

## The River Nile

The River Nile, stretching approximately 6,650 kilometres, is the longest river in the world. Rising from lakes in central Africa, it flows northwards through Sudan and Egypt before fanning out into the Nile Delta and draining into the Mediterranean Sea. It was the lifeline of one of the greatest civilisations the world has ever known.

Ancient Egypt was dominated by desert, making it almost entirely dependent on the Nile for survival. The river's annual flood cycle was central to Egyptian life. Between June and September, heavy monsoon rains in the Ethiopian Highlands caused the Nile to overflow its banks. As the waters receded, they left behind a rich deposit of dark, fertile silt, transforming narrow strips of land on either side of the river into highly productive farmland. Egyptians cultivated wheat, barley, flax, and papyrus, supporting a growing population and a thriving economy.

Beyond agriculture, the Nile functioned as Egypt's principal trade route. Boats carried stone, timber, grain and luxury goods between settlements, enabling the exchange of resources across vast distances. The river also provided fish, reeds for building and weaving, and fresh water for drinking and irrigation.

The Ancient Egyptians recognised their dependence on the river by dividing their land into the "Black Land" — the fertile Nile corridor — and the "Red Land" — the barren, hostile desert. The Greek historian Herodotus famously described Egypt as "the gift of the Nile," a phrase that remains fitting to this day.



## Questions

1. Where does the River Nile begin and where does it end?
2. What is the Nile Delta?
3. What caused the Nile to flood each year?
4. During which months did the Nile flood?
5. What is silt and why was it so valuable to Egyptian farmers?
6. Name three crops that the Ancient Egyptians grew using the fertile land near the Nile.
7. How did the Nile help to connect different parts of Egypt?
8. Apart from farming and trade, give two other ways the Nile was useful to the Egyptians.
9. Who was Herodotus and what did he say about Egypt?
10. The article says the Nile was the "lifeline" of Ancient Egypt. Using evidence from the text, explain why this description is so appropriate.

