

EXERCISES FOR PRACTICE

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Egypt has no forests. Rain is almost unknown. A poor country, one would think, but Mother Nature is resourceful and "imports" rain to fertilize the soil. Her method is simple.

At the sources of the Nile in Africa's high plateaux the rainy season is from June to September. Torrents of tropical rain descend, often accompanied by tremendous storms and tornadoes. The forests are then smitten as if by some gigantic hand and the green treetops heave as wildly as the waves in a hurricane. A colossal volume of water falls from the clouds. For thousands of years the resulting flood waters have brought down masses of mud which have gradually formed the Egyptian valleys and produced fertile land.

In the development of Egyptian culture the Nile has always played the part of schoolmaster. The necessity of regulating the Nile flow made a knowledge of surveying essential. The ancient Egyptians calculated the arrival of the inundations by observing the stars, and the Nile may thus have initiated them into the study of astronomy. We know that they observed *Sirius*, a fixed star which is only ten light years away from us. Its rising on the 19th July was the Egyptian New Year.

The first calendar thereby came into existence.

Questions

1. Why is it not true that Man is responsible for bringing water to Egypt?
2. What makes the green treetops heave like waves in a great storm?
3. How did the fertile Egyptian valleys come into existence?
4. State two ways in which the Nile “played the part of schoolmaster”.
5. What part did the star *Sirius* play in the making of the first calendar?

"Comprehension - 1"

Q1. Why it is not true that Man is responsible for bringing water to Egypt?

Ans. It is not true that man is responsible for bringing water to Egypt because of the role played by nature. Nature brings water to Egypt and "fertile" meets its requirement. Egypt has no rain due to absence of forest. While there are rains at the sources of Nile, extreme water flows downstream that gives maintains the life in Egypt.

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Q2. What makes the green treetops heave like waves in a great storm?

Ans. Monsoon in North Africa usually leads to torrential rains that cause great havoc. These rains are accompanied by disastrous gusts that make the green treetops heave like waves in a great storm. Trees are uprooted from the soil and wander across through strong winds.

3. How did fertile Egyptian valleys come into existence?

Rain is a blessing for every agrarian society. Fertile Egyptian valleys are the results of such rains. Upstream rains in Nile bring huge amount of water to the Egypt in the form of flashfloods. These waters bring huge amount of soil and mud with it. This soil settles down once water is gone. This soil is very fertile and useful and ultimately, it forms ^{another} fertile Egyptian valley. By this method, all valleys of Egypt came into existence over a period of thousands of years.

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4. State two ways by which the Nile "played the part of schoolmaster".

The Nile played a role of schoolmaster in the lives of Egyptians. It encouraged them to study two subjects. One, the knowledge of surveying and engineering was essential to control the flow of Nile for effective use. Second, the Egyptians had linked the torrential rains and floodings to the positions of stars. This linkage

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necessitated the study of Astronomy.

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Q 5. What part did the star Sirius play in the making of the first calendar?

Ans. Our Earth revolves around the Sun which is a star. There are millions of other stars in our galaxy, Milkyway. Sirius star is the nearest star to our Solar system at the distance of 10 light years. It ^{usually} remains fixed and has same speed relative to us.

This star rises on the 19th July of every year. This day was regarded as start of Egyptian year and ultimately, led to foundation of 1st calendar.

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