar based on the yearly flood.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- Inundation from the Nile River was critical to the development of Egyptian civilization. (Source 1)
- Egypt's location, situated in a desert area, made people and the civilization dependent upon the Nile River. (Source 2)
- Every aspect of daily life for the ancient Egyptians was dependent upon the Nile. (Source 3)
- Because the ancient Egyptians' way of life depended upon the Nile, they viewed the river in a god-like way as the life-giving power of Egypt. (Source 4)

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Describing how the Egyptians used the Nile River to meet their needs. The Nile was used as a source of water for Egyptians which was an important need because of the desert area that surrounded the civilization. The Nile was also a key factor for Egypt's food sources. The Nile supported plant and animal life which could be harvested, fished, and hunted to provide food for the Egyptians. The Nile River also allowed Egyptians to irrigate the land to grow crops.
- Describing how the Nile River helped Egyptian civilization to advance. The Nile River served as a mode for transportation. The use of the Nile for transportation led to the development of watercraft, enabled a centralized government, and allowed for trade. The Egyptians tracked the yearly flood and used the information to predict flooding and develop a 365-day calendar based. As they became more proficient in agriculture, the use of the Nile encouraged Egypt's job specialization (e.g. digging irrigation canals, harvesting crops, etc.). The Nile's impact on agriculture also allowed for the production of papyrus which promoted the development of their written language. Even the religious beliefs of the Egyptians were influenced by the Nile, such as Hapi, the god of bounty.

**Printable
Student Version**

***Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

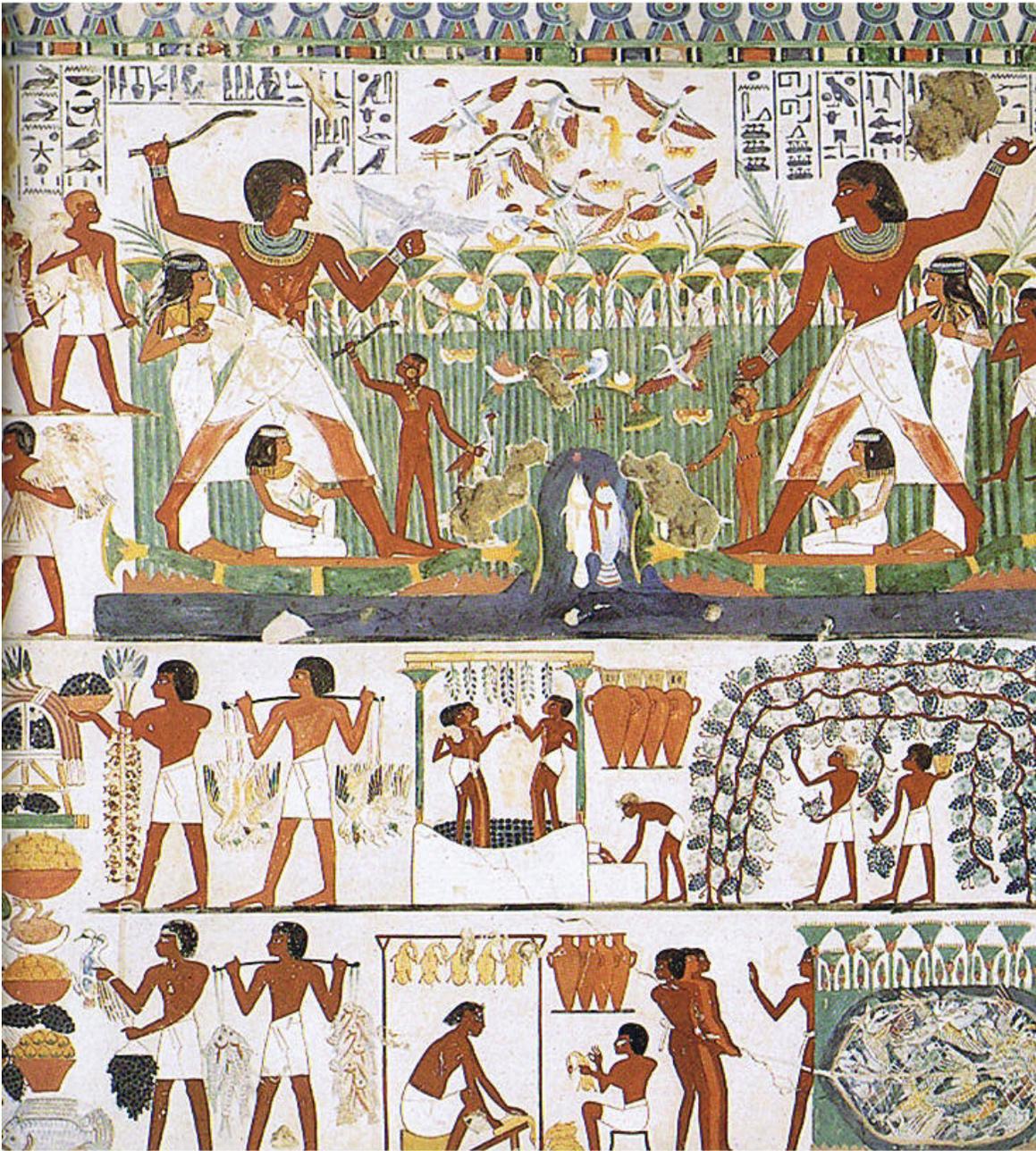
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His son is made Lord of all,
To enlighten all Egypt.
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(This page will not be scored.)

