Life Along the Nile

Read how social roles and religious beliefs shaped ancient Egypt.

SS24.7.7c "Summarize the social structure and religious beliefs of ancient Egypt."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two phrases that show what different groups did, circle two phrases that state religious beliefs, and write 1 and 2 beside two places where a belief shaped someone's role.

Work, Worship, and the Afterlife

1 During the Nile flood season, an Egyptian farmer watched the river rise beside his fields. Most people in ancient Egypt farmed, and their grain helped feed the country. The pharaoh stood at the top of society and was seen as a ruler chosen by the gods. Officials managed land, collected taxes, and organized work in the pharaoh's name. Scribes kept written records of grain and supplies. Craftspeople made tools and other goods, while laborers built structures. These groups depended on one another, though they did not share equal power.

2 Religious beliefs shaped this order and daily life. Egyptians worshiped many gods, including Ra, linked to the sun, and Osiris, linked to the afterlife. They believed gods affected nature and human lives, so people made offerings and prayed for help. Priests cared for temple images and led rituals, roles that gave them an important place in society. The pharaoh was expected to honor the gods and maintain *ma'at*, an idea of order and balance. When the Nile's waters rose, people saw the flood as part of a world shaped by divine powers.

3 Belief in life after death also shaped what people did while living. Egyptians believed that preserving a body and performing burial rites could help a person's spirit live after death. Families who could afford it arranged mummification, and tombs might hold food, tools, or small figures for the dead. Wealthy people could build elaborate tombs, while poorer families used simpler burials. Such differences showed the unequal resources of Egyptian society. Yet both rich and poor hoped for a lasting life beyond death, tying everyday work and family care to religious belief.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Summarize how farmers, scribes, and officials each helped support the pharaoh's rule.

2. How did religious beliefs shape the roles of both the pharaoh and priests?

3. Summarize what Egyptians believed about the gods' effect on daily life and how people responded.

4. How did belief in life after death connect rich and poor Egyptians, and how did their burial practices differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label for an imaginary ancient Egyptian grain jar. Explain how at least two social groups might have helped fill, record, or use it, and connect the jar to one religious belief from the passage. Begin one invented detail with “I imagine.”

ANSWER KEY

Life Along the Nile

GRADE 7 · SS24.7.7c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two phrases that show what different groups did, circle two phrases that state religious beliefs, and write 1 and 2 beside two places where a belief shaped someone's role. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Summarize how farmers, scribes, and officials each helped support the pharaoh's rule.	**Farmers grew grain, scribes recorded grain and supplies, and officials collected taxes and organized work for the pharaoh.**
2	How did religious beliefs shape the roles of both the pharaoh and priests?	**The pharaoh was seen as chosen by the gods and was expected to honor them and maintain order. Priests cared for temple images and led rituals.**
3	Summarize what Egyptians believed about the gods' effect on daily life and how people responded.	**Egyptians believed gods affected nature and human lives, so people made offerings and prayed for help.**
4	How did belief in life after death connect rich and poor Egyptians, and how did their burial practices differ?	**Both rich and poor hoped for life after death. Wealthy people could have elaborate tombs, while poorer families used simpler burials.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This imaginary jar holds grain that farmers grew beside the Nile. A scribe might have recorded its amount for officials collecting taxes. I imagine its owner painted a sun on the lid. The painting could honor Ra, a god linked to the sun, showing how belief might shape an everyday object.

Accept labels that accurately connect at least two social groups to the jar and link it to a belief in the passage. The invented detail must be clearly marked, not presented as a known fact.