

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## Isis, Osiris and the Egyptian Afterlife

The people of ancient Egypt did not have scientific explanations for natural phenomena. They believed sunshine and the great Nile River were gifts from their many gods. The beliefs of the ancient Egyptians slowly changed over time, but many of their legends influenced Egyptian culture for thousands of years.

The ancient Egyptians believed Ra was the sun god who came to earth as the first ruler of Egypt. Egypt became very rich during Ra's rule, but the people grew lazy and neglected to honor the sun god, so Ra used his magic to create a bloodthirsty lioness god named Sekhmet. Sekhmet reminded the Egyptian people of the power of Ra by terrorizing the Nile River Valley. When the Egyptian people showed their appreciation, Ra used magic to tame Sekhmet and turn her into Hathor, the goddess of love. This lesson tells us the Egyptian people both valued and feared the sun. The sun made it possible for Egyptian crops to grow, but the sun could also turn good farmland into desert where no crops would grow.

Ra's many children included Osiris and Isis, the brother and sister who ruled the Nile River Valley after they taught the Egyptians to farm and domesticate animals. The Egyptian people praised Osiris and Isis for the many gifts they bestowed on their civilization. Seth was their jealous brother and the god of storms. Seth invited all of the gods to a great party. Near the end of the feast, Seth brought in a beautiful cedar chest.

"I will give this chest to whosoever fits in it most exactly!" The gods tried to fit into the box, but everyone

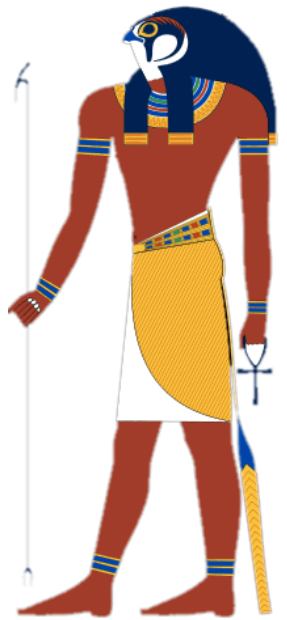
was too big or too small. Seth had carefully measured his brother so that only he would fit in the chest space. Osiris was the last of the guests to lay down in the chest.

"I am the exact fit, so the chest is mine," cried Osiris and he climbed into the container.

"It is your chest and it is where you will be forever," replied Seth as he sealed the lid and cast the chest and Osiris into the Nile. Isis recovered her brother's body and returned it to Egypt. When Seth discovered what Isis had done, he ripped open the chest, tore the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces, and scattered the pieces along the whole length of the Nile.

The people of ancient Egypt believed that when their gods left this world they could live in an afterlife. The afterlife was a perfect version of ancient Egypt. In order to get to the afterlife, however, the gods first had to pass through the underworld. The underworld was a strange and dangerous place filled with fantastic and dangerous creatures. Traveling through the afterworld required the Egyptian gods to be very clever because they had to complete many tasks. The Egyptians believed that their gods could not reach the afterlife unless their bodies remained in one piece in Egypt. Isis knew the body of Osiris had to be intact and buried in Egyptian sand, so when she found the pieces of her brother, she buried Osiris in a secret place where Seth could not find him.

Horus was the son of Isis and the god of the sky. Horus took the form of a falcon and brought the sun with him each day as he flew across the sky. The eyes of Horus were said to be the sun and the moon, but the moon was not as bright because it was damaged by Seth in a great battle conflict. Horus subdued Seth, but he was never able to kill his uncle. This legend of Horus and Seth helps to explain why the Egyptians believed that they could never completely defeat evil and chaos.



Horus is often depicted as having the body of a man and the head of a falcon.

\*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Fill in the Blanks

The people of ancient Egypt believed in many g\_\_\_\_\_ and g\_d\_\_e\_\_s\_\_s. They believed that Ra, their god of the s\_\_\_\_, came to e\_\_r\_\_h as the first r\_\_l\_\_r of Egypt. When the Egyptian people began to disregard Ra, the sun god unleashed a terrible l\_\_o\_\_e\_\_s god named S\_\_k\_\_et on the people, but when the Egyptians showed their \*a\_\_p\_\_e\_\_i\_\_t\_\_on to Ra, the sun god used his m\_\_g\_\_c to turn Sekmet into H\_\_t\_\_or, the goddess of l\_\_\_\_\_.

Osiris, Isis and Seth were c\_\_i\_\_d\_\_en of Ra. Seth tricked O\_\_i\_\_is into climbing into a giant c\_\_\_\_\_ and then threw the chest into the N\_\_\_\_\_. Isis \*r\_\_t\_\_i\_\_v\_\_d the chest, so the enraged Seth tore his brother's body into f\_\_u\_\_t\_\_en pieces. Isis recovered the pieces of Osiris' body because the E\_\_y\_\_t\_\_a\_\_s believed their gods had to be b\_\_r\_\_ed in one piece in order to travel to the a\_\_t\_\_r\_\_i\_\_e.

Seth was finally defeated in a great battle H\_\_r\_\_s. Horus was Seth's \*n\_\_p\_\_ew and the god of the s\_\_\_\_. The legends say that Horus would take the form of a f\_\_l\_\_on and fly across the sky each day. The eyes of Horus eyes were the s\_\_\_\_ and the m\_\_\_\_\_, but the moon was not as bright as the sun because it had been damaged in Horus' battle with S\_\_\_\_\_.

### Answer in complete sentences

\*1. Why do you think Ra was one of the most important of the Egyptian gods?

---

---

---

2. Why was it necessary for Isis to find and rebuild the body of Osiris?

---

---

---

3. How was the underworld different from the afterlife?

---

---

---

4. According to Egyptian mythology, why were the Egyptians never able to completely defeat evil and chaos?

---

---

---

\*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.