



People of the Nile

5

✓ Lesson Objectives

Core Content Objectives

Students will:

- ✓ Locate Egypt on a world map or globe and identify it as a part of Africa
- ✓ Explain the importance of the Nile River and how its floods were important for farming
- ✓ Describe key components of a civilization

Language Arts Objectives

The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards addressed in all lessons in this domain.

Students will:

- ✓ Use the setting of “People of the Nile” to write and draw a unique story with the same setting (RL.1.3)
- ✓ Describe the connection between the annual flooding of the Nile River and the ability of Egyptians to farm and settle in the area (RI.1.3)
- ✓ Describe an illustration of crops growing along the banks of the Nile River and use pictures and details in “People of the Nile” to describe the read-aloud’s key ideas (RI.1.7)
- ✓ Compare and contrast Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt (RI.1.9)
- ✓ With assistance, categorize and organize facts and information from “People of the Nile,” to answer questions (W.1.8)
- ✓ Add drawings to descriptions of the Nile River, the setting of “People of the Nile,” to clarify ideas and thoughts (SL.1.5)

- ✓ Prior to listening to “People of the Nile,” make predictions orally about whether life in ancient Egypt was similar to, or different from, life in Mesopotamia, and then compare the actual outcomes to predictions
- ✓ Share writing with others

Core Vocabulary

advantage, n. A skill or thing that increases one’s chances of success

Example: The children’s small size gave them an advantage when playing hide and seek because they could hide in small spaces.

Variation(s): advantages

Egyptians, n. People from or living in Egypt

Example: Cleopatra and King Tut were Egyptians.

Variation(s): Egyptian

enriched, v. Added to or made richer


Example: Her mother bought milk that was enriched with vitamin D.

Variation(s): enrich, enriches, enriching

flooding, n. Water covering an area that is usually dry

Example: Sometimes when it rains very hard for a very long time, flooding takes place.

Variation(s): none

<i>At a Glance</i>	Exercise	Materials	Minutes
<i>Introducing the Read-Aloud</i>	Where Are We?	world map or globe	10
	Making Predictions About the Read-Aloud		
	Purpose for Listening		
<i>Presenting the Read-Aloud</i>	People of the Nile		15
<i>Discussing the Read-Aloud</i>	Comprehension Questions	world map or globe	10
	Word Work: Flooding		5
 Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day			
<i>Extensions</i>	Civilizations Chart	Image Card 7	20
	Setting	drawing paper, drawing tools	
<i>Take-Home Material</i>	Family Letter	Instructional Master 5B-1	*



People of the Nile

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Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

Where Are We?

Ask students to locate the continent of Africa on a world map or globe. Point to Egypt and explain that Egypt is a country in the northeast corner of Africa.



◀ Show image 5A-1: The desert

Review with students what a desert is. Explain that much of Egypt, like Mesopotamia, is a desert. The desert in Egypt is called the Sahara Desert. Have students repeat *Sahara Desert* after you.

Ask students which two rivers were very important to the Mesopotamians and why those rivers were so important. (Tigris and Euphrates; allowed them to farm in the desert) Tell students that today they will learn about life in ancient Egypt and an important river called the Nile River. The Nile is the longest river in the world, and it flows through Egypt. Show students the Nile River on a map or globe.

Ask students if they have heard of Egypt, the Nile River, or the Sahara Desert. Give students the opportunity to share any prior knowledge they have about the region.

Making Predictions About the Read-Aloud

Tell students that at about the same time people were living in Mesopotamia, people were also living in Egypt. Tell students that the next several read-alouds will be about life in ancient Egypt several thousands of years ago. Explain to them that part of the read-aloud is factual information about the Egyptians, and the other part is a made-up story with characters. Ask students if they think life in ancient Egypt was the same as or different from life in Mesopotamia.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to learn about life in ancient Egypt, and to find out whether or not their predictions were correct about ancient Egypt being the same as or different from Mesopotamia. Also tell them that Egypt has been called “the gift of the Nile,” and they should listen carefully to learn why.



People of the Nile

◀ Show image 5A-2: Map of Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates rivers

1 [Point to Mesopotamia and Egypt on the map. Explain that Egyptians are people who live or lived in Egypt.]

2 What is the longest river in the world?

3 It was very helpful for the Egyptians to have the Nile.

4 [Point to the area surrounding Egypt on the map.]

5 [Explain to students that crops need vitamins and minerals to grow.]

While people were creating cities and nations in Mesopotamia, another group of people, the **Egyptians**, were building another great civilization on the banks of another river, the Nile.¹

The Nile River is the longest—and one of the mightiest—rivers on the earth.² After it flows all the way through Egypt, it empties into the sea. The Nile has always given the people of Egypt a special **advantage**.³

Most farmers outside of Egypt⁴ had a hard time growing crops. They often had to farm the same land year after year. The problem with this was that by using the same land every year, the crops they planted would use up the natural vitamins and minerals in that land. After the vitamins and minerals were used up, the farmers could no longer grow crops on that land.⁵

So, the farmers would have to stop farming and give the land a few years to “rest.” By not growing crops on that land for a few years, the natural vitamins and minerals the plants needed to grow would start to build up again. Then the farmers could farm on that land again, at least for a few more years.

Because the farmers could only grow their crops on the same land for a few years before the natural vitamins and minerals would be used up, they could not count on being able to grow enough food every single year. It was a very hard life.

6 [Point to Egypt on the map.]

But, the Egyptians⁶ could farm the same land over and over again. Do you know why? The reason they could had to do with the Nile.



← **Show image 5A-3: Map of Africa with Egypt and the Nile highlighted**

7 [Point to it on the map, dragging your finger from the bottom of the image to the mouth of the river in Egypt at the top of the image, as you read.]

8 Water is no longer covering land that is usually dry.



9 [Have students describe what they see in the picture.]

10 [Point to the crops and the river in the picture.] The river mud added vitamins and minerals to the fields during the flooding.

← **Show image 5A-4: Crops growing along the banks of the Nile**⁹

The Nile begins its long journey to the sea in the high mountains of central Africa.⁷ Every spring, heavy rainstorms fill Africa's mountain lakes, emptying water into the Nile. Rushing down the mountainsides with enormous speed and power, the swollen river carries mud, rich with minerals and vitamins, in its current. When the floodwaters reach the flat lands of Egypt, they spread out for miles on either side of the riverbanks. When the rains and the **flooding** stop, the river goes back to its usual size.⁸

Long, long ago the ancient Egyptians planted crops in the muddy fields that were **enriched** with vitamins and minerals.¹⁰ In this way, the Nile floods meant life for the Egyptians. But if the rains were light for a year or two, the floodwaters would not bring enough rich soil (with vitamins and minerals for the plants), and the people might go hungry because they would not be able to grow as much food.

The Egyptians knew their lives depended on the river. Most Egyptians lived within twelve or thirteen miles of the Nile on one side or the other, for it was there that the floodwaters refreshed the land each year.¹¹

The floodwaters could also be very dangerous.¹² When the spring floods came, the Nile could destroy homes and villages if they were built too close to the river. So, many ancient Egyptian villages were built up above the level of the river so that when the spring floods came, the river would not destroy the buildings and homes.

Some villages, though, were built on the same level as the river itself. Every year the people living there would have to leave their village when the water rose too high.¹³ They moved away to a safer place and then would return a few weeks later after the river had returned to a lower level. The ancient Egyptians in those villages would have to repair a lot of the damage. Still, they did that every single year.

11 How is this similar to Mesopotamia?

12 How do you think floodwaters can be dangerous?

13 Here the word *rose* means moved upward or increased. The word *rose* can also mean a type of flower.



← **Show image 5A-5: Egyptian man pointing to village with canals**

14 [Point to the canals in the picture.]

15 Who else have you learned about who also dug canals? (Mesopotamians) What did the Mesopotamians use the canals for? (farming)

16 What do you think the ancient Egyptians used the Nile for in addition to farming?

Some villages had another way of dealing with the flood waters. The people living in these villages dug canals, ditches cut into the earth that spread from the edge of the river to carry away the extra water from the spring floods.¹⁴ The water flowed through the canals, past the village, and into the farm fields beyond. So the village did not get damaged, and the water could be transported out farther from the Nile.¹⁵

But the Egyptians used the Nile for other reasons, as we shall see in this story of an ancient Egyptian family.¹⁶



← **Show image 5A-6: Ipi and Meret on the banks of the Nile**¹⁷

17 You are now going to hear a story with the Nile River Valley as its setting.

One day thousands of years ago, an Egyptian woman named Ipi (*IP*-pea) and her daughter Meret (*MER*-et) went down to the Nile to gather some soft, muddy clay so they could make clay pots. Approaching the river, they heard a voice call, “Ipi! Meret!” They looked up and smiled, for sailing out in the middle of the Nile was Rensi (*REN*-see), the husband of Ipi and the father of Meret. Rensi was a fisherman who sailed his narrow boat up and down the river, casting out rope nets to catch fish. Rensi did this just as the men in his family had always done before him. As Rensi’s mother had told him, “Once a fisherman, always a fisherman; and once a fisherman’s son, always a fisherman, too.”¹⁸

18 The ancient Egyptians used the Nile for food by fishing!

Rensi began making his way back to Meret and Ipi, and after a few minutes, he reached shore. Pulling his boat a little way onto the sand so that it would not drift back into the water, he made his way over to them.

Meret turned to her father, who hugged her and kissed her. “Little fish,” he said gently, using one of his nicknames for Meret.

← **Show image 5A-7: Rensi, Ipi, and Meret carrying fish to house**



The three of them took the rope fishing nets from the boat and hung them to dry on wooden racks in the sun. Then Rensi, his wife, and his daughter took the fish from the boat back to their

19 The river was an easy way to transport people and goods. How is this similar to Mesopotamia?

village, where they would sell them at the market.¹⁹ That night, exhausted from a day at the market, they made their way back to their little house made of mud bricks at the edge of the village.

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent passages of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding the students' responses using richer and more complex language. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses.

1. *Evaluative* Were your predictions about whether life in ancient Egypt was the same as or different from life in Mesopotamia correct? Why or why not? (Answers may vary.)
2. *Literal* [Have a student locate the country of Egypt on a world map or globe.] On what continent is Egypt located? (Africa)
3. *Inferential* Why is Egypt often called “the gift of the Nile”? (It is because of the Nile River, and what it allowed the Egyptians to do, that ancient Egypt was able to be established as a civilization.)
4. *Inferential* How was the flooding of the Nile, which happened during heavy spring rains, important for farming? (It enriched the soil with vitamins and minerals.)
5. *Inferential* Why did most people in ancient Egypt live near the Nile? (They needed to grow their own food, and the river made farming possible.)



◀ **Show image 5A-7: Rensi, Ipi, and Meret carrying fish to house**

6. *Inferential* Within the read-aloud you heard a made-up story about an Egyptian family. Summarize what happens in the story. (Ipi and Meret go down to the river and see Rensi sailing and fishing. Rensi sails back to shore and the three of them clean up the boat and put it away. Then they walk back to their house.)

7. *Inferential* How was the Nile important to Meret and her family? (They used the clay to make pots, they fished in the river, and they traveled on it.)
8. *Evaluative* How were Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt the same? (They both were located near rivers; people lived in both places; both had canals; etc.)
9. *Evaluative* How were they different? (They were on different continents; the rivers had different names; etc.)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

10. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* Could ancient Egypt have existed without the Nile River? Why or why not? (Answers may vary.)
11. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]

Word Work: Flooding

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, "When the rains and the *flooding* stop, the river goes back to its usual size."
2. Say the word *flooding* with me.
3. *Flooding* means covering with too much water an area of land that is normally dry.
4. I heard on the news that there was flooding near the Mississippi River.
5. Have you ever seen or heard about flooding? Try to use the word *flooding* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students' responses: "I saw flooding . . . "]
6. What's the word we've been talking about?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: The read-aloud explained that flooding was helpful to the ancient Egyptians because it enriched the soil. Flooding can also be harmful because too much water can damage plants, animals, and homes. I am going to read some sentences. If the sentence describes a way that flooding can be helpful, you will say, "Flooding can be helpful." If the sentence describes a way that flooding can be harmful, you will say, "Flooding can be harmful."

1. The flooding provided rich soil for planting crops. (Flooding can be helpful.)
2. The people living near the river had to leave their homes as the flooding came closer and closer. (Flooding can be harmful.)
3. The flooding left clay that was used to make clay pots. (Flooding can be helpful.)
4. The birds flew away because of the flooding of their habitat. (Flooding can be harmful.)
5. The flooding destroyed the corn crop. (Flooding can be harmful.)



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



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Extensions

20 minutes

Civilizations Chart

Show students Image Card 7 (Farming Along the Nile). Talk about the Image Card and have students share what they learned from the read-aloud about farming along the Nile. Ask students how this is similar to Mesopotamia. (They both farmed near the river.) Ask students how this is different from Mesopotamia. (The ancient Egyptians farmed near the Nile, while the people of Mesopotamia farmed on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.) Tell the students that you are going to place the Image Card in the *Farming* column on the chart to help them remember that people in ancient Egypt farmed near the Nile.

Setting

Ask students if they remember what the setting of a story is. (where and when it takes place) Ask students to identify and describe the setting of the story about Meret and her family. (near the Nile River, thousands of year ago)

Ask students what other kinds of stories might be written with the same setting. (going fishing on the Nile; taking a trip down the Nile in a boat; etc.) After brainstorming ideas, tell students that they are going to draw a picture of one of the ideas. Then they will write about the picture that has been drawn. Some students may need to dictate to an adult what will be written. Others may write a word or two, one complete sentence, or several sentences with a beginning, middle, and end. Give students the opportunity to share their drawings and writing.

Take-Home Material

Family Letter

Send home Instructional Master 5B-1.