

## INTRODUCTION TO THE WEEK

Ancient Egyptians had literature, including stories and poems, just as we do now. Did you know, for instance, that the Egyptians wrote an early version of the Cinderella story? Egyptian children grew up hearing and telling stories, and singing songs, just as you do.

But, compared to our own times, there were very few books in ancient Egypt. Most people in America can read, and we have many libraries. We also have bookstores both online and in our towns, as well as books at home. In Egypt, there was much less to read, and it was only a small group of people in the upper classes (some noblemen, priests, and professional writers called scribes) who did most of the reading *and* writing.

Why was it this way in ancient Egypt? Well, first of all, most people did not need to read or write in order to conduct their lives. They were laborers or servants on farms, building projects, or the Nile. Or, they worked in the homes of wealthy owners, the temples of priests, or the Pharaoh's palace. In these occupations, people simply did not need to know how to read or write. For most of these people, books were a far-off luxury!

Also, Egyptian writing was more complicated than English, so it took longer to learn. It also took longer to write (there were no keyboards!). Finally, things to read and things to write with were more scarce. They were harder to make and harder to keep in ancient Egypt. What the Egyptians used as paper had to be pounded out of papyrus reeds by hand, which was a long and tiring process!

Even though literacy was scarce in ancient Egypt, there are still many fascinating stories that have come down to us over thousands of years from that time. You will read several of these stories in the weeks ahead, and you will also begin to learn how to study literature. It's going to be an exciting ride, so jump on your camel and let's get started!

### Reading

Each week, this is where you will find reading assignments in a story, poem or play, literary supplements, and the Literary Toolbox. Literary Toolbox readings are assigned by section title, so you will need to look those up in the Literary Toolbox Table of Contents. You should read all sub-sections under the title you are assigned, unless told to read only specific selections.

- ❑ *Tales of Ancient Egypt*, by Roger Lancelyn Green (Week 1 of 3)
  - ❑ "Khnemu of the Nile," p. 42-49
  - ❑ "The Golden Lotus," p. 75-81
  - ❑ "The Girl with the Rose-red Slippers," p. 202-212
- ❑ From the Literary Toolbox
  - ❑ "Artistry and Literature," p. 6-7
  - ❑ "How Imaginative Literature Works," p. 14-17
  - ❑ "The Study of Literature," p. 17-22
  - ❑ The short introductory section under "Content," and continue to the end of the sub-section "Topic and Theme," p. 91



Excerpt from the *Book of the Dead*, taken from the Papyrus of Ani

**Worksheet**

The study of artistry means trying to find out what literary elements the author has chosen and arranged. It also means trying to understand what purpose the author wants to fulfill with his choices and arrangement, whether that is 1) to be pleasing or interesting, or 2) to show readers something that the writer thinks is important, or 3) both. Below is an example from one Egyptian story, “The Girl with the Rose-red Slippers”:

- Choice: What people, places, and things does the author choose for this story?
  - People: A beautiful slave girl, a rich merchant, and Pharaoh*
  - Places: Egypt, the merchant’s house, Pharaoh’s palace*
  - Things: The rose-red slippers, the eagle*
- Arrangement: How does the author arrange the things he has chosen?  
*The writer arranges the people, places, and things in his story around a chain of events. The rich merchant buys the little slave girl, adopts her, and gives her the rose-red slippers. Later, an eagle steals one slipper and carries it to Pharaoh’s palace, where it is taken as an omen that Pharaoh’s men must look for the person who owns the slipper. They find the beautiful girl and she becomes Pharaoh’s wife.*
- Purpose: This is a story that seems mostly just meant to be pleasing and interesting. Did you enjoy the way the author arranged these people, places, and things, that seem to have nothing to do with each other, into one story? Did you find it pleasant and interesting?  
*We certainly hope that you enjoyed the story, which is history’s first Cinderella-type tale!*

Now, answer the following questions for the story of “The Golden Lotus”:

- For this story, the author chooses a Pharaoh who wants something “new.” Who makes a suggestion to fulfill Pharaoh’s wish?
- What two “new” things does the author choose for the magician to suggest or show Pharaoh in this story?
  - 
  -
- Which of these two “new” things is arranged to happen first?
- Which is more unusual than the other?
- Do you think it was a good idea to arrange the story this way? If so, why?

### Preparation for Discussion

In most weeks, you may be required to fill out the worksheet section because it is good groundwork for your discussion preparation. In the rare weeks where you do not need to fill out the worksheet, you will see a note in the weekly introduction above the Readings section.

In the Preparation for Discussion section, you will find activities of two kinds: written exercises and thinking questions. The written exercises, obviously, require you to give your best written answers. Feel free to use an extra piece of paper or a computer document to write these out.

Your teacher may also require you to write answers to thinking questions, but mostly what is required for thinking questions is that you think about them, and maybe write a few notes to yourself about them so that you will remember your thoughts for class.

As you work on these activities now and throughout the year, remember that you should include direct quotes and page number references from the book as much as you can when writing answers. If you are just listing the characters or summarizing the plot for a story, then direct quotes and page numbers are unnecessary, but if you are giving an answer that comes from any one page or could be explained in the wording that the book itself uses, be sure to include those. This will teach you how to do work that is well-grounded in the text, and will also be useful for quick reference in class.

1. Written Exercise: Look at the example in the explanation of the term Artistry in the Literary Toolbox section. You may also look at the example at the top of the worksheet on the previous page. Then, try to fill out the following outline for “Khnemu of the Nile,” looking for the same things as you saw laid out in those examples:
  - Choice:
    - People:
    - Places:
    - Events:
  - Arrangement:
  - Results:
2. Written Exercise: Based on the explanation and example of Content as a literary analysis category, which you read about this week in the Literary Toolbox section, try to write down the Topic and Theme(s) for “Khnemu of the Nile”:
  - Topic:
  - Theme(s):
3. Thinking Question: 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 section, is “Khnemu of the Nile” literature?
4. Thinking Questions: Egyptians stories show some worldview beliefs that we would say are not only imaginary but false from a biblical perspective. Yet, they may also show some beliefs that are true and helpful.
  - What are the false beliefs in “Khnemu of the Nile”?
  - What, if anything, does this story say that is true and helpful?
5. Thinking Questions: This week you read in the Literary Toolbox section about our three big goals for literature studies: understanding, evaluating, and enjoying. You should be prepared to explain that reading to your teacher in class, but meanwhile, consider the following questions about those three big goals and the main Egyptian story that you worked on this week:
  - 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?
  - 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?



## INTRODUCTION TO THE WEEK

This week you will continue to read stories from ancient Egypt, and you will learn about the term “Genre,” which means a kind of literature. There are three main kinds of fictional literature: drama (play scripts), poems, and stories. So far you have only read stories, but did you know that stories can be written as poems (called “Narrative” Poems), and that ancient peoples wrote most of their stories in poetry?

In fact, each of the stories that you will read this week were originally poems, some of them quite beautiful. This week’s story of Sinuhe comes from an ancient Egyptian poem which was so marvelously well-written that people call its author, the “Egyptian Shakespeare.”

Why were these stories originally written as poems? In the Ancient World, where there were no televisions and few written things, a lot of stories were handed down as poetry so that they would be easier to memorize and more interesting to hear. People would recite them to each other for fun. The Egyptians who did know how to write were good at making poetry, and they used special literary tools to make their poems even more interesting. So, as you read this week, remember that these stories have been translated from Egyptian poetry into English prose!

### Readings

- ❑ *Tales of Ancient Egypt*, by Roger Lancelyn Green (Week 2 of 3)
  - ❑ “The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor,” p. 142-152
  - ❑ “The Adventures of Sinuhe,” p. 153-163
  - ❑ “The Peasant and the Workman,” p. 164-171
- ❑ From the Literary Toolbox
  - ❑ The short introductory section under “Frameworks,” p. 27
  - ❑ “Genres” through “The Story,” p. 28-30
  - ❑ The short introductory section under “Artistry,” to the end of “Pattern (Design),” p. 85-87
  - ❑ “Repetition,” p. 88-89



Excerpt from the *Book of the Dead* Depicting a Heart Being Weighed on a Scale

## Worksheet

1. Below is an example of the characters, plot, and setting in this week's "Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor." Write down what you think are the characters, plot, and setting for "The Peasant and the Workman":

"The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor"

- Characters: *The sailor, the serpent (who has a personality, even though he is not human), and the Grand Vizier.*
- Plot: *A sailor was shipwrecked on a magical desert island, where he met a great Serpent who was kind to him and foretold his return to Egypt. When the sailor gets home, he tells his tale to the Grand Vizier, who says it is a good story and gives the sailor what he wanted—permission to tell his story to Pharaoh.*
- Setting: *Ancient Egypt, the sea, and also a magical island.*

"The Peasant and the Workman"

- Characters:

- Plot:

- Setting:

2. This week, we aren't just looking for artistry but for these two specific *kinds* of artistry: repetition and pattern. There is one other example of repetition in "The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor," and one more example of pattern in "The Peasant and the Workman." Can you find them?

- Repetition in "The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor":

- Pattern in "The Peasant and the Workman":

**Preparation for Discussion**

3. Thinking Questions: One of the ideas that we see in each of these stories is the idea that the pharaoh is a god on earth. (This is said on p. 146, 157, and 161.)
  - If you were the pharaoh and all your life people told you that you were a god on earth, how would you react? Explain your thoughts.
  - Why do you think the Egyptians said this about the pharaoh?
4. Thinking Question: Pharaohs have a lot of work to do in ruling Egypt and caring for their people. They also have a lot of responsibility and are supposed to set a good example. From “The Peasant and the Workman,” what sort of virtues does the peasant praise in the Lord Stewart (and also in Pharaoh), and say are good?
5. Thinking Questions: In “The Peasant and the Workman” we saw what Egyptian people hoped and believed about Pharaoh. In “The Adventures of Sinuhe” we see another example of an Egyptian nobleman like the Lord Stewart, except that Sinuhe is a Royal Companion, a bodyguard of Egypt’s crown prince.
  - What are Sinuhe’s strengths and weaknesses, from an Egyptian point of view?
  - Do you think you would admire Sinuhe if you had known him? Why or why not?





## INTRODUCTION TO THE WEEK

Most religions in ancient times were polytheistic, meaning they believed in multiple gods. You might say that polytheism is a state of “mistaken divinity,” in which people believed in many gods with a variety of personalities (most of them much like human beings with superpowers) rather than in the One True God.

All Egyptian boys or girls, as well as those in ancient China, America, India, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome, could tell you stories about their people’s gods and goddesses. This is one reason why the ancient days of literature are sometimes called the “Theocratic Age.” *Theocratic* means “all about gods.”

People in that time were fascinated by and loved to write about who they believed their gods were, what they believed their gods had done, and how they believed they should behave towards their gods. Many of their stories are scary: the gods of the Ancient World were not especially nice characters, and most of them did not care much about mankind, except that they wanted humans to serve them. It sounds different from the God we worship, doesn’t it?

This week you will read about the Egyptian gods and some of their deeds. You will also read one story about how the Egyptians hoped to earn salvation for their souls by living good lives. As you go, you will be asked questions that will help you compare and contrast these gods with God. You may be surprised to see how different your life is from theirs, because you believe in Yahweh (who is real) and not in Ra (who is not real)!

### Readings

- Tales of Ancient Egypt*, by Roger Lancelyn Green (Week 3 of 3)
  - “Ra and His Children,” p. 3-25
  - “Horus the Avenger,” p. 26-41
  - “The Land of the Dead,” p. 118-126
- Literature Supplement (at the end of this week plan) about the Egyptian Worldview
- From the Literary Toolbox
  - “Worldviews and the Correspondence Theory of Truth” through “The Human Author’s Worldview,” p. 8-9
  - “Reality, Morality, and Values,” p. 91



A Woman Worships the God Ra

**Worksheet**

From the stories you read this week, compare Ra (the chief god of Egypt) with God. To do this, try to fill in the blank spaces in the following chart. Here's a hint: look at the boxes that have already been filled in as examples of the kinds of things you are trying to find, and look on the pages listed beside the empty boxes to help you!

THE NATURE OF RA	PAGE	GOD'S NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES
Ra is a life-giving creator and skilled craftsman, who speaks everything into existence.	3	God is the Creator, who gives life to all things that have it and spoke all creation into existence.
	3	Nowhere in Scripture do we read that God embodies Himself as the sun. The Bible says that "God is light," but He is not embodied as the sun.
Ra wishes to keep mankind alive even when they oppose him, mostly so that he will have subjects to serve him.	7	God has no need of mankind to serve Him, but He is gracious to mankind and loves man even though He needs nothing from us.
	4	There is no equal contest between evil and God, because God is far greater and more powerful than evil, so that He always triumphs over it without growing weary.
	4-16	God is all-powerful and all-knowing. He does not tolerate rivals but easily overcomes them. (Satan was never a real threat to Him.) He has all power to enforce His will. He needs nothing made by man, and judges all other "gods" without fear of being tricked or overcome.
	10	God doesn't play favorites and is self-sufficient, having no fear for His throne. He is also wrathful against injustice and evil, but never selfishly angry.
THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE GODS	PAGE	THE TRINITY
There are a number of different Egyptian gods, all created by Ra or descended from the gods he created: Geb, Nut, Shu, Hamarchis, Osiris, Isis, Horus, Set, Nephthys, Anubis, etc.	3, 10-11	God is One: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all literally the same God. There are no multiple gods and God did not create any other gods.
	10-42	There is never any fighting or disagreement between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Preparation for Discussion**

1. Written Exercise: In this week's Literature Supplement, you read about ancient Egyptian worldview beliefs. Write some examples of the Egyptian beliefs about morality and values from this week's stories. Include page numbers or other references.
2. Thinking Question: Can you imagine how confusing it would be to try to worship as many different gods as the Egyptians believed were real? What might that be like?
3. Thinking Questions: Consider the story about Ra and Sekhmet (p. 3-9), and the following questions:
  - If you were an Egyptian, how would you feel to know that Hathor, the goddess of love, is actually the same person as Sekhmet, a cruel and destroying goddess?
  - How might you feel if you knew that Ra, who is supposed to be your all-powerful creator, created Sekhmet and then couldn't control her?
  - How would you react if you knew that your god, Ra, who is supposed to be the savior of mankind, actually "saved" you from the slaughter of Sekhmet by giving her even greater power over you? Would you think that was "saving" you?
  - If Hathor/Sekhmet had power to control you as the goddess of love, would you be afraid to love anybody? Why or why not?
4. Written Exercise: Write out your best answers to the following questions about human sin and human salvation according to the Egyptian stories found in *Tales of Ancient Egypt*:
  - Look at the last paragraph on page 4 in *Tales of Ancient Egypt*. According to the Bible, how does evil come into the world? Why are people sinful? Is it the fault of mankind—or did evil just gradually creep into human hearts (Genesis 3)? Is the Egyptian view of sin different from a biblical one?
  - Go back to pages 6-7 in *Tales of Ancient Egypt* and look again at *why* Ra chose to save mankind. Was it because he loved them, or primarily for some other reason?
  - Is the Egyptian understanding of why their god saved them different from our understanding of why God saves us? (HINT: look up Acts 17:24-25.)
  - In the story of "The Land of the Dead" (118-126), a person is saved by living a pure life and proving it to Osiris, the Judge of the Dead. Is this the way people are saved according to the Bible? If not, what's the difference?
  - The Egyptians rightly saw that man does not measure up to the standard of what is right and good. However, they believe that a man can earn the gods' approval and his own salvation after death, by his good deeds in life. Is this true according to the Bible?

## STUDENT SUPPLEMENT: THE EGYPTIAN WORLDVIEW

### Reality

- The Supernatural
  - Egyptians believed that things in the created world, such as the sun or the Nile River, are actually gods and goddesses.
  - These gods and goddesses, they believed, have human personalities and live in family groups.
    - The gods and goddesses do not die and have great powers. Most gods and goddesses have their own pet (or “cult”) cities that they care for especially.
    - Like people, gods can be wise, merciful, loving, and kind, but also spiteful, unfair, and cruel. Most have both good and bad traits.
    - The gods are willing to give care and rewards to a few special human beings (mostly the pharaohs), and through them to bless their nation of Egypt.
    - The gods need to be housed, clothed, fed, and given drink, by humans.
  - Egyptians believed that magic is real and is used by both the gods and men.
  - They believed in *ma'at* (a word that combines truth, justice, goodness, and harmony). *Ma'at* is the opposite of chaos (*isfet*). It is the moral standard that humans must meet, with the gods (especially Osiris) as judges.
- The Natural World: The universe is a creation of the gods, though there are at least three different accounts about how this happened. Egyptians may have believed that Earth was created for mankind.
- Mankind
  - Egyptians believed that humans have a soul and a body. The soul lives in the body, but it is a separate and immortal spirit. They believed that body and soul will be united in death.
  - Egyptians thought that man is as he has always been—there was no fall from perfection. However, they also believe man is flawed: his heart is set against *ma'at*, and this is the main source of trouble in the world. Yet man's rebellion against truth, justice, goodness, and harmony is not seen as an impossible obstacle to salvation.
- Salvation: After death, each human soul would be judged by Osiris, god of the dead. He would decide how well each person lived up to the standard of *ma'at*. Thus, for the Egyptian, real salvation is won by human works.

### Morality

- For Egyptians, justice, goodness, truth, and harmony, are right. Injustice, wickedness or evil, falsehood, and unbalance are wrong.
- Part of upright living means honoring the gods (including Pharaoh) with devotion, prayer, and sacrifices.
- It is right and good to worship and honor Pharaoh as a god on earth.

### Values

- Egyptians saw the gods (including Pharaoh) as valuable, because they were believed to provide everything and have at least some kindness towards mankind.
- Serving the gods was seen as valuable, because that is how men can convince the gods to bless them.
- To Egyptians, a person's name is valuable. It is his identity. It can be used in spells or curses, and is also linked to one's reputation, whether good or bad.
- The human soul and its resurrection are valuable. All Egyptians hope that their souls will be resurrected after death. A proper funeral (and good religious behavior in general) is seen as valuable, so that one's soul may enter a blissful afterlife.
- Egyptians believed that it is valuable to live one's life uprightly, in harmony with *ma'at*, so that a person would be judged righteous when his soul is weighed against the Feather of Truth after death.
- Egypt is valuable. Egyptians are also valuable to themselves. They see themselves as blessed by their gods and better than other nations in both war and culture.
- Good relationships between Egyptians are valuable to them, especially between master (or lord), and servant. Faithfulness from servants to masters is valuable.
- Foreigners and personal relationships with them are *not* valuable to the Egyptians. In fact, such relationships are viewed as disgusting. Egyptians only value interactions with foreigners for trade or political gain.