

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

- Name one way in which the Nile directly caused the advance of Egyptian civilization.
Any one of these would be correct:
 - Supplied abundant food through the annual renewal of the soil
 - Housed fish and animals that the Egyptians hunted for food
 - Made trade possible from one end of Egypt to the other
 - Enabled speedy communication in a long, narrow territory
 - Unified the country by enabling one centralized government to communicate with the whole land
- What was the “Black Land”?
The “Black Land” was a region of fertile soil along the banks of the Nile, replenished yearly with a new layer of silt washed down during the flooding of the river.
- List the four classifications that can be used to categorize the levels of complexity of any given society.
 - Bands*
 - Segmented societies or tribes*
 - Chiefdoms*
 - States or civilizations*
- Which of these classifications is the most complex, and why?
States or civilizations are the most complex (and advanced) forms of society, and are typically larger than chiefdoms. They display considerable specialization of roles and settlements in cities. Status is not defined by lineage; rather, status comes from occupational specialization which forms classes in society.
- True or False: The floods of the Nile were perfectly predictable.
False. While the ancient Egyptians could predict what time of the year the Nile would flood, whether or not it would flood every year was not perfectly predictable.
- What sort of people mined the precious minerals of Egypt?
Conscripted citizens mined ore as part of their tax burden. On larger projects, criminals and prisoners of war were used as well.
- Name at least one people group with whom the Egyptians traded.
Any one of these would be correct:
 - People of the eastern Mediterranean*
 - People of Sinai*
 - People of the African interior*
 - Nubians*
- During which part of the year, approximately, did the Nile flood?
Mid-July through late October (or “summer through late fall”)
- Name one way that technology played a role in the development of advanced societies.
Even though the author of one of our resources (Haywood) asserts that technology probably did not play a critical role in the emergence of civilization, he does give the example of the construction of stone pyramids in ancient Egypt. These were erected without the benefit of wheels, pulleys, cranes, or hard metal tools.
- How can you account for rapid advancements in civilization?
Answers will vary to a degree; look for understanding based upon your discussion time that may have included some of the following points:
 - The Nile forced men to think, which is how they rapidly formed an advanced civilization.*
 - The Creator Himself instructed mankind in advanced farming, which enabled mankind to advance relatively quickly from a savage state to complex societal organizations.*
 - The Bible records many individuals receiving gifts, skills, or talents directly by the Spirit of God. These skills form the basis of all human advancement.*

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. “Ancient Egypt would not have been the mighty civilization it was without its unique geography.” Assess the validity of this statement in three well-structured paragraphs.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

- Predictable flooding of the Nile provided dependable food: soil was renewed yearly, ensuring a regular abundance of crops. With this abundance, specialization of human roles within society could develop.
- Centrality of the Nile River provided relatively easy and rapid travel by boat, enhancing trade, communication, and building projects.
- Nile current flowed one way, while prevailing winds blew the other way, enabling easy two-way traffic: float with the current downstream, and hoist a sail to go upstream against the current.
- Desert (Red Land) on both sides of the Nile Valley provided protection against invaders.

Sample Answer

Ancient Egypt would not have been the mighty civilization it was without its unique geography. Egyptian civilization depended on both the food and the easy transportation enabled by the Nile River, and on the safety provided by the deserts that surrounded it.

The Nile provided Egypt with a dependable food source. Its relatively predictable yearly floods replenished the soil with river silt, in which crops could grow well. The Egyptians used advanced irrigation systems to take advantage of the flooding and to grow plentiful crops. This abundance of food made it possible for them to develop the specialization of roles in society that a civilization begins with.

The availability of the Nile for transportation encouraged Egyptians to develop boats and boating skills. Egyptians could use the Nile’s current to travel downhill and north to the Nile delta, and then could use the prevailing winds, which blew from the Mediterranean Sea, to sail south (upstream) again. Egyptians thus developed thriving trade among themselves and with other nations, and government officials could keep an eye on whatever was going on politically, too. The availability of the Nile for transportation contributed to the wealth and stability of Egyptian civilization.

Egypt’s isolated location, surrounded by deserts, helped give Egypt the stability that made her great. Egypt was protected by vast deserts that effectively discouraged invasion along her borders for miles. Enemies could not attack easily from any side. Because they were not often attacked by enemies, the Egyptians could spend their time and energy perfecting their civilization instead of fighting to defend themselves or, at least at first, of crossing the deserts to attack others.

The unique farming and travel advantages offered by the Nile River, combined with the security of being surrounded by deserts, played an integral part in making Egypt a great civilization.

2. Egypt has been called the “Gift of the Nile.” Describe how the Nile shaped Egyptian farming, trade, and society.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Farming

- The predictable cycle of the Nile’s yearly floods resulted in annual renewal of the “black land.”
- Farmers’ work cycle was defined by the Nile’s annual flood.
- Innovations in farming (*shaduf*, irrigation ditches) resulted from the flooding Nile.
- Because of the Nile, farmers could grow a large variety of crops and water livestock. The Nile thus provided a rich variety of foods, making civilization possible and enjoyable.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include (continued)**Trade**

- Centrality of the Nile River encouraged travel by boat.
- Current flowing one way (north) and winds blowing the other (south) allowed easy two-way traffic, which kept the long, narrow community united.
- Developed trade with many other nations, too: traded gold for art works, marble, etc.

Society

- The Nile organized society in many ways (too many to list here), including (but not limited to) where the wealthy built houses, when the farmers worked, how much people had to eat, etc.
- Quick and easy communication via the Nile facilitated the stability and authority of the central government; this public order helped to build the stable society that Egypt became.
- Public works were dependent on the relatively easy transport of heavy building materials via the Nile.

Sample Answer

Egypt has been called the “Gift of the Nile” because the river had such a great influence on Egyptian life. Among other things, the Nile shaped Egyptian farming, trade, and society.

The Nile provided Egypt with a dependable food source. Its predictable yearly floods renewed the soil with “black land” river silt, in which crops could grow well. The Egyptians developed advanced irrigation systems to catch the flood waters. When the water receded, they could plant a wide variety of foods in the silt it left behind, as well as water their livestock. After farmers harvested their food, they worked on other specialized projects. Thus the Nile shaped the lives of Egyptian farmers.

The Nile also made it possible for Egyptians to trade with other peoples. The availability of a big river for transportation encouraged Egyptians to develop boats and boating skills. Egyptians could use the Nile’s current to travel north to the sea and then could use the prevailing winds, which blew from the sea, to sail upstream again. Thus they developed thriving trade among themselves and with other nations.

The Nile shaped Egyptian society in many different ways. The lives of all were regulated by the flooding of the Nile. Egyptians’ work, travel, and leisure activities were all affected by whether or not the Nile flooded. What Egyptians ate and where they built their houses, or their food quality and quantities, were all influenced by the Nile. Also, the governmental structure of Egypt was formed around the pharaoh, who could both communicate and enforce his commands because of relatively swift and easy travel on the Nile. The Nile thus could be said to keep the government in power, and the order that a stable government brings helps form an advanced society.

The Nile was central to Egyptians’ farming, trade, and social organization. More than any other single feature, it made Egypt what it was; thus Egypt has often been called the “Gift of the Nile.”

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

1. What were the two kingdoms of Egypt called?

Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt

2. Name one way that the geography of Egypt affected its cultural development.

NOTE: The list below is not exhaustive, but contains the most common answers that students will give.

- The Nile's ebb, flow, and life-giving water dictated activities, living conditions, and the locations of inhabitants.*
- The lack of timber as a natural resource led the Egyptians to build houses from mud bricks. The homes of the least to the greatest were all basically built of the same materials.*
- Because of hot and sunny conditions, Egyptian clothing was lightweight and white. Men primarily wore kilts; women wore simple, sheer shifts. Both sexes wore wigs; some scholars believe that these developed as protection from the hot sun.*
- Because the Nile Valley had natural barriers that protected society from enemies, Egyptians developed as a peace-loving society that existed for thousands of years without keeping a standing army.*
- Because the Nile was used for transportation, Egyptians developed boats of varying, specific types. Many Egyptians enjoyed the river as a source of recreation.*

3. During which Kingdom (Old, Middle, or New) were the Great Pyramids built?

The Old Kingdom

4. What is a *mastaba*?

A mastaba is a type of rectangular mud-brick building in which the first kings of Egypt were buried. These burial buildings evolved into step pyramids and finally straight-sided pyramids.

5. What is the "Valley of Kings"?

This was a remote valley in which tombs were cut under cliffs. New Kingdom pharaohs and their families were buried there.

6. What was the Egyptians' concept of judgment after death?

They believed that Osiris had a judgment hall where each person's heart was weighed against the Feather of Truth. Depending on the outcome of that judgment, the person would either be sent to the happy Kingdom of the West or be fed to a monster.

7. How were pyramids seen as national monuments?

Pyramids were seen as national monuments to both pharaohs and their deeds: to human endeavors and the greatness of Egyptian civilization.

8. How did the Egyptians' beliefs about their pharaohs help bolster the pharaohs' power as rulers?

Because the Egyptians believed the pharaohs were an incarnation of a god or part-god, part-man, the pharaohs had extensive power. As an extension of this, the Egyptians believed that obedience and service the pharaoh was required to attain the afterlife. Because the pharaoh was divine, his leadership and wisdom were thought to be better than his subjects'.

9. True or False: Mizraim was the first pharaoh to unite the two kingdoms of Egypt.

False. It was Menes (also called Narmer) who united Upper and Lower Egypt.

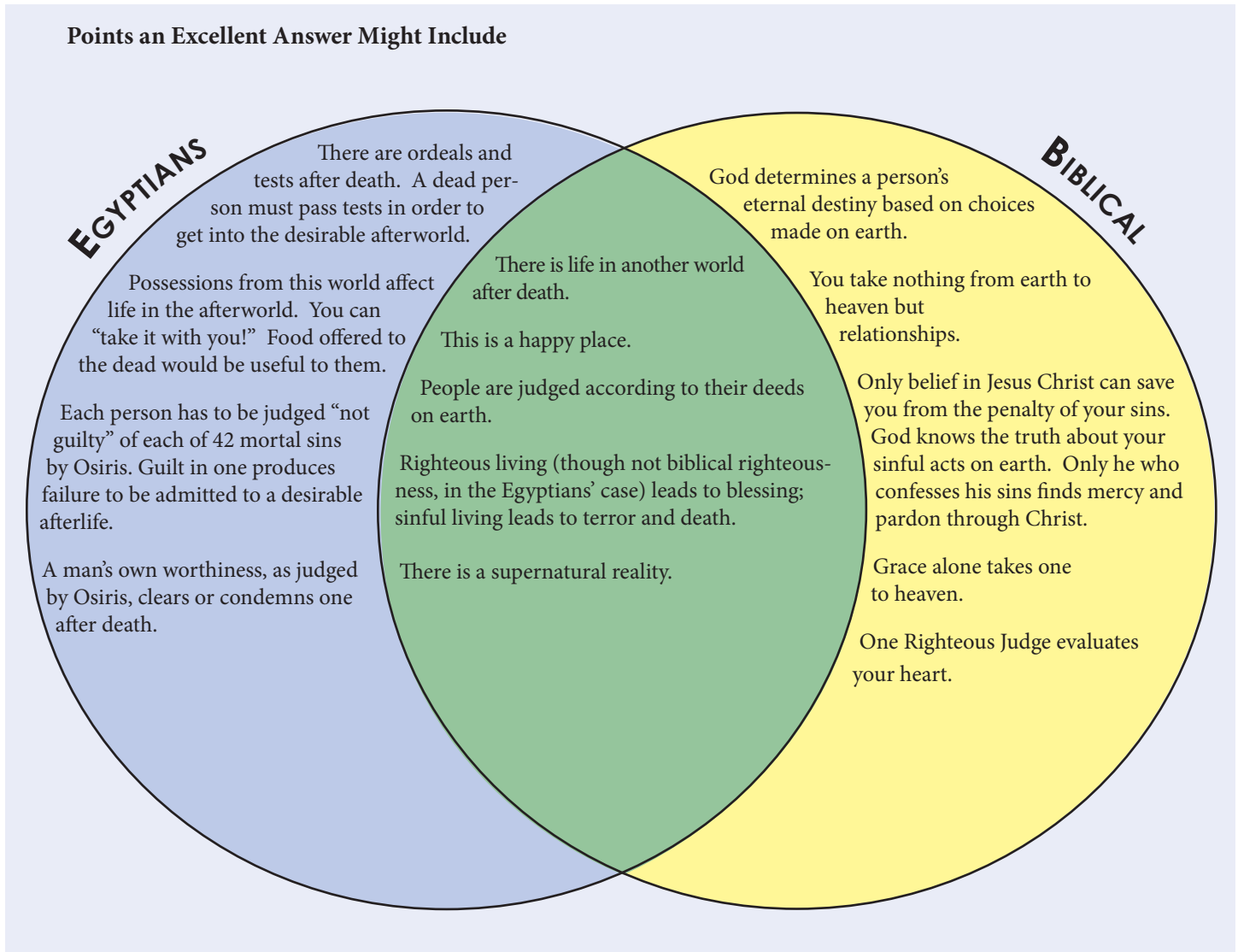
10. True or False: Akhenaten (previously called Amenhotep) instituted the worship of multiple gods during his reign as Pharaoh.

False. He was a monotheist who introduced the worship of one god (Aten, sometimes associated with Ra) as the sole religion of Egypt.

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. Compare and contrast Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife with biblical ones. What do both say about life after death, the basis on which the dead are judged and admitted to a happy afterlife, and the physical connections between earthly life and the afterlife?



Sample Answer

Egyptians were as concerned with life after death as we are. When we compare pagan Egyptian beliefs and biblical revelation about the truths of the afterlife, we find both similarities and differences. These show up well if we look at three topics: respective teachings about 1) life after death, 2) the basis on which the dead are judged and admitted to a happy afterlife, and 3) the physical connections between earthly life and the afterlife.

The similarities between Egyptian and biblical teaching show a common human knowledge of eternity and of responsibility for one’s deeds. Egyptian religion, like the Bible, taught that there is life after death. People have immortal souls, which go either to a place of happiness or a place of torment for eternity. Their destiny is affected by the quality of their deeds on earth. All people face judgment, where they have to answer for the things they have done. To this extent, Egyptian and biblical beliefs are similar. However, the details of how people were judged and of the physical connection between earthly life and the afterlife differ widely.

Regarding the judgment of the dead, Egyptian religion emphasized works and reflected an inadequate understanding of human sin. Egyptians expected a judgment in which people's good works were weighed on a scale against their bad works. If their good works balanced reasonably well, they would get to enjoy a happy afterlife. They would swear that they were not guilty of the 42 mortal sins that Osiris would ask them about. By contrast, the Bible teaches that no man's works are good enough to save him. The one sovereign God knows all our wrong deeds, and all of them matter to Him. Even one sin is disobedience to God and potent enough to send one to Hell. The Bible's message is that the only way that people can gain a happy afterlife is by the grace of God, extended only to those who accept His Son's sacrifice for their sins.

Egyptians also differed with the Bible regarding the physical connections between earthly life and the afterlife. Egyptians thought that people in the afterlife still needed their dead bodies, along with earthly food, treasures, and comforts, to be happy in the world to come. This is why they built pyramids, mummified their bodies, and buried different earthly possessions with the bodies: to provide comforts for the dead. By contrast, the Bible teaches that it is our spirits that go to heaven. In the new heavens and new earth, God will give His people new, resurrection bodies, regardless of what happened to our old bodies. In these ways, biblical belief about the afterlife is much different from the corresponding Egyptian belief.

All human beings seem to wonder sometime about their eternal destiny. The Egyptians' beliefs demonstrated that, like us, they worried about what was on the other side of death. Unfortunately, they chose to worship deities that they themselves fashioned, rather than the Creator who is displayed in the world He made, and so they deviated from the truth.

2. "Pharaohs erected pyramids for reasons beyond simple self-aggrandizement." In three structured paragraphs, support this statement by discussing three distinct goals that pharaohs had for pyramid construction. For each goal, give details about the pharaohs' situation or cultural mindset (why did they have this goal?) and assess whether the pharaohs were successful in meeting their goals.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

- Pharaohs were seen as the sun god incarnate.
- Pyramids were ladders for the pharaohs to return to the skies.
- Pharaohs, more than others, deserved to have their bodies preserved for a happy afterlife.
- Pharaohs' mummies needed to be kept safe.
- Pharaohs tried to take more treasure with them than did ordinary Egyptians.
- Ironically, the highly-visible pyramids attracted grave robbers.
- Pharaohs wanted monuments for posterity.
- Pyramids were built to last.
- They were decorated with artwork recounting the pharaoh's exploits.
- The pyramids fulfilled the goal of preserving the pharaohs' names: we still know about these pharaohs.

Sample Answer

At first glance, it might seem that the pharaohs of Egypt were nothing more than self-aggrandizing, greedy, vain-glorious men who built monuments to themselves by the sweat of their people. But there was more to it. Because of their position as rulers, pharaohs built pyramids to reflect their status as Egyptian gods, to preserve their bodies for the afterlife, and to leave monuments to their names that would endure after their death.

In Egyptians' minds, a pharaoh deserved a massive pyramidal tomb because he was the sun god incarnate. Scholars believe that pyramids were meant to help the dead pharaohs climb back up to the heavens to rejoin the gods. The burial temple that was built with the pyramid provided a suitable place to worship him after his death. In this context as minor deities, it was only natural and proper that divine pharaohs have pyramids built for themselves.

Since the pharaoh was so important, Egyptians felt that it was critical that his body be preserved after death, and to ensure that he would have the good afterlife he deserved. Pyramids were designed to house the pharaoh's mummies safely. Their chambers provided space for all the earthly treasures that he had enjoyed on earth. Such possessions would be necessary to reflect his high status in the next world. It was believed that a pharaoh needed a whole pyramid to supply himself for the next world as befitted his rank.

The pharaohs' final goal for their pyramids was to preserve their names for posterity. As great kings with the blood of the gods in them, the pharaohs deserved to be remembered, according to the Egyptians. Pyramids were designed to stand for millennia as enduring reminders of the great kings (and the great deeds that they had done for their land). They were decorated with lavish artistic depictions of the pharaohs' exploits, as well as with pictures of daily life. Not only pyramids, but obelisks and other stone monuments proclaimed the great deeds of prominent pharaohs. Though this might be pride in some ordinary man, it was seen as only fitting for a ruler, as the glory of the commander was conferred on the whole nation.

The fact that we still remember these pharaohs today shows that, though pyramids failed to deify their occupants or even to preserve their bodies safely, they did succeed in the goal of reminding posterity of the lives of the Egyptian pharaohs.

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

- True or False: All the Egyptian gods were part of one family descended from Ra.
False. Though there was a family of gods descended from Ra, other gods were not part of this family. Furthermore, different myths describe the origins of the gods differently.
- True or False: Egyptians believed that the first god created himself in the beginning.
True
- Name four of the major “gods” of Egypt.
Any four of these would be correct:
 - Amun (Amun-Re)
 - Anubis
 - Bast
 - Bes
 - Geb
 - Hathor
 - Thoth
 - Ma’at
 - Horus
 - Isis
 - Shu
 - Nut
 - Osiris
 - Ptah
 - Sobek
 - Ra/Re
 - Sekhmet
 - Set
 - Taweret
- Egyptian idols were often pictured as animal-human combinations. Name one of these.
The following represent a sample of possible answers, any one of which would be correct. There are others!
 - Anubis (jackal)
 - Bast (cat)
 - Hathor (cow)
 - Horus (falcon/hawk)
 - Ra/Re (falcon; also ram)
 - Thoth (ibis; also baboon)
 - Set (donkey, hippo, armadillo)
 - Sobek (crocodile)
- Name two ways in which the gods of Egyptian mythology are similar to humans.
Any two of these would be correct:
 - They have human emotions.
 - They are limited by each other’s conflicting plans, powers, and secrets (not omniscient or omnipotent).
 - They can be tricked, manipulated, or deceived.
 - They engage in unrighteous behavior such as lying, cheating, stealing, and murdering.
 - They marry and have children.
 - They suffer from weakness, danger, and fear.
- How were Egyptian pharaohs thought to be related to the gods?
The Egyptians believed that each pharaoh was a direct descendent of the god Horus and thereby of Ra. He was considered a “god on earth.”
- The Egyptians described the creation of the world in various myths. Summarize one of them.
Any one of these would be correct:
 - A god named Atum created the world through a process like evolution.
 - Ra rose out of the primordial waters and then spoke the world into being. (Sometimes Ra is said to have been born from a great goose’s egg or lotus flower.)
 - The pharaoh Akhenaten taught that the Aten (his monotheistic deity, associated with the sun) had created all things.
- In the myth of Osiris, who kills Osiris and why?
Seth (or “Set”), his jealous brother, because he wants Osiris’s throne.
- Name two of the plagues that judged a specific Egyptian god or goddess, along with the god or goddess so judged.
Any two of these would be correct. Your student need only list the god or goddess’s name, though for your convenience we identify them further here.
 - Plague of the Nile: Hapi (or “Hopi,” god of the Nile), or Khnum, or Sothis (god of floodwaters)
 - Plague on livestock: Ptah (represented by the Apis bull), Hathor (represented by the cow), or Khnum (represented by the ram)
 - Plague of boils: Isis, goddess of healing
 - Plague of darkness: Ra/Re, god of the sun
 - Plagues of hail and locusts: Osiris, god of crops
 - Any of the latter plagues (beginning with the plague of gnats) which the Egyptian magicians were unable to match: Isis and Thoth, goddess and god of magic

10. What was the societal significance of the tenth plague?

NOTE: Students should explain the essence of this answer; they need not provide all this information.

In the Ancient World, the firstborn male child represented the primal strength of the father. Oldest sons inherited all of their father's estate and were the leaders of their clans. To kill a man's firstborn was to kill his best hope for the future.

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. “Egyptian ‘gods’ were human creations; only Yahweh is divine.” Support this statement by comparing and contrasting the respective characters, recorded actions (in mythology or the Bible), and relationships to mankind of Egyptian gods and Yahweh.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Egyptian Gods	Yahweh
Characters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfish actions are typical • Fallible: no one god able to control • In conflict with one another 	Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy, righteous, different from man • Sovereign: only one God—can control everything and does, for good and for glory.
Recorded Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mythic stories, unrealistic (untrue) 	Recorded Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical account: true narrative • Acts in history to redeem man
Relationships to Mankind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in men mostly as the keepers of their temples • Men seek to get away with as much as they can (rather than be holy) 	Relationship to Mankind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created man purposefully, and in love • Holy love and justice (as well as self-sacrifice, longsuffering, and patience) towards men are consistently displayed.

Sample Answer

Egyptian gods were human creations; only Yahweh is divine. This is obvious from their respective characters, their recorded actions, and their relationships with mankind.

Egyptian “gods” reflect the character, actions, and priorities of their human inventors. Egyptian myths portray their deities largely as selfish, fallible, and in conflict with one another. Ra is said to have created the world, and he created lesser deities (sometimes called his children) from his tears. One account says that he created his human form by gathering together the waters of chaos. The deity Set envies Osiris his throne, so he kills him and cuts him up into little pieces, which his wife Isis has to reassemble. Egyptian myths tell of gods marrying and giving birth to other gods, feeling jealous, fighting wars, and even getting old. Their relationship to humankind mirrors the human reaction of the powerful to those under them: they pay attention to their inferiors mostly to demand things from them. Egyptian gods expect men to build their temples and generally be useful. Men, for their part, attempt to placate the gods and get away with as much as they can. The gods have little love for humans as special creations. In all these ways, the Egyptian gods reflect the attitudes and characters of their human devisors.

Yahweh, by contrast, displays truly divine character, actions, and priorities that no man would have invented. The Bible describes Him as holy, righteous, just, merciful, omniscient, and omnipotent. He is never capricious or impetuous. He creates the world intentionally and beautifully, giving humans a special place of honor. Yahweh chooses to judge justly, but also to show free mercy in redeeming a people for His own, at great personal cost to Himself. God’s relationship to man is one of a divinity whose character is vastly different from humankind’s. Yet, God cares about people, and seeks to restore them from the sinfulness that comes so naturally to them, and is often directed at Him! Yahweh is truly a God that no man would invent.

The Egyptians believed in gods made in man’s image; the Bible teaches of a God in whose image man was made. The differences in their characters, recorded actions, and reputed relationships to mankind make it apparent that Yahweh alone is truly divine.

2. “In the Ten Plagues, Yahweh demonstrated His superiority over the Egyptian deities.” Support this statement by describing three specific plagues.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

NOTE: Remember that your student’s essay should only have three supporting paragraphs, although the sample includes examples for all the plagues.

	PLAGUE	WHAT THE PLAGUE REPRESENTED
1	Nile turns to blood. Egyptians dig near the Nile for drinking water.	The Nile god is named and represented in various ways. Hapi is the primary Nile god. Turning the Nile to blood was showing power over Egypt’s very life-source.
2	Frogs further foul the land of Egypt and the Nile.	The frog symbolized the goddess Heqt (Heket), a primordial (foundational) deity specially associated with childbirth. Burning piles of frogs would have been a painful sight (and smell!) to Egyptians.
3	Gnats fill the land. Magicians cannot create gnats and tell Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God!”	This is the first plague that the magicians can’t match, and they admit that God is operating. Isis was the goddess of magicians.
4	Insects infest the land—but God begins to set His people apart. Insects do not infest Goshen, where the Israelites live.	The Bible says that “the land was laid waste” by unknown insects harmful to vegetation and humans. Probably little normal work could go on; perhaps they brought diseases. The idols of health (principally Isis) and crops (Osiris) would be affected.
5	Severe pestilence on all livestock: horses, donkeys, cattle, herds, and flocks.	This is a severe blow to the wealth and prestige of Egyptian culture. Animals were very valuable. The Apis bull was overpowered, as was Hathor, a cow-goddess.
6	Fine dust that causes boils and sores to break out on man and beast, from head to foot.	All Egyptian deities of healing were powerless before the Lord, especially Isis.
7	Hail, thunder and fire rain down on Egypt, destroying all crops that were in flower or bud (flax and barley) and all trees in the fields (valuable for both shade and wood).	Again, this is a blow to the wealth of Egypt: valuable crops are destroyed. The god Osiris again takes a beating.
8	Locusts eat the remaining vegetation, especially the important crops of wheat and spelt.	Egypt is further impoverished, and Pharaoh is proven impotent before the plague. No Egyptian idols can help.
9	Tangible darkness covers the land for three days.	Darkness topples the chief idol: the sun god Re (or Ra, or Amon-Re). Also affected would be Mut (eye of the sun) and Nut (sky goddess). Furthermore, Pharaoh is powerless, even though he believes himself to be the brother of the sun.
10	The firstborn of Egypt die, both men and cattle, from the Pharaoh to the prisoner in his dungeon.	A huge blow to human pride, and also to family emotions and relationships. No Egyptian idols can help.

Sample Answers

In the Ancient World, where multiple gods were thought to have real power and where nations believed in local deities and their power to sustain them, the gods had contests in which their victories or defeats could be easily discerned by their worshippers. In sending the plagues on Egypt, Yahweh specifically demonstrated to the pagan world His superiority over many Egyptian deities. This is seen well in the _____, _____, and _____ plagues.

The first plague, in which the Nile was turned to blood, demonstrated Yahweh's superiority over the Nile god (chiefly called Hapi). The Nile formed the life blood of Egyptian civilization, so naturally the Egyptians worshipped it as a god. For Yahweh to turn the Nile into blood was to jeopardize all of Egyptian society, as their main source of life became defiled and deadly. The Nile god was shown to be helpless to heal himself before the God of Israel, and thus no god at all.

In the second plague, the plague of frogs, Yahweh ridiculed the goddess Heket, whose symbol was a frog. Heket was a goddess of childbirth and one of the Egyptians' earliest foundational gods. When the frogs died, the Egyptians had to burn whole piles of these sacred animals. Heket was shown to have no power even over her own sacred symbol.

The third plague, the plague of gnats, was an indirect judgment on Isis as goddess of magic. It was significant because Pharaoh's magicians could not imitate it, thus proving that Isis' power had failed. Yahweh made it clear that He alone, and not any magical power commanded by mankind, was at work inflicting the plagues.

The fifth plague, the plague on cattle, was a direct judgment on many of the animals that represented Egyptian gods. Ptah, for instance, was represented by the special Apis bull, and Hathor's symbol was a cow. By showing his control over all cattle, Yahweh ridiculed these and other gods and showed their powerlessness.

The plague of boils showed the helplessness of the Egyptian gods of healing before Yahweh. Isis and other deities stood by helplessly while all their worshippers got sick. This proved that they were not gods of healing at all. Yahweh alone rules the lives of men.

In the seventh plague, the plague of storm and hail, Yahweh showed His kingship over nature and destroyed Egypt's crops. Osiris was the god of crops and vegetation, which the LORD destroyed. This plague showed Osiris' helplessness to protect the people of his kingdom from the LORD. God alone could grant or take away prosperity.

The plague of darkness showed Yahweh's power over the sun, which the Egyptians worshipped supremely. Amon-Re, the sun god, was one of their chief deities. The pharaoh himself was supposed to be the sun god incarnate. By inflicting darkness on the Egyptians, God proved that neither Amon-Re nor the pharaoh had any power over the sun. The sun-god was no god at all.

In each of these plagues, the God of Israel humiliated and overpowered yet another Egyptian deity, proving His superiority over each of them. The plagues showed the Egyptians and the Israelites that Yahweh alone is God.