

WORLD HISTORY

Ancient Egypt

COMMON CORE

A S S E S S M E N T S

MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY



Ancient Egypt

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978-1-57596-425-6
E-Book ISBN: 978-1-57596-433-1

Product Code: HS873 v1.0

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Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about Egypt. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical world history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- **A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of world history**

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards—Assessment 1 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 1, Assessment 2 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 2, and so on. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- **Based on primary or secondary sources**

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone. Links to online versions of print media are available in the Bibliography. Please note that these links were valid at the time of production, but the websites may have since been discontinued.

- **Brief tasks promoting historical literacy**

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- **Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments**

A *basic* and an *advanced* version of each assessment are provided. The *basic* assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The *advanced* assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the *basic* version.

- **Easy to use as both learning and assessment tools**

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess students' historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- **Evaluating student responses**

Brief but specific suggestions are provided, defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly, they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

Assessment 1 *Basic Level***“Hymn to the Nile”**★ Key Ideas and Details

1. (6–8) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 1 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that the hymn depicts the Nile as a gift of the gods, with the Nile perhaps being a deity itself. The hymn is deeply reverential about the Nile’s great value to Egyptians. In practical terms, the Nile’s value is described mainly as agricultural. The river and its floods water the crops, thereby providing the vast surplus of grain that sustains life and supports a higher civilization—causing “the workshops of Ptah to prosper” and assuring “perpetuity to the temples.” Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should note the greater detail in Document 2 about specific benefits from the Nile and its floods. The document calls attention to the regularity and predictability of the floods, not merely to the fact that they water crops. It notes the way the floods also replenish the earth with rich new soil each year. Also, the document points out the ease with which travel both up and down the river linked all parts of Egypt together cooperatively.

“Hymn to the Nile”

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

Hail to thee, O Nile! Who manifests thyself over this land, and comes to give life to Egypt!
Mysterious is thy issuing forth from the darkness, on this day whereon it is celebrated!
Watering the orchards created by Re, to cause all the cattle to live, you give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one! Path that descends from the sky, loving the bread of Seb and the first-fruits of Nepera, You cause the workshops of Ptah to prosper!

Lord of the fish, during the inundation, no bird alights on the crops. You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, assuring perpetuity to the temples. If you cease your toil and your work, then all that exists is in anguish. If the gods suffer in heaven, then the faces of men waste away.

Source Information: A sense of how important the Nile was to ancient Egyptians can be gained from the “Hymn to the Nile.” No one knows who wrote it or exactly when. From the style, some historians date it to the Middle Kingdom (from around 1975–1640 BCE). The Egyptian gods named in the passage are the sun god Re; the earth god Seb; the god of grain Nepera; and Ptah, creator god and god of craftsmanship. This version is adapted from *The Ancient World*, vol. 1 of *The Library of Original Sources*, edited by Oliver J. Thatcher (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), pp. 79–83.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

The civilization of ancient Egypt arose over 5,000 years ago. It grew from small farming villages located along the banks of the Nile River in northern Africa . . . Most early civilizations grew up along big rivers. But the Nile was unusual in many ways. One major aspect of the Nile was its annual flood . . . The Nile is about 4,100 miles long. Each year, rains far to the south flood the river all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. The ancient Egyptians looked forward to these floods. They were highly regular annual floods that began in June and lasted about four months. The flood waters would go down as Egypt's growing season began. For the next eight months, farmers would be busy in their fields.

The flood kept the lands fertile, allowing the agricultural cycle to repeat itself predictably, year after year. That's because each year's flood left behind a new layer of rich soil. This meant the same lands could be farmed year after year, for many centuries—and they would never wear out. The rich farmland along the river was able to feed many villages, and in time it came to support a huge civilization

The Nile also gave ancient Egypt a natural roadway. Villages could trade with one another easily up and down the river. Boats heading north downstream floated with the current. Going upstream, to the south, they could use sails. Winds generally blew from the Mediterranean in a southerly direction, so it was fairly easy to sail up the Nile. After about 700 miles, boats would reach the first cataract, or set of rapids. It was harder to travel beyond the cataracts. But these also acted as barriers to anyone coming down the Nile to attack Egypt.

Source Information: This is a secondary source document about the role of the Nile River in the history of ancient Egypt. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. This passage is an adapted and expanded version of Lesson 1 in Jonathan Burack's *Ancient Egypt*, History Unfolding (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2009).

Assessment Questions

1. According to Document 1, what benefits did the Nile bring to people in ancient Egypt? Cite details from the document in your answer.
2. What does Document 2 add to Document 1 to better explain why ancient Egyptians “looked forward” to the Nile’s floods? Cite specific details from Document 2 to support your answer.

Assessment 1 *Advanced Level*

“Hymn to the Nile”

★ Key Ideas and Details

1. (9–10) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
1. (11–12) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 1 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past. As called for by the Common Core standard for grades 11–12, it also prompts students to relate the textual details to “an understanding of the text as a whole.”

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should note the hymn’s language addressing the Nile as a living entity bestowing its gifts lovingly—“you give the earth to drink,” “you create the grain.” Also, the Nile is depicted as working with several other benevolent deities. The benefits from it are mainly agricultural. The Nile waters the crops and provides the vast surplus of grain that sustains life. In doing this, it also supports a higher civilization—by causing “the workshops of Ptah to prosper” and ensuring “perpetuity to the temples.” Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should note the detail in Document 2 about specific benefits from the Nile and its floods—both in watering crops and replenishing soil. The passage also implies a contrast with other rivers by focusing on the Nile flood’s unique regularity and predictability. The document also points out the ease with which travel both up and down the river linked all parts of Egypt together cooperatively. It indicates as well that the Nile’s cataracts helped ensure Egypt’s security against attacks from the South. These features distinguish the river as a uniquely valuable one for a complex society along its shores.

“Hymn to the Nile”

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document and carefully answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: (9–10) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information. **(11–12)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Document 1: A Primary Source

Hail to thee, O Nile! Who manifests thyself over this land, and comes to give life to Egypt! Mysterious is thy issuing forth from the darkness, on this day whereon it is celebrated! Watering the orchards created by Re, to cause all the cattle to live, you give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one! Path that descends from the sky, loving the bread of Seb and the first-fruits of Nepera, You cause the workshops of Ptah to prosper!

Lord of the fish, during the inundation, no bird alights on the crops. You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, assuring perpetuity to the temples. If you cease your toil and your work, then all that exists is in anguish. If the gods suffer in heaven, then the faces of men waste away.

Source Information: A sense of how important the Nile was to ancient Egyptians can be gained from the “Hymn to the Nile.” No one knows who wrote it or exactly when. From the style, some historians date it to the Middle Kingdom (from around 1975–1640 BCE). The Egyptian gods named in the passage are the sun god Re; the earth god Seb; the god of grain Nepera; and Ptah, creator god and god of craftsmanship. This version is adapted from *The Ancient World*, vol. 1 of *The Library of Original Sources*, edited by Oliver J. Thatcher (Milwaukee: University Research Extension, 1907), pp. 79–83.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

The civilization of ancient Egypt arose over 5,000 years ago. It grew from small farming villages located along the banks of the Nile River in northern Africa . . . Most early civilizations grew up along big rivers. But the Nile was unusual in many ways. One major aspect of the Nile was its annual flood . . . The Nile is about 4,100 miles long. Each year, rains far to the south flood the river all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. The ancient Egyptians looked forward to these floods. They were highly regular annual floods that began in June and lasted about four months. The flood waters would go down as Egypt's growing season began. For the next eight months, farmers would be busy in their fields.

The flood kept the lands fertile, allowing the agricultural cycle to repeat itself predictably, year after year. That's because each year's flood left behind a new layer of rich soil. This meant the same lands could be farmed year after year, for many centuries—and they would never wear out. The rich farmland along the river was able to feed many villages, and in time it came to support a huge civilization

The Nile also gave ancient Egypt a natural roadway. Villages could trade with one another easily up and down the river. Boats heading north downstream floated with the current. Going upstream, to the south, they could use sails. Winds generally blew from the Mediterranean in a southerly direction, so it was fairly easy to sail up the Nile. After about 700 miles, boats would reach the first cataract, or set of rapids. It was harder to travel beyond the cataracts. But these also acted as barriers to anyone coming down the Nile to attack Egypt.

Source Information: This is a secondary source document about the role of the Nile River in the history of ancient Egypt. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. This passage is an adapted and expanded version of Lesson 1 in Jonathan Burack's *Ancient Egypt*, History Unfolding (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2009).

Assessment Questions

1. Document 1, the "Hymn to the Nile," treats that river as a benevolent deity. What details suggest the Nile is a deity, and what benefits does the hymn tell us the Nile gives to Egypt?
2. Document 2 describes the Nile's great value to Egypt. It also suggests what made the river unique compared with other great rivers along which complex civilizations arose. Explain how it develops both of these points.

Assessment 2 *Basic Level*

The Egyptian Afterlife

★ *Key Ideas and Details*

- 2. (6–8)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 2 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 2 for grades 6–8. It asks students to summarize the central ideas in a source from the text itself without imposing ideas or attitudes external to the text. This is not easy to do. This activity assesses the ability to read closely in order to build an overall understanding of the source out of the text itself.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that the main point is that the grave goods and artwork were not merely for decoration. They were assumed to have magical powers that could aid the deceased in making the transition to a fulfilling life after death. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question may vary. However, the passage suggests these grave goods mainly reveal a positive attitude toward the afterlife. The goods consisted of many ordinary objects and scenes, implying that the next world would be similar to what life had been like for Egyptians in this world. They seem to express hopes regarding the afterlife more than they do fears about it.

The Egyptian Afterlife

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

A Secondary Source Document

Egyptians believed in many gods and told many myths about these gods. Prayers and spells of all kinds were used to gain their help in this world and the next. Such prayers and spells were written on coffins, on the walls inside tombs, and on papyrus scrolls left to give guidance to the deceased. Tombs were filled with many other things: statues of the deceased and others, furniture, utensils, tools, and other goods for the dead person to use in the next life. In some tombs, magnificent wall paintings showed the deceased's daily activities [during this life]—which were also scenes of what he or she hoped life in the next world would be like. These were not just decorative scenes; after all, once a tomb was shut, all these objects were never supposed to be seen by living human beings again. [Instead,] all these grave goods and artwork were thought to have power to shape the person's life in the next world. As with many things in ancient Egypt, words and images had magical power. It was hoped this power could keep Egypt's traditional way of life alive, both in the natural world and the spiritual realm for all eternity to come.

Source Information: This is a secondary source passage adapted from the Introductory Essay to Jonathan Burack's *What We Can Learn from Egypt's Tombs*, *The Historian's Apprentice* (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2010).

Assessment Questions

1. The central idea in this passage has to do with the artwork and grave goods Egyptians put in their tombs. What central idea does the passage express about the nature and purpose of these grave goods?
2. Was the Egyptian concept of the afterlife mainly positive, mainly negative, or neutral? Cite details from the document to support your answer.

Assessment 2 *Advanced Level*

The Egyptian Afterlife

★ *Key Ideas and Details*

- 2. (9–10)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- 2. (11–12)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 2 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 2 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to summarize the central ideas in a source from the text itself without imposing ideas or attitudes external to the text. This is not easy to do. Moreover, when it comes to the unique demands of thinking historically we do also want students to use knowledge of historical context to help them interpret sources. That sort of contextualizing, however, also demands that students suspend their own present-day ideas while studying a source. This activity assesses the ability to read closely in order to build an overall understanding of the source out of the text itself.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that the main point is that the grave goods and artwork in Egyptian tombs were thought to have magical powers that could aid the deceased in making the transition to a fulfilling life after death. This is indicated by the kinds of goods in the tombs—furniture, utensils, tools, and other useful objects. Wall painting and spells written on coffins seem designed to ensure the next life would continue the happiest aspects of this life. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question will vary. Some may concentrate on what the objects in the tombs teach us about Egyptian daily life—furniture, home life, work routines, technology, family relationships, etc. Others may see in these objects signs of the social and mental lives of Egyptians—what they most valued in this life and what their ideas were about the afterlife. The goods consisted of many ordinary objects that seem to be there on the assumption that life in the next world would be similar to what life had been like for Egyptians in this world. In this way, they are evidence of what Egyptians valued and hoped to see re-created in the afterlife.

The Egyptian Afterlife

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 2: (9–10) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text. **(11–12)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

A Secondary Source Document

Egyptians believed in many gods and told many myths about these gods. Prayers and spells of all kinds were used to gain their help in this world and the next. Such prayers and spells were written on coffins, on the walls inside tombs, and on papyrus scrolls left to give guidance to the deceased. Tombs were filled with many other things: statues of the deceased and others, furniture, utensils, tools, and other goods for the dead person to use in the next life. In some tombs, magnificent wall paintings showed the deceased's daily activities [during this life]—which were also scenes of what he or she hoped life in the next world would be like. These were not just decorative scenes; after all, once a tomb was shut, all these objects were never supposed to be seen by living human beings again. [Instead,] all these grave goods and artwork were thought to have power to shape the person's life in the next world. As with many things in ancient Egypt, words and images had magical power. It was hoped this power could keep Egypt's traditional way of life alive, both in the natural world and the spiritual realm for all eternity to come.

Source Information: This is a secondary source passage adapted from the Introductory Essay to Jonathan Burack's *What We Can Learn from Egypt's Tombs*, *The Historian's Apprentice* (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2010).

Assessment Questions

1. What overall point does this passage make about Egypt's tombs? Cite details from the document to support your answer.
2. In general, what do you think historians and archaeologists can learn about life in Egypt from the way Egyptians decorated and stocked their tombs?

Assessment 3 *Basic Level*

The God-Kings of Egypt

★ *Key Ideas and Details*

- 3. (6–8)** Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 3 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 3 for grades 6–8. It asks students to follow the way a set of ideas or sequence of events in a text interacts together to describe a process or develop a central idea. This activity assesses the students’ ability to read closely in order to understand various connections between each detail and the next in a text.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the passage describes the pharaoh’s great authority as the ruler over all of Egypt and the way his authority is strengthened by the idea of his divine or semidivine nature. In death, the pharaohs merge with the gods and continue to influence life and help to maintain order in the world. Answers to the second assessment question should note how the quotation makes clear the close association of the pharaoh with certain Egyptian deities. Not only does Unas sit on the throne of Osiris, but Unas actually is Osiris—“Atum, this your son is here, Osiris. . . . He lives! He lives! This Unas lives!” Best answers will note that the pharaohs inscribed such prayers inside tombs where no one would see them. In other words, this conception of the pharaoh as a god was not just for public display.

The God-Kings of Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in it. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 3: Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

A Secondary Source Document

The pyramids were the tombs of early pharaohs. Later pharaohs had their tombs buried deep in cliffs to keep robbers out. These tombs were meant to ensure dead pharaohs easy passage to the next life. This was important not only to the pharaoh, but also to all of Egypt. The pharaohs were the link between the natural world and the spiritual realm of the gods. Without pharaohs, disorder would spread everywhere. Naturally, this view of the pharaoh greatly added to his authority and his government's right to rule all of Egypt. It also helps explain Egypt's constant interest in pleasing the gods, observing many complex rituals, and paying close attention to preparing for the pharaoh's afterlife.

The pharaohs were seen as partly human and partly divine. They are often called god-kings. For example, Unas was a pharaoh who lived in the 24th century BCE. The writings on the walls of his tomb include these lines:

O Unas, you have not gone dead, you have gone alive to sit on the throne of Osiris. Your scepter is in your hand that you may give orders to the living, the handle of your lotus-shaped scepter in your hand. Give orders to those of the Mysterious Sites (the dead)!

Atum, this your son is here, Osiris, whom you have preserved alive. He lives! He lives! This Unas lives! He is not dead, this Unas is not dead! He is not gone down, this Unas is not gone down! He has not been judged, this Unas has not been judged! He judges, this Unas judges!

In this passage, Unas is identified with and seems to become one with the god Osiris, identified here as the son of the god Atum.

The pharaoh's role in Egyptian society was to maintain the world's order or stability. The word for this principle of order was "Ma'at." At various times, the deceased pharaoh was thought to merge with the supreme god Amon-Re or with Osiris, the god of the underworld. In this form, he continued to play a role in maintaining Ma'at.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about the pharaohs of Egypt and their role in Egyptian society. The quotation in the passage mentions three Egyptian gods—Atum, a creator god; Osiris, god of the underworld who renews life; and Amon-Re, a later merging of the creator god Amon with the sun god Re. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity. The passage's quotation comes from the Pyramid of Unas, translated on Pyramid Texts Online.

Assessment Questions

1. This passage's central idea has to do with the pharaoh's role in Egyptian society, both in life and death. Explain what Egyptians believed about that role.

2. Explain why the quotation is so important in helping to understand the passage's central idea.

Assessment 3 *Advanced Level*

The God-Kings of Egypt

★ *Key Ideas and Details*

- 3. (9–10)** Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- 3. (11–12)** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 3 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 3 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to follow the way a set of ideas or sequence of events in a text interacts together to describe a process or develop a central idea. The activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand various connections between each detail and the next in a complex text. It also asks them to evaluate the explanation offered in the passage and consider how adequate it is.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the quotation makes clear the close association of the pharaohs with certain Egyptian deities. Not only does Unas sit on the throne of Osiris, but Unas is fused with Osiris; he and the god are depicted as one. This supports the passage's central point that the pharaohs' great authority was based on the idea of the pharaohs as semidivine figures who could rule over and protect Egypt while alive and even after death. Answers to the second assessment question should see that this view of the pharaoh as a god-king gave an emotionally powerful legitimacy to their rule. It would be much harder to oppose or complain about a ruler who was assumed to have divine powers he could exercise even after death. Best answers will recognize that other factors could also have contributed to the stability of centralized government in Egypt but that this factor would give that stability extra support.

The God-Kings of Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in it. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 3: (9–10) Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them. **(11–12)** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

A Secondary Source Document

The pyramids were the tombs of early pharaohs. Later pharaohs had their tombs buried deep in cliffs to keep robbers out. These tombs were meant to ensure dead pharaohs easy passage to the next life. This was important not only to the pharaoh, but also to all of Egypt. The pharaohs were the link between the natural world and the spiritual realm of the gods. Without pharaohs, disorder would spread everywhere. Naturally, this view of the pharaoh greatly added to his authority and his government's right to rule all of Egypt. It also helps explain Egypt's constant interest in pleasing the gods, observing many complex rituals, and paying close attention to preparing for the pharaoh's afterlife.

The pharaohs were seen as partly human and partly divine. They are often called god-kings. For example, Unas was a pharaoh who lived in the 24th century BCE. The writings on the walls of his tomb include these lines:

O Unas, you have not gone dead, you have gone alive to sit on the throne of Osiris. Your scepter is in your hand that you may give orders to the living, the handle of your lotus-shaped scepter in your hand. Give orders to those of the Mysterious Sites (the dead)!

Atum, this your son is here, Osiris, whom you have preserved alive. He lives! He lives! This Unas lives! He is not dead, this Unas is not dead! He is not gone down, this Unas is not gone down! He has not been judged, this Unas has not been judged! He judges, this Unas judges!

In this passage, Unas is identified with and seems to become one with the god Osiris, identified here as the son of the god Atum.

The pharaoh's role in Egyptian society was to maintain the world's order or stability. The word for this principle of order was "Ma'at." At various times, the deceased pharaoh was thought to merge with the supreme god Amon-Re or with Osiris, the god of the underworld. In this form, he continued to play a role in maintaining Ma'at.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about the pharaohs of Egypt and their role in Egyptian society. The quotation in the passage mentions three Egyptian gods—Atum, a creator god; Osiris, god of the underworld who renews life; and Amon-Re, a later merging of the creator god Amon with the sun god Re. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity. The passage's quotation comes from the Pyramid of Unas, translated on Pyramid Texts Online.

Assessment Questions

1. Explain the relationship of the quotation in this passage to its overall point.
2. How might this passage help to explain the stable, long-lasting authority of Egypt's centralized government?

Assessment 4 *Basic Level*

Priests and Scribes in Ancient Egypt

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 4. (6–8)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 4 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 4 for grades 6–8. It asks students to recognize that words and phrases must be understood in relation to the meaning of the text as a whole. In seeking to understand historical sources, this is an especially important challenge. Words and phrases need to be understood as they were used within their historical context. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand terms in these ways.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should be able to use the passage's context to define *social hierarchy* as a system ranking people or groups of people by status or authority. The passage identifies priests and scribes as among those who help rule Egyptian society, along with administrators and military officers. This should make it clear that those at the top of a social hierarchy are those in that society with greater authority, wealth, and power. Answers to the second assessment question should see that priests and scribes both had central roles in governing society. Scribes were a small elite with specialized skills. Document 1 is evidence of how complex Egyptian hieroglyphics were. This could support the passage's claims about how specialized the scribe's skills were and how difficult those skills were to master. Priests also had to master these skills, as well as others. Priests were a key economic group in control of a great deal of the society's lands. In all these ways, the meanings of the terms *priest* and *scribe* in Egypt differ from the definitions we might assign to these words today.

Priests and Scribes in Ancient Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents as historical sources, read and make use of the source information just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Document 1: A Primary Source



Photo Source: Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-04011

Source Information: This is a photograph of a pylon of a temple in Karnak, Egypt. It shows some ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, possibly the first writing system in the world.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

Egypt's huge agricultural surplus made it possible for its peasant laborers to support a large number of skilled people to help rule over Egyptian society. In charge were the pharaoh, his relatives, top administrators, and military officers. Two other groups also at the top of this social hierarchy were priests and scribes. In a society without money, these groups were paid mainly with goods or with productive agricultural lands.

Thousands of priests and scribes were a part of ancient Egypt's government. Most of the priests and all scribes had to learn Egypt's difficult writing system. Egyptian writing first took the form of hieroglyphs. Hieroglyphs were pictures that often stood for whole words. Over time, many of them also came to be used for single sounds.

This system was no simple alphabet. Only those who could afford years of training could be scribes. These scribes kept track of goods stored, land holdings, debts owed, and many other records needed by government officials. Only one percent of all Egyptians could read. This means that scribes were a tiny well-off group in Egyptian society. Many other Egyptians were part-time priests. They helped out with temple rituals for a few weeks or months each year. But the many full-time priests in the temples made up another powerful group in Egyptian society. The temples controlled huge amounts of land. In the New Kingdom the priests of Thebes may have held a third of Egypt's lands, with all the peasants and villages on them.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about certain groups that played key roles in managing and ruling ancient Egyptian society. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Assessment Questions

1. Document 2 says priests and scribes were at the top of Egypt's social hierarchy. Using the passage, explain what a *social hierarchy* is and what it means to be at the top of it.
2. Consider this statement: "The way we use the words *priest* and *scribe* today might not convey fully what ancient Egyptians meant by them." Use the passage and Document 1 to explain what Egyptians did mean by these two words.

Assessment 4 *Advanced Level*

Priests and Scribes in Ancient Egypt

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 4. (9–10) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
- 4. (11–12) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 4 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 4 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to recognize that words and phrases must be understood in relation to the meaning of the text as a whole. In seeking to understand historical sources, this is an especially important challenge. Words and phrases need to be understood as they were used within their historical context. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand terms in these ways.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the passage identifies priests and scribes as among those who help rule Egyptian society, along with top administrators and military officers. That is, they are among those at the top of Egypt's social hierarchy, and as such they have more status, wealth, and power than we associate with the words *priest* and *scribe* today. They also performed important administrative and economic management functions, far more so than priests and scribes (writers) today normally do. Best answers will also note the very difficult, specialized skills it took to master Egyptian hieroglyphics as compared with learning to write using our alphabetical script. Answers to the second assessment question may vary. Many other groups in our society could be mentioned as those who perform the various managerial, economic, political, and intellectual tasks that priests and scribes carried out in ancient Egypt. Corporate executives, computer programmers, and thousands of skilled officials in government are among those who manage society and the economy. Many other institutions along with churches shape ideas and culture—schools, universities, major media outlets, entertainment, sports figures, etc. Clearly, this is a question whose responses could be discussed thoroughly.

Priests and Scribes in Ancient Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents as historical sources, read and make use of the source information just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 4: (9–10) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science. **(11–12)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

Document 1: A Primary Source



Photo Source: Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-04011

Source Information: This is a photograph of a pylon of a temple in Karnak, Egypt. It shows some ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, possibly the first writing system in the world.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

Egypt's huge agricultural surplus made it possible for its peasant laborers to support a large number of skilled people to help rule over Egyptian society. In charge were the pharaoh, his relatives, top administrators, and military officers. Two other groups also at the top of this social hierarchy were priests and scribes. In a society without money, these groups were paid mainly with goods or with productive agricultural lands.

Thousands of priests and scribes were a part of ancient Egypt's government. Most of the priests and all scribes had to learn Egypt's difficult writing system. Egyptian writing first took the form of hieroglyphs. Hieroglyphs were pictures that often stood for whole words. Over time, many of them also came to be used for single sounds.

This system was no simple alphabet. Only those who could afford years of training could be scribes. These scribes kept track of goods stored, land holdings, debts owed, and many other records needed by government officials. Only one percent of all Egyptians could read. This means that scribes were a tiny well-off group in Egyptian society. Many other Egyptians were part-time priests. They helped out with temple rituals for a few weeks or months each year. But the many full-time priests in the temples made up another powerful group in Egyptian society. The temples controlled huge amounts of land. In the New Kingdom the priests of Thebes may have held a third of Egypt's lands, with all the peasants and villages on them.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about certain groups that played key roles in managing and ruling ancient Egyptian society. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Assessment Questions

1. Using Document 1 and the context provided by Document 2, explain how the meanings of the terms *priest* and *scribe* in ancient Egypt differed from what we usually mean by these two words today?
2. Consider this statement. "In our culture, people still perform the roles that priests and scribes did in ancient Egypt. But mostly, they are not actually priests and scribes." Explain this statement.

Assessment 5 *Basic Level*

Akhenaten's Hymn to Aten

★ *Craft and Structure*

5. (6–8) Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 5 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 5 for grades 6–8. It asks students to pay attention to a text's "structure"—that is, to the overall pattern or organizational arrangement of its headings, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, and chapters as well as its various stylistic features. These formal elements can contribute to a text's meanings in many ways. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand the impact of the way one historical primary source is structured to present its information.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that the hymn consists of a description of Aten and his great works in creating the world, providing the benefits of life to all, and giving Akhenaten, and his wife Nefertiti a unique role in knowing him and explaining him to the world. In all this, the hymn's text fits the "definition structure." The details in the passage do not describe any sequence or process, nor does the hymn make a proposition as part of an argument. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question may vary. They should focus on the effusive praise and the language of awe and mystery expressed about Aten's supreme power. These are typical of sacred or religious writings directed to a deity. They are a part of the hymn's description of Aten, but they do make the hymn something more than simple definition or description.

Akhenaten's Hymn to Aten

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 5: Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

A Primary Source Document

One God, like whom there is no other. You did create the earth by your heart . . . , you alone existing, men and women, cattle, beasts of every kind that are upon the earth, [and] that move upon . . . legs, all the creatures that are in the sky and that fly with their wings, and the deserts of Syria and [Nubia], and the Land of Egypt.

You set every person in his place. You provide their daily food, every man having the portion allotted to him, you . . . compute the duration of his life. . . .

You make [the Nile] in the [Underworld], you bring it when you wish to make mortals to live, inasmuch as you have made them for yourself, their Lord who does support them to the uttermost, O you Lord of every land, you shine upon them, O ATEN of the day, you great one of majesty. . . .

You are in my heart. There is no other who knows you except your son Nefer-kheperu-Rā Uā-en-Rā [Pharaoh Akhenaten]. You have made him wise to understand your plans and your power. . . . You have raised up your son who came forth from your body, the King of the South and the North, Living in Truth, Lord of Crowns, [Akhenaten], great in the duration of his life, [and for] the Royal Wife, great of majesty, Lady of the Two Lands, Nefer-neferu-Aten Nefertiti, living [and] young forever and ever.

Source Information: This is part of “The Great Hymn to the Aten,” found in the tomb of a high official. It may have been written by Pharaoh Akhenaten in the mid-1300s BCE. Akhenaten made a radical break with Egyptian religious tradition by placing all creative power in the god Aten, the disk of the sun. The sun had always played a key role in Egyptian religion, but Akhenaten made Aten the sole god. For example, this hymn does not mention the other Egyptian gods who helped the sun travel across the sky and back through the underworld each day. Some see Akhenaten as an early monotheist and an idealist. However, others see him as a tyrant who claimed that Aten only revealed himself to Akhenaten. These parts of the hymn are adapted from *Tutankhamen: Amenism, Atenism and Egyptian Monotheism*, translated by E. A. W. Budge (London: Martin Hopkinson & Company, 1923), pp. 129–35.

Assessment Questions

1. “Text structure” refers to the way paragraphs and longer texts are organized, with different structures serving different purposes. Here are three types of text structure:

- *Sequence Structure*: Steps or phases of a process are described, as in a recipe or procedure
- *Definition Structure*: A description of the nature of something, its parts, characteristics, purposes, effects, etc.
- *Proposition/Argument*: A claim is made and reasoning or evidence in support is presented, sometimes along with counter-arguments.

Of these text structures, choose the one you think most accurately describes the text structure of this document. Explain your choice.

2. In the words of one writer, hymns like this were “more than just poetry. They were sacred, religious communications.” What in this hymn helps to show what the writer means?

Assessment 5 *Advanced Level*

Akhenaten's Hymn to Aten

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 5. (9–10)** Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
- 5. (11–12)** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 5 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 5 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to pay attention to a text's "structure"—that is, to the overall pattern or organizational arrangement of its headings, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, and chapters as well as its various stylistic features. Students should see how structure is deliberately used to enable the text to achieve certain goals. Such formal elements can contribute to a text's meanings in many ways. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand the impact of the way one historical primary source is structured to present its information.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question may vary. All should see that the hymn does consist of a description of Aten and his great works in creating the world, providing the benefits of life to all, and giving Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti a unique role in knowing him and explaining him to the world. Some may feel the term "definition structure" does not fully convey the text pattern of a sacred hymn like this. Its effusive praise and the awe and mystery it expresses regarding Aten's supreme power could be seen as more celebratory than definitional. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should note that the last part of the passage is more about Akhenaten than it is about Aten. It depicts Akhenaten as the "son" of Aten, saying "there is no other who knows you." In this passage, some historians see Akhenaten claiming to be the sole source of religious insight on whom all Egypt must depend. Whether they are right or not, this part of the hymn does seem to have a different focus from a hymn of praise.

Akhenaten's Hymn to Aten

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 5: (9–10) Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis. **(11–12)** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

A Primary Source Document

One God, like whom there is no other. You did create the earth by your heart . . . , you alone existing, men and women, cattle, beasts of every kind that are upon the earth, [and] that move upon . . . legs, all the creatures that are in the sky and that fly with their wings, and the deserts of Syria and [Nubia], and the Land of Egypt.

You set every person in his place. You provide their daily food, every man having the portion allotted to him, you . . . compute the duration of his life. . . .

You make [the Nile] in the [Underworld], you bring it when you wish to make mortals to live, inasmuch as you have made them for yourself, their Lord who does support them to the uttermost, O you Lord of every land, you shine upon them, O ATEN of the day, you great one of majesty. . . .

You are in my heart. There is no other who knows you except your son Nefer-kheperu-Rā Uā-en-Rā [Pharaoh Akhenaten]. You have made him wise to understand your plans and your power. . . . You have raised up your son who came forth from your body, the King of the South and the North, Living in Truth, Lord of Crowns, [Akhenaten], great in the duration of his life, [and for] the Royal Wife, great of majesty, Lady of the Two Lands, Nefer-neferu-Aten Nefertiti, living [and] young forever and ever.

Source Information: This is part of “The Great Hymn to the Aten,” found in the tomb of a high official. It may have been written by Pharaoh Akhenaten in the mid-1300s BCE. Akhenaten made a radical break with Egyptian religious tradition by placing all creative power in the god Aten, the disk of the sun. The sun had always played a key role in Egyptian religion, but Akhenaten made Aten the sole god. For example, this hymn does not mention the other Egyptian gods who helped the sun travel across the sky and back through the underworld each day. Some see Akhenaten as an early monotheist and an idealist. However, others see him as a tyrant who claimed that Aten only revealed himself to Akhenaten. These parts of the hymn are adapted from *Tutankhamen: Amenism, Atenism and Egyptian Monotheism*, translated by E. A. W. Budge (London: Martin Hopkinson & Company, 1923), pp. 129–35.

Assessment Questions

1. This text seems to have a simple definition structure—a structure that describes the nature or characteristics of something. Do you think this adequately defines this text’s structure? Why or why not?
2. One historian says, “This hymn is directed at Aten, but it is not only about Aten.” Explain what this historian means and what aspects of the hymn led him to this view.

Assessment 6 *Basic Level*

The Battle of Kadesh

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 6. (6–8)** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 6 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 6 for grades 6–8. It asks students to note a text’s point of view as expressed by looking closely at details in the text itself. These details may take the form of emotional language, distorted or exaggerated descriptions, stereotyped labeling, etc. However, even a text with a neutral tone may express bias or point of view by selectively emphasizing some facts while omitting others. Therefore, students also need to go outside the text to interpret point of view by considering sourcing information such as the author’s background, purpose, and audience. In addition, students need to see that when sources express conflicting points of view they may still be reliable in certain ways—for example, by what they share in common or by backing up their claims with solid evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that Ramses II explains the success as entirely due to his own efforts, after his god Ammon spoke to and inspired him. He depicts his charioteer as terrified and set to flee, whereas he alone charges ahead and turns the battle around. The details in the passage all attest to his courage and ferocity. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question should note that Wilson simply asserts that the battle was a setback; he does not go into details about it. He says Ramses II acted courageously but was a poor general and only prevented a complete rout. His main point is that Ramses distorted the outcome in an effort to build up his image as a great warrior and leader. Wilson calls this “blatant advertising” to cover up failure. Moreover, he suggests that in doing this, Ramses was using a “recognized literary form” the pharaohs used to depict themselves as “divine kings” who could do no wrong.

The Battle of Kadesh

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand these documents as historical primary sources, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Document 1: A Primary Source

Then my voice it found an echo. . . .
Ammon heard it, and he came at my call;
And for joy I gave a shout.
From behind, his voice cried out,
“I have hastened to you, Ramses Miamun,
Behold! I stand with you,
Behold! . . . I am he,
Your own father, the great god Ra, the sun. . . .

When my . . . charioteer beheld in his dismay,
How the horses swarmed around us, lo! his courage fled away,
And terror and affright
Took possession of him quite;
And straightway he cried out to me, and said,

“Gracious lord and bravest king, savior-guard, . . .
Oh! protect us, Ramses Miamun!
Oh! save us, mighty King!”

Then the King spoke to his squire,
“Halt! take courage, charioteer,
As a sparrow-hawk swoops down upon his prey,
So I swoop upon the foe, and I will slay,
I will hew them into pieces, I will dash them into dust;
Have no fear,
Cast such evil thought away,
These godless men are wretches that in Ammon put no trust.”
Then the king, he hurried forward, on the Hittite host he flew, . . .
“Like Baal in his strength, on their rearward, lo! I fell,
And I killed them, none escaped me, and I slew, and slew, and slew.”

Source Information: The Battle of Kadesh took place in 1274 BCE in what is today the nation of Syria. In this battle, Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II led his army against the Hittite Empire, which was located in what is now Turkey. The clash involved thousands of horse-drawn chariots and foot soldiers. Ramses II inscribed his account of the battle on the walls of five temples. This passage is a modern translation of part of Ramses II's account. The "Ammon" mentioned in it was Egypt's central creator deity. This passage is adapted from *Egypt, Africa, and Arabia*, translated by W. K. Flinders Petrie, vol. 3 of *The World's Story: A History of the World in Story, Song and Art*, edited by Eva March Tappan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), p. 154–62.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

The myth of the divine king as the one and only incarnation of the state had produced a recognized literary form by which observed fact was rendered into a different kind of truth, the sincere and devout affirmation of the centrality of pharaoh. . . . [Ramses II] distorts a setback into a stunning triumph. It is all too clear that he was a stupid and culpably inefficient general and that he failed to gain his objectives at Kadesh. It must also be true that he was personally courageous and that he succeeded in re-forming his army and leading it back to Egypt in good order. We may sympathize with the desire to assert a moral victory out of these small triumphs, snatched from the jaws of utter rout. The fact remains that the arrogant bellowing of victory . . . [is] similar to the bloated bulk of Ramses II's monuments or to his shameless appropriation of the monuments of his ancestors. Blatant advertising was used to cover up the failure to attain past glories.

Source Information: In the battle of Kadesh, the Hittites surprised Ramses II's army and attacked it when it was still spread out along its line of march near Kadesh. The Egyptians were able to recover, but most historians think the battle was a draw. No one won a decisive victory. In this passage, John Wilson comments on Ramses II's account of the battle inscribed on several monuments throughout Egypt. (Document 1 is a part of that account.) This passage is from *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* by John A. Wilson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 247.

Assessment Questions

1. In Document 1, Ramses II claims the Battle of Kadesh was a huge success. How does he explain the success and his own role in achieving it? Cite specific details to support your answer.
2. John Wilson (Document 2) is harsh in his criticism of Ramses II's account of the battle. Why does he think Ramses II distorted its outcome as he did?

Assessment 6 *Advanced Level*

The Battle of Kadesh

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 6. (9–10) Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- 6. (11–12) Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 6 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 6 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to note a text's point of view as expressed by looking closely at details in the text itself. These details may take the form of emotional language, distorted or exaggerated descriptions, stereotyped labeling, etc. However, even a text with a neutral tone may express bias or point of view by selectively emphasizing some facts while omitting others. Therefore, students also need to go outside the text to interpret point of view by considering sourcing information such as the author's background, purpose, and audience. In addition, students need to see that when sources express conflicting points of view they may still be reliable in certain ways—for example, by what they share in common or by backing up their claims with solid evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that Ramses II explains his army's success in the battle as being due to his own efforts, but these efforts he was only able to achieve after his god Ammon spoke to and inspired him. Making this point is the purpose of the entire first stanza. The second stanza depicts his charioteer as terrified, which sets up a contrast with the third stanza in which Ramses claims to turn the battle around all by his own courage and ferocity—though he again reminds us that courage comes from Ammon. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question may vary. Some may criticize Wilson for not presenting evidence that the battle was a setback. We have to take him at his word about that. Wilson also uses harsh language in criticizing Ramses. Some might consider this biased. However, others may accept that Wilson is basing his judgment on what other historians have already shown about the battle. As to his rhetoric, Wilson does agree that Ramses II acted courageously though he was a poor general who only staved off a complete rout. Wilson's main point is that Ramses distorted the outcome by using a "recognized literary form" meant to depict the Egyptian pharaoh as a "divine king" who could do no wrong. Wilson's strong criticism could be seen as a way to emphasize the propaganda value of this literary form for the pharaohs who used it.

The Battle of Kadesh

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand these documents as historical primary sources, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 6: (9–10) Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts. **(11–12)** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Document 1: A Primary Source

Then my voice it found an echo. . . .
Ammon heard it, and he came at my call;
And for joy I gave a shout.
From behind, his voice cried out,
“I have hastened to you, Ramses Miamun,
Behold! I stand with you,
Behold! . . . I am he,
Your own father, the great god Ra, the sun. . . .

When my . . . charioteer beheld in his dismay,
How the horses swarmed around us, lo! his courage fled away,
And terror and affright
Took possession of him quite;
And straightway he cried out to me, and said,

“Gracious lord and bravest king, savior-guard, . . .
Oh! protect us, Ramses Miamun!
Oh! save us, mighty King!”

Then the King spoke to his squire,
“Halt! take courage, charioteer,
As a sparrow-hawk swoops down upon his prey,
So I swoop upon the foe, and I will slay,
I will hew them into pieces, I will dash them into dust;
Have no fear,
Cast such evil thought away,
These godless men are wretches that in Ammon put no trust.”
Then the king, he hurried forward, on the Hittite host he flew, . . .
“Like Baal in his strength, on their rearward, lo! I fell,
And I killed them, none escaped me, and I slew, and slew, and slew.”

Source Information: The Battle of Kadesh took place in 1274 BCE in what is today the nation of Syria. In this battle, Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II led his army against the Hittite Empire, which was located in what is now Turkey. The clash involved thousands of horse-drawn chariots and foot soldiers. Ramses II inscribed his account of the battle on the walls of five temples. This passage is a modern translation of part of Ramses II's account. The "Ammon" mentioned in it was Egypt's central creator deity. This passage is adapted from *Egypt, Africa, and Arabia*, translated by W. K. Flinders Petrie, vol. 3 of *The World's Story: A History of the World in Story, Song and Art*, edited by Eva March Tappan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), p. 154–62.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

The myth of the divine king as the one and only incarnation of the state had produced a recognized literary form by which observed fact was rendered into a different kind of truth, the sincere and devout affirmation of the centrality of pharaoh. . . . [Ramses II] distorts a setback into a stunning triumph. It is all too clear that he was a stupid and culpably inefficient general and that he failed to gain his objectives at Kadesh. It must also be true that he was personally courageous and that he succeeded in re-forming his army and leading it back to Egypt in good order. We may sympathize with the desire to assert a moral victory out of these small triumphs, snatched from the jaws of utter rout. The fact remains that the arrogant bellowing of victory . . . [is] similar to the bloated bulk of Ramses II's monuments or to his shameless appropriation of the monuments of his ancestors. Blatant advertising was used to cover up the failure to attain past glories.

Source Information: In the battle of Kadesh, the Hittites surprised Ramses II's army and attacked it when it was still spread out along its line of march near Kadesh. The Egyptians were able to recover, but most historians think the battle was a draw. No one won a decisive victory. In this passage, John Wilson comments on Ramses II's account of the battle inscribed on several monuments throughout Egypt. (Document 1 is a part of that account.) This passage is from *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* by John A. Wilson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 247.

Assessment Questions

1. In Document 1, what does Ramses II claim he did in the Battle of Kadesh, and what does he suggest enabled him to do it? Cite specific details to support your answer.
2. John Wilson (Document 2) is harsh in his criticism of Ramses II's account of the Battle of Kadesh. Do you think his criticism is fair? Why or why not?

Assessment 7 *Basic Level*

Geography and Ancient Egypt

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (6–8)** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 6–8. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in several primary sources presented in a variety of visual and textual formats.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the assessment question should see that Document 1 does offer evidence of Egypt's long-lasting stability. It lists very long eras of unity with much shorter intermediate eras when Egypt was not united and stable. However, the document does not offer evidence of the role played by geography or another factor in explaining that stability. Documents 2 and 3 together do offer such evidence. Document 2 indicates several geographic factors making for long-term stability and unity—the regular floods that kept land fertile and made it possible to support a large population; the ease of travel up and down the river, which helped unify the country; and the protective desert on either side that helped to shield Egypt from outside attacks. Document 3 confirms these points visually by conveying a sense of how green and fertile the Nile valley and delta were and how vast the desert stretches were that kept Egypt isolated and safe.

Geography and Ancient Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer one question on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

CCS Standard 7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Document 1: A Secondary Source

Time Line of Egyptian History	
2950–2575 BCE	Early Dynastic Period: <i>Egypt is unified for the first time</i>
2575–2150 BCE	Old Kingdom: <i>The largest pyramids are built</i>
2150–1975 BCE	First Intermediate Period: <i>A time of disunity</i>
1975–1640 BCE	Middle Kingdom: <i>Egypt is reunified.</i>
1640–1540 BCE	Second Intermediate Period: <i>A time of disunity and invasion by outsiders</i>
1540–1075 BCE	New Kingdom: <i>Egypt is reunified. Pharaohs build tombs into the Valley of Kings mountainside</i>
1075–715 BCE	Third Intermediate Period

Source Information: This time line of Egyptian history (the dates are approximate) shows the long periods when a unified state existed (the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms) and intermediate times when ancient Egypt was not united. The time line was adapted from the table in *The Human Past: World Prehistory & the Development of Human Societies*, edited by Chris Scarre (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), p. 371.

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Document 2: A Secondary Source

The Nile River was the central geographic feature of ancient Egypt. It was along this river that this civilization grew up over 5,000 years ago. Among large rivers, the Nile was unusual. Its annual flood occurred in a very regular way that actually made life pleasant for people living along the river. Each year, the Nile flood came right on time and left behind a new layer of rich soil. This soil meant the same lands would not wear out even as it was farmed regularly over many centuries. A huge surplus of grain, livestock, and other basic goods could be produced. This helped to make ancient Egypt a relatively safe, comfortable land.

On either side of the huge river, the fertile lands suddenly turn to desert. In some places, this change is so sudden that a person can place one foot on fertile soil and the other on the barren desert sands. As a result, the rich farmland along the river supported many villages and cities, while the deserts on either side acted as a natural barrier, protecting Egypt against attacks from enemies. The compactness of agricultural settlement and the ease of travel up and down the river also made a unified state easier to build and maintain. Times of division and instability did occur, but much longer eras of unity under the pharaoh and his administrators were the norm.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source exploring some reasons for the comfortable and stable order that so often existed in ancient Egypt. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Document 3: A Visual Primary Source



Photo source: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Source Information: A NASA satellite photo showing the rich, green fertile land along the Nile and in its delta, as well as the dry, relatively unsettled desert regions around it.

Assessment Question

1. “Egypt was a long-lasting and relatively stable society, in large part because of its geography.” Do *all three* of these sources offer evidence in support of this statement? Why or why not?

Assessment 7 *Advanced Level*

Geography and Ancient Egypt

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10)** Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the assessment question should see that Document 1 offers evidence of Egypt's long-lasting stability, indicating very long eras of unity interspersed with much shorter intermediate eras when Egypt was divided. Document 2 focuses on several geographic factors making for long-term stability and unity in Egypt—the regular floods that kept land fertile and made it possible to support a large population; the ease of travel up and down the river, which helped unify the country; and the protective desert on either side that helped to shield Egypt from outside attacks. Document 3 confirms these points visually by conveying a sense of how green and fertile the Nile Valley and delta were and how vast the desert stretches were that kept Egypt isolated and safe. Therefore, any thesis statement using all three of these sources should make some claim about the relationship of Egypt's long and relatively stable past with the geographical factors that contributed to that long-term stability.

Geography and Ancient Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer one question focused on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Document 1: A Secondary Source

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1075–715 BCE	Third Intermediate Period

Source Information: This time line of Egyptian history (the dates are approximate) shows the long periods when a unified state existed (the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms) and intermediate times when ancient Egypt was not united. The time line was adapted from the table in *The Human Past: World Prehistory & the Development of Human Societies*, edited by Chris Scarre (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), p. 371.

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Document 2: A Secondary Source

The Nile River was the central geographic feature of ancient Egypt. It was along this river that this civilization grew up over 5,000 years ago. Among large rivers, the Nile was unusual. Its annual flood occurred in a very regular way that actually made life pleasant for people living along the river. Each year, the Nile flood came right on time and left behind a new layer of rich soil. This soil meant the same lands would not wear out even as it was farmed regularly over many centuries. A huge surplus of grain, livestock, and other basic goods could be produced. This helped to make ancient Egypt a relatively safe, comfortable land.

On either side of the huge river, the fertile lands suddenly turn to desert. In some places, this change is so sudden that a person can place one foot on fertile soil and the other on the barren desert sands. As a result, the rich farmland along the river supported many villages and cities, while the deserts on either side acted as a natural barrier, protecting Egypt against attacks from enemies. The compactness of agricultural settlement and the ease of travel up and down the river also made a unified state easier to build and maintain. Times of division and instability did occur, but much longer eras of unity under the pharaoh and his administrators were the norm.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source exploring some reasons for the comfortable and stable order that so often existed in ancient Egypt. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Document 3: A Secondary Source



Photo source: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Source Information: A NASA satellite photo showing the rich, green fertile land along the Nile and in its delta, as well as the dry, relatively unsettled desert regions around it.

Assessment Question

1. Construct a thesis statement or claim about Egypt that could be supported by evidence from *all three* of these sources. Explain how the sources support the statement you come up with.

Assessment 8 *Basic Level*

The State in Ancient Egypt

 *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

8. (6–8) Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

 *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 8 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 8 for grades 6–8. It asks students to pay attention to the way a text reasons about its factual claims and to distinguish between these and expressions of opinion. This could mean paying close attention to the factual evidence offered or to the reasoning process and logic used to support a claim—as well as an ability to distinguish these from the text's biases or expressions of opinion. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand a text in these ways.

 *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Responses to the first assessment question should note that the document focuses on a single economic-political process. Its claim is that over time, more and more land came under the control of a growing number of administrators, priests, and other officials. As these lands became hereditary, the “resources at the ruler’s disposal were gradually reduced” and he slowly lost power. Responses to the second assessment question will vary. Some may find the argument convincing. It seems quite logical. However, others may wonder why the powerful pharaohs could not reverse the trend the passage described. For example, why could the pharaohs not find ways to reward their growing army of administrators so as to keep them dependent on the pharaoh? Many other questions could be asked about this topic, and these should be discussed thoroughly.

The State in Ancient Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

A Secondary Source Document

Ancient Egypt developed a powerful state under the pharaohs. That state was made up of thousands of officials who managed many aspects of life. According to Professor Graham Connah, it took thousands of “officials, workmen, artisans, artists, surveyors, architects, scribes, managers and others” to raise taxes, manage armies, and carry out building projects. Connah describes how this huge governing system grew and changed:

This administrative machine was initially controlled by the ruler, who appointed members of his own family to its highest positions; the incumbents of these positions were also, in many cases, members of the priesthood. In a non-monetary economy, reward for their services consisted of the granting of royal estates and their produce, in theory until the official’s term of office expired. However, the ruler’s control over such appointments weakened as time went on, and their possession, along with the estates, tended to become hereditary.

According to Connah, more and more officials and aristocrats demanded tombs and other ritual centers to help ease their paths into the afterlife. These required constant upkeep. Regular ritual ceremonies had to be performed in them. To afford all this, ever more land was granted to the growing numbers of administrators, high officials, and priests. Often these lands became hereditary, to be passed on within a family forever. Connah sums up the effect of this as follows:

In a situation where productive land was limited but formed the basis of the economy, it was inevitable that the resources at the ruler’s disposal were gradually reduced and his power consequently weakened, as that of high officials and the priesthood increased.

Egypt went through long cycles in which the pharaohs were very powerful for a few centuries and then slowly lost power. An “intermediate” period of disorder and disunity would follow. Then Egypt would unite again and start the cycle over again. In Connah’s view, the very forces that caused the growth of Egypt’s powerful state may also, over time, have weakened the power of its pharaohs as rulers.

Source Information: This is a secondary source document about the way ancient Egypt’s government grew and changed over time. The document was written in 2014 specifically for use in this activity. It summarizes and quotes the views of Professor Graham Connah in a passage from his “Holocene Africa,” chapter 10 in *The Human Past: World Prehistory & the Development of Human Societies*, edited by Chris Scarre (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), p. 374. The actual passage summarized here is reproduced as-is for the *advanced level* of this assessment.

Assessment Questions

1. Egypt went through times of unity under strong pharaohs followed by times when the pharaohs slowly lost power and Egypt fell into disunity. How does this document help explain why that happened?
2. Does the document prove the claim it makes, or does it merely make the claim sound reasonable? Explain your answer.

Assessment 8 *Advanced Level*

The State in Ancient Egypt

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 8. (9–10)** Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.
- 8. (11–12)** Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 8 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 8 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to pay attention to the way a text backs up or seeks to explain its factual claims. This could mean paying close attention to the factual evidence offered in the text as compared with expressions of opinion. Or it could mean attention to the reasoning process and logic used to support a claim. It may also require students to examine underlying assumptions and bias in order to see how they shape or distort the reasoning process presented by the text. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand a text in these ways.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Responses to the first assessment question should note that Connah seeks to explain why the power of the pharaohs seemed to erode over long periods of time. He focuses his explanation on a single economic-political process. His claim is that over time, more and more land came under the hereditary control of the growing number of administrators, priests, and other officials. As the pharaoh's hold over these lands and their resources slipped, he slowly lost political power as well. Some may find Connah's argument convincing. It seems quite logical. However, others may wonder why the powerful pharaohs could not reverse the trend Connah describes, or why they could not find ways to reward their growing army of administrators so as to keep them dependent on the pharaoh. Responses to the second assessment question will vary. Many other factors could help explain Egypt's cycles of unity and disunity. Climate change or other environmental problems might at times have undermined stable economic life in Egypt. Outside military threats could have emerged at times. Technological shifts, such as from bronze to iron production, could have altered the power balances in the region. These and other suggestions should all be discussed.

The State in Ancient Egypt

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 8: (9–10) Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims. **(11–12)** Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

A Secondary Source Document

It is apparent that a well-organized system of taxation existed, mainly in the form of agricultural products, other raw materials, and labor. To acquire these resources and make use of them in major state projects required the involvement of a host of government officials, workmen, artisans, artists, surveyors, architects, scribes, managers and others. . . .

This administrative machine was initially controlled by the ruler, who appointed members of his own family to its highest positions; the incumbents of these positions were also, in many cases, members of the priesthood. In a non-monetary economy, reward for their services consisted of the granting of royal estates and their produce, in theory until the official’s term of office expired. However, the ruler’s control over such appointments weakened as time went on, and their possession, along with the estates, tended to become hereditary. The increasing number of mortuary and other ritual centers [for pharaohs and other top officials and aristocrats] needed support for the continuance of their associated ceremonies and for those who conducted them, support that was also often provided by the granting of estates or their produce, theoretically in perpetuity. In a situation where productive land was limited but formed the basis of the economy, it was inevitable that the resources at the ruler’s disposal were gradually reduced and his power consequently weakened, as that of high officials and the priesthood increased.

Source Information: In this passage, Graham Connah focuses on the way the powerful government of ancient Egypt grew and changed over time. The passage is from Connah’s “Holocene Africa,” chapter 10 in *The Human Past: World Prehistory & the Development of Human Societies*, edited by Chris Scarre (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), p. 374.

Assessment Questions

1. Connah presents a theory here seeking to explain a cyclical pattern in the Egyptian pharaohs' hold on power. Evaluate how effectively this passage explains that pattern.
2. What other factors might also help explain Egypt's cycles of unity and disunity? Explain your answer.

Assessment 9 *Basic Level*

The Democratization of the Afterlife

 *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

9. (6–8) Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

 *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 9 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 9 for grades 6–8. It asks students to understand the relationship between primary and secondary sources. This means students must know the difference between the two kinds of sources—that primary sources provide the evidence for secondary source claims and interpretations. This should lead them to adopt a critical approach to secondary sources themselves. That is, such secondary accounts should not be regarded as final and complete. They are interpretations of the past, not the past itself. Students should learn to weigh secondary source accounts against the relevant primary source evidence.

 *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the passage is talking about the ability of Egyptians to prepare their tombs so as to ease their path to the afterlife and make it more fulfilling. At first, only the pharaoh may have received this benefit. Over time, others did as well. The growing numbers able to prepare tombs properly is what is meant by the phrase “democratization of the afterlife.” Evidence for it mainly takes the form of the greater number of such tombs discovered from the Intermediate Period and later. Document 2 supports this idea in that Kyky was not a member of the royal family. His own words indicate he was a mid-level administrator, one without a powerful protector. Answers to the second assessment question should explain that the doubts have to do with the supposed lack of evidence of properly prepared tombs from before the Intermediate Period. The skeptical historians point out that this lack of evidence is not proof that no evidence ever existed. They say it is much harder to find such evidence since much more of it may have decayed or been lost.

The Democratization of the Afterlife

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document and one primary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 9: Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Document 1: A Secondary Source

The great pyramids were all built during the Old Kingdom (2625–2130 BCE). They were meant for Egypt’s pharaohs, its god kings, so they could thrive in the afterlife and still influence life in Egypt favorably. Egyptians at that time may have believed that only the pharaoh passed to the afterlife—though it is hard to know what popular beliefs really were held during the Old Kingdom.

During the Intermediate Period (2130–1980 BCE) that followed, there is more evidence of common people making preparations for life after death. Some historians call this shift the “democratization of the afterlife.” They mean to suggest that a growing number of people other than those in the royal family could prepare for a fully meaningful and satisfying afterlife. That is, they could take the necessary steps in preparing their tombs to ensure this happy outcome for themselves. For example, non-royal people who could afford to began to have spells like the “Coffin Texts” carved on their coffins and tombs. Along with these Coffin Texts, tombs might include spells written on the walls, furniture, and other goods for the dead person to use in the next life.

Not all historians accept this idea of a “democratization of the afterlife” in the Intermediate Period. The farther back in time we go in ancient Egyptian history, the harder it is to find evidence of properly prepared tombs. Yet these historians say there is at least some evidence that even in the Old Kingdom, non-royal tombs did include the spells needed to ensure a spiritual rebirth in the next life. It may be that at first these were mainly written on papyrus, not the wood of the coffin. In that case, the papyrus would much more easily have decayed, leaving no traces at all. As with so much else about ancient Egypt, this is a question that is not easily settled.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about the nature of Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Document 2: A Primary Source

Then, he meditated deeply within himself to find himself a protector. He found Mut ahead of the other gods; Shay and Rennehet [which could be interpreted as “fate” and “fortune”] are in her hand, as are the span of life and the breath of life, everything which occurs is under her control. . . .

I didn’t take a human protector, I did not attach myself to a man of power; not (even) if he had been my son. . . .

I rejoice at your strength, since you are greater than all gods; my heart is filled with my mistress.

I shall not fear mortals when I lie down. Since, when I have found sleep, I have a protector.

Source Information: Kyky was a civil servant when Ramses II ruled Egypt (reigned 1279–1213 BCE). Kyky was a man of intermediate rank in the aristocracy. He must have been special in some way since his tomb is among those of other nobles in western Thebes. However, he was not of the royal family. Kyky is identified as an official in charge of livestock for one of the temples at Karnak. Literate and educated, Kyky included his autobiography in his tomb. The passages here are from that autobiography. In it, Kyky mentions that his protector is Mut, a key Egyptian mother goddess. The passage was translated by Thierry Benderitter and appears online in “Kyky (Samut),” *Tombs of the Noblemen*, on the website Osirisnet.

Assessment Questions

1. Summarize briefly what Document 1 means by the phrase “democratization of the afterlife” and explain how Document 2 offers evidence to support this idea.
2. Using Document 1, explain why some historians have doubts as to whether there really was a democratization of the afterlife in ancient Egypt.

Assessment 9 *Advanced Level*

The Democratization of the Afterlife

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 9. (9–10)** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- 9. (11–12)** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 9 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 9 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to understand the relationship between primary and secondary sources. This means students must know the difference between the two kinds of sources—that primary sources provide the evidence for secondary source claims and interpretations. This should lead them to adopt a critical approach to secondary sources themselves. That is, such secondary accounts should not be regarded as final and complete. They are interpretations of the past, not the past itself. Students should learn to weigh secondary source accounts against the relevant primary source evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the passage is about the ability of Egyptians to prepare their tombs so as to ease their path to the afterlife and make it more fulfilling. At first, only the pharaoh may have received this benefit. Over time, others did as well. The growing numbers able to prepare tombs properly is what is meant by the phrase “democratization of the afterlife.” Evidence for it mainly takes the form of the greater number of such tombs discovered from the Intermediate Period than from earlier periods. Skeptics about a democratization of the afterlife say the lack of evidence of properly prepared tombs in the earliest eras is not proof that no evidence ever existed. They say it is much harder to find such evidence from those times, much of which may have decayed earlier. Answers to the second assessment question should see that Document 2 supports the idea of a “democratization of the afterlife” in that Kyky was not a member of the royal family. His own words indicate he was a mid-level administrator, one without a powerful protector. However, Kyky was a member of the aristocracy, not an ordinary Egyptian. Moreover, he was just one individual, and answers to this question should indicate that the question really demands evidence of a trend showing a growing number of individuals with access to fully equipped tombs, etc.

The Democratization of the Afterlife

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document and one primary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 9: (9–10) Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources. **(11–12)** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Document 1: A Secondary Source

The great pyramids were all built during the Old Kingdom (2625–2130 BCE). They were meant for Egypt’s pharaohs, its god kings, so they could thrive in the afterlife and still influence life in Egypt favorably. Egyptians at that time may have believed that only the pharaoh passed to the afterlife—though it is hard to know what popular beliefs really were held during the Old Kingdom.

During the Intermediate Period (2130–1980 BCE) that followed, there is more evidence of common people making preparations for life after death. Some historians call this shift the “democratization of the afterlife.” They mean to suggest that a growing number of people other than those in the royal family could prepare for a fully meaningful and satisfying afterlife. That is, they could take the necessary steps in preparing their tombs to ensure this happy outcome for themselves. For example, non-royal people who could afford to began to have spells like the “Coffin Texts” carved on their coffins and tombs. Along with these Coffin Texts, tombs might include spells written on the walls, furniture, and other goods for the dead person to use in the next life.

Not all historians accept this idea of a “democratization of the afterlife” in the Intermediate Period. The farther back in time we go in ancient Egyptian history, the harder it is to find evidence of properly prepared tombs. Yet these historians say there is at least some evidence that even in the Old Kingdom, non-royal tombs did include the spells needed to ensure a spiritual rebirth in the next life. It may be that at first these were mainly written on papyrus, not the wood of the coffin. In that case, the papyrus would much more easily have decayed, leaving no traces at all. As with so much else about ancient Egypt, this is a question that is not easily settled.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about the nature of Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Document 2: A Primary Source

Then, he meditated deeply within himself to find himself a protector. He found Mut ahead of the other gods; Shay and Rennehet [which could be interpreted as “fate” and “fortune”] are in her hand, as are the span of life and the breath of life, everything which occurs is under her control. . . .

I didn’t take a human protector, I did not attach myself to a man of power; not (even) if he had been my son. . . .

I rejoice at your strength, since you are greater than all gods; my heart is filled with my mistress.

I shall not fear mortals when I lie down. Since, when I have found sleep, I have a protector.

Source Information: Kyky was a civil servant when Ramses II ruled Egypt (reigned 1279–1213 BCE). Kyky was a man of intermediate rank in the aristocracy. He must have been special in some way since his tomb is among those of other nobles in western Thebes. However, he was not of the royal family. Kyky is identified as an official in charge of livestock for one of the temples at Karnak. Literate and educated, Kyky included his autobiography in his tomb. The passages here are from that autobiography. In it, Kyky mentions that his protector is Mut, a key Egyptian mother goddess. The passage was translated by Thierry Benderitter and appears online in “Kyky (Samut,” Tombs of the Noblement, on the website Osirisnet.

Assessment Questions

1. Explain the phrase “democratization of the afterlife” and assess the evidence offered in Document 1 both in support of and against the idea.
2. Do you think Document 2 offers enough evidence to show that there was a “democratization of the afterlife” later in Egyptian history? Why or why not?

Writing Assessment 1

Ancient Egypt

★ *The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing*

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

This standard is the basis for the corresponding No. 1 Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Writing Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing 1. The Anchor Standards are the basis on which the various Common Core History/Social Studies Standards are based. This assessment asks students to write an essay that makes meaningful claims and that develops those claims using relevant evidence and sound reasoning. The essay should make clear the strengths and limitations of the claims it makes while also considering possible challenges or counter claims.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to Writing Assessment 1*

- Essays for this assignment should be scored according to these criteria.
- How well does the essay state a claim addressing all elements of the prompt?
- Does the essay use evidence from all or most of the documents assigned for this task?
- Is the evidence explained effectively using careful reasoning and a logical flow of one idea to the next?
- Does the essay defend the claim in relation to any relevant alternative claims?
- Are ideas presented using precise language, effective transitions, and domain-specific vocabulary?
- Does the essay include an effective conclusion supporting its claims?
- How well does the essay follow rules of usage, spelling, and punctuation?

Ancient Egypt

The Standard: Write a brief essay that presents a well-reasoned argument focused on historical content.

The Question

Using your background history knowledge and the primary and secondary source documents listed here, explain why you do or do not agree with the following statement:

"Ancient Egypt was a tyrannical society, controlled by one all-powerful ruler. It never showed an ability to change or develop in any way at all."

Documents: Base your essay on your general background knowledge and all of the primary and secondary source documents in the *Egypt* assessments.

Instructions

- Write a brief, well-organized essay that includes an introduction, one to three internal paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Introduce a specific claim that you can defend in response to the question.
- Support your claim with an argument based on evidence from the documents and sound reasoning about that evidence.
- Consider other possible claims that may differ from your own.
- Include related outside information based on your background knowledge of history.
- Use transitions and a logical arrangement of ideas to connect all parts of your essay to the claim you are making.
- Write a conclusion that follows from the argument your essay has made.

Writing Assessment 2

Ancient Egypt

★ The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

This standard is the basis for the corresponding No. 2 Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Writing Assessment 2 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing 2. The Anchor Standards are the basis on which the various Common Core History/Social Studies Standards are based. This assessment asks students to write an essay that uses sources effectively to provide strong support and evidence clarifying and explaining a central idea or set of ideas and concepts.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to Writing Assessment 2

- Essays for this assignment should be scored according to these criteria.
- How well does the introduction address the prompt with a clear, well-defined central idea and a preview of supporting ideas?
- Does the essay use evidence from many of the documents assigned for this task?
- Is the evidence used effectively to support the essay's key ideas and concepts?
- Does the essay engage in careful reasoning and a logical flow of one idea to the next?
- Are ideas presented using precise language, effective transitions, and domain-specific vocabulary?
- Does the essay include an effective conclusion supporting its key ideas?
- How well does the essay follow rules of usage, spelling, and punctuation?

Ancient Egypt

The Standard: Write an informative/explanatory essay clearly describing and explaining historical events and trends.

The Question

Ancient Egypt was an amazingly stable and long-lasting civilization. Why was it so much more stable than other complex societies around it? Your task is to write an essay offering your own explanation for why Egypt was so stable. Develop your own thesis statement or claim about this. Then choose four sources from this set of assessments that you feel best help support your thesis statement. In writing your essay, refer to these sources and use them to support your answer. Also pick one source from the set that does not seem to support your claim. In your essay also deal with this source and the challenge it presents to your own explanation of Egypt's stability.

Documents: Base your essay on your general background knowledge and on your selection of sources from all the primary and secondary source documents in the Egypt assessments.

Instructions

- Write a brief, well-organized essay that includes an introduction, one to three internal paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Introduce the topic with a clear, well-defined central idea, and preview in a general way other key ideas your essay will develop.
- Support each of your key ideas with evidence from many of the documents and with sound reasoning about that evidence.
- Include related outside information based on your background knowledge of history.
- Use transitions and a logical arrangement of ideas to connect the major parts of your essay.
- Write a conclusion that follows from and summarizes the main points your essay has made.

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