

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

- ❑ If you are looking for a fun way to begin the year, you might allow your student to pair up with a younger sibling or classmate (or with you!) and share his favorite thing that he has learned so far about Egyptian culture and stories.
- ❑ If you have not done so already, please read “Teaching Literature Studies for Young Adults” in your program materials. This document explains each component of the following class plan and gives many ideas about how to use them.
- ❑ NOTE: All this year, you will find our sample student answers in *italics*, below the original questions. When we have extra comments that you might wish to share, these will appear with the sample answers in unitalicized text.

Summary of “The Golden Lotus” (p. 77-83)

Pharaoh Seneferu is bored. He asks his Chief Magician, Zazamankh, to show him something new. The magician suggests that Pharaoh should go out for a pleasure cruise on the river, with maidens as rowers (instead of the usual male rowers). Pharaoh takes this advice and finds his heart lifted as he watches the beautiful girls, but then the precious golden lotus ornament falls from the head of one maiden and goes to the bottom of the Nile. She weeps and will not be comforted. Pharaoh calls for the magician, who causes the river to part so that the boat comes to rest on the bottom. The girl is overjoyed to get back her golden lotus, and Pharaoh is pleased with the wonder of the parted Nile.

Summary of “The Girl with the Rose-Red Slippers” (p. 213-218)

A beautiful fair-skinned Greek slave girl named Rhodopis is bought and adopted by a wealthy Greek merchant named Charaxos, who is living in Egypt. He gives her a pair of rose-red slippers. One day, an eagle snatches one of the beautiful girl’s slippers and carries it away to the palace of Pharaoh Amasis. When the slipper is dropped into his lap from the sky, Pharaoh is so amazed by this sign from a bird sacred to the god Horus that he declares he will marry the slipper’s owner. A search is made and the girl is found. The slipper fits her perfectly and she has its mate, so she is brought to Pharaoh. When the girl is brought to Pharaoh, he finds her so beautiful that he not only marries her but makes her his Queen instead of just one of his many wives. (This is possibly the first version of the Cinderella story!)

Summary of “Khnemu of the Nile” (p. 43-51)

Zoser, a Pharaoh of early Egyptian times, truly believed that he was a god. With the help of his friend and advisor, Imhotep (the first great Egyptian architect), Zoser had the first pyramid built to glorify himself. But this turned out to be a mistake, because Zoser neglected the worship of the gods and the building of their temples while he was busy with his pyramid. Khnemu, god of the Nile, decided to keep the river from flooding for seven years in order to punish Zoser. Without the rich flood mud, there was a famine. Zoser consulted Imhotep, who went to Thebes to inquire of the gods and learned of Khnemu. Imhotep explained to Zoser that he and Egypt had neglected the worship of Khnemu for too long. Then Khnemu himself appeared to Zoser in a vision and commanded that a temple be built on his sacred island of Elephantinē to appease and honor him. Pharaoh Zoser traveled to the island, where he decreed the building of a new temple, richer than any other, and appointed Imhotep to design it. That year, the flood rose and caused a rich harvest, and ever afterwards the Egyptians believe that they must take care to honor Khnemu, god of the Nile.

Answers to Worksheet

Check your student’s answers for the following questions about story of “The Golden Lotus”:

- ❑ For the story of “The Golden Lotus,” the author chooses a Pharaoh who wants something “new.” Who makes a suggestion to fulfill Pharaoh’s wish?
His chief advisor, a magician
- ❑ What two “new” things does the author choose for the magician to suggest or show Pharaoh in this story?
 - ❑ *Singing girls dressed in golden net-dresses rowing at the oars, instead of the usual male oarsmen*
 - ❑ *The parting of the Nile River, so that the boat comes to rest on the river bottom*
- ❑ Which of these two “new” things is arranged to happen first? Which is more unusual than the other?
 - ❑ *The author arranges his story so that the “new thing” of the singing girls come first.*
 - ❑ *The first “new” thing, the singing girls at the oars, makes Pharaoh very happy at first. But then a golden lotus hair ornament falls overboard, causing one of the singers to become sad. This gives the magician an opportunity to display a still greater wonder to Pharaoh: he parts the Nile to recover the lost ornament.*
- ❑ Do you think it was a good idea to arrange the story this way, with the second new thing more surprising than the first? If so, why?

Answers will vary. Typically: “Yes, because I like to see it get more and more interesting as the story goes along.”

- ❑ This is a story of wonders, meant mostly to be pleasing and interesting. Did the people, things, and events that the author chose, and the way he arranged them, please and interest you?
Hopefully the answer is yes!

Discussion Topics

1. Artistry means that a writer chooses materials such as people, places, and events, then arranges them to fulfill the author’s purposes. One of the most common purposes is to make something that is pretty or interesting. Another is to show something that the author believes is important or meaningful. For the story “Khnemu of the Nile,” your student was instructed to name the things the writer has picked out, how he has arranged them, and for what purpose(s). Review and correct his answer with him, using the following sample answers. (Student Question #2)
 - ❑ Choice:
 - ❑ *The writer chooses people like the proud Pharaoh Zoser, his friend Imhotep, the Nile, the god of the Nile (Khnemu), and the god of wisdom (Thoth).*
 - ❑ *He also chooses places, such as an island called Elephantine, a pyramid, and the land and people of Egypt.*
 - ❑ *The writer also picks out events, like Zoser’s building of the pyramid to glorify himself, the seven years’ famine, Imhotep’s trip to the temple of Thoth to find out which god Zoser should appeal to for help, Zoser’s meeting with Khnemu, Zoser’s repentance and trip to the island of Elephantine, his building of a temple there to Khnemu, and Khnemu blessing Egypt with an inundation of the Nile.*
 - ❑ Arrangement: *The writer arranges his events so that the pyramid-building and the consequences of Zoser’s pride (the famine) come first, followed by Zoser’s encounter with Khnemu and then Zoser’s repentance and trip to Elephantine to honor Khnemu properly. Finally, there is the blessing that comes from Khnemu.*
 - ❑ Results:
 - ❑ *The writer’s choice and arrangement is pretty in that the first half of the story is building a monument (the pyramid) and then visiting a god (Imhotep going to see Thoth), while the second half of the story is the same thing in reverse: first Zoser visits a god (Khnemu) in a dream, and then he builds a monument (the temple to Khnemu on Elephantine).*
 - ❑ *The arrangement of events helps to tell the reader what the writer thinks is important, which is that a pharaoh must be careful not to neglect the worship of the gods while in pursuit of his own glory!*
2. Based on the explanation and example of Content as a literary analysis category, which you read about this week in the Literary Toolbox, you were asked to try to write down the Topic and Theme(s) for “Khnemu of the Nile.” (Student Question #3)

NOTE: Answers for this story’s topic may vary, since “what a story is about” can be expressed as either a very brief description of who and what happens in it, or as a few words about the abstract ideas it addresses. Thus, if your student gave the substance of either answer below, he would be basically correct.

- ❑ Topic:
 - ❑ *This story is about Pharaoh Zoser and his bad choice to glorify himself by building a pyramid, which brought down the wrath of the gods on his people until he found a way to make the gods happy again.*
 - ❑ *Or, this story is about pride and humility, and about the powers of Pharaoh and of the gods.*
 - ❑ Theme(s):
 - ❑ *The Nile River is really controlled by a god, and it is valuable to keep this god happy and satisfied if the land of Egypt is to have water and crops for food.*
 - ❑ *Pharaohs should not be proud and glorify themselves so much that they neglect to worship the gods, who are even greater and more powerful.*
 - ❑ *When you have been proud, you must humble yourself and put right the wrong you did.*
3. In “Khnemu of the Nile” the author portrayed and interpreted the reality of the Nile River for you as ancient Egyptians would have seen it. To accomplish this, he chose people, places, things, events (Elements of Form) and arranged them into a story using words. According to the definition that you learned this week in the Literary Toolbox, is “Khnemu of the Nile” literature? (Student Question #4)
Answers will vary, but we believe that this story is literature.

4. Egyptians stories show some worldview beliefs that we would say are not only imaginary but false from a biblical perspective. Yet, they may also say show some beliefs that are true and helpful. You were asked some questions about falsehood and truth in the story “Khnemu of the Nile.” What were your thoughts? (Student Question #5)

NOTES: Here and throughout the rest of the year, please note that we have offered a greater variety of examples than your student should be expected to provide. See the footnote below for important details on this topic.¹ Also, please note that below for the first time you see one of those extra comments that you might wish to share, which appears with the italicized sample answers, but in unitalicized text. This comment is about Joseph, and your student should not be expected to have thought of it or given it as an answer, since it is outside of his reading.

- What are the false beliefs in “Khnemu of the Nile”?

False from a Biblical Perspective:

- The story is inaccurate in that it falsely describes gods named Khnemu and Thoth who rule over the Nile and over wisdom (whereas in fact God rules over both).*
 - A “god-man” quality is falsely given to Pharaoh Zoser. This is false because no man other than Jesus has ever been divine.*
 - The story holds up the practice of magic as a good and useful thing, which it is not.*
 - The story of Joseph in the Bible, which actually did happen, gives a true account of “seven years of famine” in the land of Egypt (Genesis 41). We don’t know whether the years of famine in this story are the same as those, but they could be. If so, then Pharaoh Zoser really owed his people’s rescue from famine to the God of the Bible and His helper, Joseph, not to a god named Khnemu and a helper named Imhotep.
- What, if anything, does this story say that is true and helpful?

True from a Biblical Perspective:

- When human beings glorify themselves and are proud, they get into trouble with God, because they are taking away the worship that belongs to Him and giving it to themselves.*
- When we have been proud, we must humble ourselves and repent, asking for forgiveness.*

5. From your readings in the Literary Toolbox, answer the following questions:

NOTE: Students were not given a pre-discussion question for this topic. Rather, this topic is an opportunity to check your student’s comprehension of part of his readings in the Literary Toolbox.

- According to the Literary Toolbox, why would we choose to *study* literature at all? Why not just read it and enjoy whatever we get?
 - Great stories have more to offer than we immediately see. Although we can “just read” literature and get a great deal out of it, we will almost always find more meaning and interest in it if we take time to study it.*
 - Also, it takes study to learn how to separate content from artistry, to discern whether content is true, and to see how artistry is being used to bring meaning through artistic form.*
- According to the Literary Toolbox, we have three specific goals for our literary studies. What are these goals, and why do we have them?

The three goals are: to understand, to evaluate, and to enjoy. Below are some of the reasons for these goals:

 - We want to understand what we are studying as well as we possibly can, in order to rightly respond to it and to comment on it with accuracy and good judgment. Understanding also helps us to enjoy literature more.*
 - After understanding what a literary work has to offer, we want to judge what value it has to us (the process of evaluating), so that we can approve everything which is good, and not approve what is bad.*
 - Because literature is artistic, studying it is never just about understanding. It is also about delight! As we understand a work of literature and evaluate it, we are better able to appreciate and enjoy what is beautiful and truthful in what we read, or disapprove of what is ugly or false.*

¹ As we explain in “Teaching Literature Studies for Young Adults,” we offer a variety of examples so that your student’s chosen example will be more likely to appear in the list. We also do it so that, in illustrating principles with examples, so that you can switch from one example to another if your student has trouble understanding the first one. However, we strongly urge that your student *not* be expected to provide as many examples as we list, nor necessarily examples that are as detailed and maturely expressed as those we list. Unless he was asked to find a specific number, one or two examples of any given literary concept from your student is fine, so long as they are substantially correct. Also, just as importantly, you should *never* feel obligated to review our whole list of examples with your student in class, unless you both have plenty of time and desire to do so!

6. You were asked questions about understanding, evaluating, and enjoying in relation to the story “Khnemu of the Nile”. What were your thoughts about these questions?” (Student Question #6)
- Did you notice that we took time this week to study and try to understand what is going on in the story, “Khnemu of the Nile,” and to evaluate its themes from a biblical perspective?
Answers will vary.
 - Did you enjoy “Khnemu of the Nile” more or less than the other stories that you read this week, because we took extra time to understand and evaluate it?
Answers will vary.

GLANCE INTO NEXT WEEK...**WEEK 2**

Activity Idea: Prepare a skit to reenact one of the Egyptian stories read so far. See the orange box at the head of your Week 2 Teacher’s Notes for more ideas about this activity.