Name _____ Date _____

Ancient Egypt: The Nile, Pharaohs and Pyramids

Directions: Read the passage. The words in bold are key terms. Then answer the questions.

Life Along the Nile

The Nile River flows north through the desert of northeastern Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. Because it runs north, southern Egypt is called Upper Egypt and northern Egypt is called Lower Egypt. Near the sea, the river splits into branches across a wide, flat **delta**.

Very little rain falls in most of Egypt. But every summer, heavy rains far to the south made the Nile rise. This yearly flood, the **inundation**, left a layer of dark, rich mud on the fields. Egyptians called this land Kemet, the "black land." The dry desert beyond it was the "red land."

Around 3100 BCE, Upper and Lower Egypt were joined under one ruler. Today we call the rulers of ancient Egypt pharaohs. A **pharaoh** ruled the whole land. Historians group pharaohs into dynasties. A **dynasty** is a line of rulers, usually from one family. Most pharaohs were men, but Hatshepsut, a woman, ruled as pharaoh in the 1400s BCE.

Egyptians believed a person's spirit would need its body in the afterlife. So they dried bodies and wrapped them in linen. Each preserved body is a **mummy**. Some pharaohs were buried in pyramids, which were giant tombs. The largest pyramid at Giza was built for King Khufu around 2500 BCE.

Egyptians carved and painted **hieroglyphs**, signs that stood for sounds or ideas, on temples and tombs. For everyday records, scribes wrote a faster script in ink on papyrus, a paper-like sheet made from a river plant.

1. Match each bold word from the passage about the Nile to its meaning in the passage. Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ delta
2. _____ inundation
3. _____ pharaoh
4. _____ dynasty
5. _____ mummy
6. _____ hieroglyphs

A. a paper-like sheet made from a river plant
B. wide, flat land where a river splits into branches near the sea
C. a ruler of all of ancient Egypt
D. the yearly flood that left rich mud on the fields
E. signs that stood for sounds or ideas
F. a body that was dried and wrapped in linen
G. a giant tomb built for a ruler
H. a line of rulers, usually from one family

2. Why did Egyptians farm the black land instead of the red land?
A. The flood brought water and rich mud to the black land, but the desert stayed dry.
B. The red land was crowded with cities and temples.
C. Rain fell often on the black land but never on the red land.
D. Pharaohs did not allow farming near the river.

3. A trader sails from the delta to Upper Egypt. In which direction is the trader traveling?
A. North B. West C. East D. South

4. One year, the inundation was much smaller than usual. What problem would farmers most likely face?
A. Less land would get water and fresh mud, so harvests would shrink.
B. The red land would flood instead of the black land.
C. The delta would move south into Upper Egypt.
D. Too much rain would fall on their fields.

5. Which of these events in ancient Egypt happened first?
A. Upper and Lower Egypt were joined under one ruler.
B. Hatshepsut ruled Egypt as pharaoh.
C. The largest pyramid at Giza was built for Khufu.

6. What were Egypt's pyramids built to be?
A. Temple towers where priests served a city's god
B. Forts that guarded the delta from invaders
C. Tombs for some of Egypt's pharaohs
D. Palaces where pharaohs lived with their families

7. What made Hatshepsut stand out among the pharaohs?
A. She was a scribe who wrote in ink on papyrus.
B. She was a woman, and most pharaohs were men.
C. She had the largest pyramid at Giza built for herself.
D. She first joined Upper and Lower Egypt under one ruler.

8. Egyptians believed a person's spirit would need its body in the afterlife. What did this belief lead them to do?
A. Dig canals to bring the flood to the red land
B. Move their farms out into the desert
C. Dry bodies and wrap them in linen
D. Start a new dynasty for every pharaoh

9. A scribe needs to write down a tax record quickly. Based on the passage, what would the scribe most likely do?
A. Carve hieroglyphs into a temple wall B. Tie knots in a set of colored strings
C. Write a faster script in ink on papyrus D. Brush signs onto a strip of silk

10. Complete the sentence about Khufu and Khafre with terms from the passage.

Word bank
pharaoh • dynasty • delta • mummy

Khufu and his son Khafre each ruled Egypt as _____, and both belonged to the Fourth _____.