



## The Nile

The river Nile was essential to life in ancient Egypt. Every year, it flooded, leaving behind a black silt that enriched the soil for growing crops. The river was also used to irrigate fields in other areas. Most people lived along and around the Nile. This is still true in Egypt today. The river was used for water, fishing and trade. Mud from the river was used for bricks and papyrus plants were used to make paper.

## Farming

Egyptian farmers divided their year into three seasons, based on the cycles of the Nile River:

**Akhet** (June-September): The Flooding Season. No farming was done at this time, as all the fields were flooded. Instead, many farmers worked for the pharaoh (king), building pyramids or temples. Some of the time was spent mending their tools and looking after animals.

**Peret** (October-February): The Growing Season. In October the floodwaters receded, leaving behind a layer of rich, black soil. This fertile soil was then ploughed and seeded.

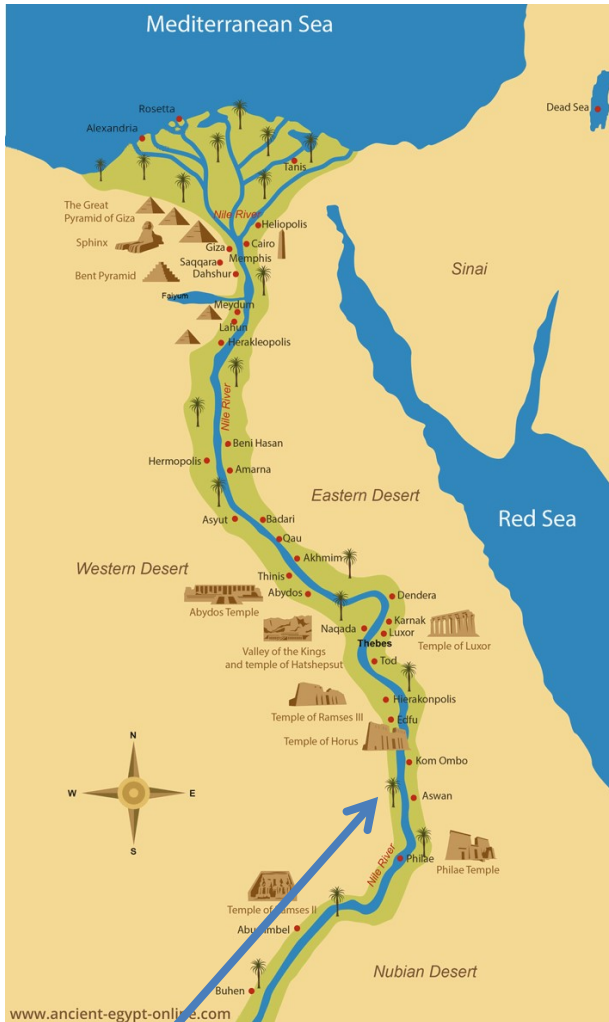
**Shemu** (March-May): The Harvesting Season. The fully grown crops had to be cut down (harvested) and removed before the Nile flooded again. It was also the time to repair the canals ready for the next flood.

## Moving Water

**Moving the Water** The farmers would lift the water from the canals using a tool called a shaduf (or shadoof). A shaduf is a large pole balanced on a beam. At one end of the pole was a heavy weight and on the other end was a bucket. The ancient Egyptian farmer would pull the bucket down into the water, then the weight would pull the filled bucket back out again. He would then swing the bucket round and empty the bucket onto his crops.



The flood cycle of the River Nile in Egypt.



The River Nile was the reason that the first farmers settled there around 5000BC. The river was used for water, food and transport, as well as making the soil in the area perfect for growing crops.



A **shaduf** was used for moving water

