

HOW DO BELIEFS REVEAL

Oral traditions, such as relating oral histories and telling stories, helped early societies share their values and beliefs.

VALUES AND BELIEFS OF THE HAIDA

The Haida have always sung songs, performed dances, and created ceremonial objects to celebrate special occasions and to honour all the living things that sustain them physically and spiritually. They also tell stories to help other Haida understand their history and know who their ancestors were. This tradition continues today.

Some Haida stories teach children to listen to their parents and grandparents and to respect others, whether the others are animals or people.

The Haida continue to believe in **reincarnation** (the belief that after people die, their soul will be reborn in a different physical body). When older Haida are dying, they will sometimes tell a family member who is expecting a baby that they will return as the new baby—and what the baby will grow up to be, such as a carver, a cook, or a painter. When a baby is born, Elders can often see immediately who the baby was in a previous life.



These photos show some of the features of the group of islands called Haida Gwaii. **Q:** What environmental features do you see in these photos? How do you think the environmental features you identified would influence the way the Haida viewed the world?

VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES?

RAVEN: TRICKSTER AND CREATOR

Many Haida stories involve a mischievous and supernatural character called Raven, the trickster. A raven is a large bird in the crow family. The Haida believe that Raven helped create their world, as well as many things for people to enjoy. In many stories, Raven behaves badly, but for the Haida, these stories serve as reminders to people to share with and help others.

This photo shows Kung Jaadee singing.

Q: What do you observe? On the basis of your observations, what inferences can you make about Kung Jaadee's perspective?

Kung Jaadee is a traditional Haida singer, drummer, and storyteller. She has written: "I believe we learned how to survive by watching the animals, the whales, the birds. From watching them, we learned how to be k'onjee angaa, dear people. We learned how to be human beings. We adopted some of these creatures for our crests, as a way of showing respect to them for looking after us." The following is Kung Jaadee's story about Raven.

Before the beginning of time, before the beginning of our universe, there was Raven, our Trickster and our Creator. He flew for eons in the darkness. When the blackness tried to destroy him, Raven flapped his wings hard and moved the darkness until it formed our world.

Raven promised to make this world a better place, as it needed many things. He made the land, and placed fresh water in the world. He also placed the fliers, the swimmers, and the Four-Leggeds, and he made us Two-Leggeds. He made us in all our different colours, and he placed us on the earth in one place, because he intended for us to live together. We humans decided we knew better, and we divided ourselves and moved to the Four Directions on our own.

Raven went into our world and taught us how to be proper human beings: how to look after one another and to help one another.

Some say when Raven made our world better, he took items from some who were being greedy. It is true that Raven did trick the people who kept the Light, the Fire, the Fresh Water, and other things to get them away from these greedy people, but he did this to help us.

Q: What does this story about Raven reveal about the perspective of the Haida on their environment? Why do you think stories like this are important to the Haida?



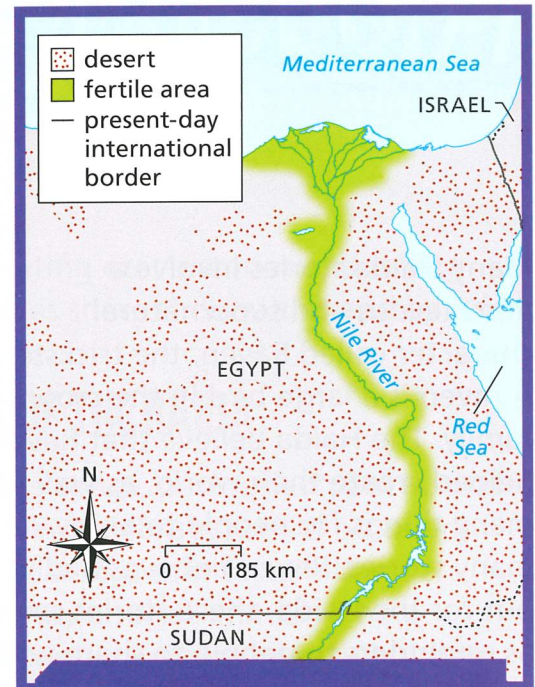
VALUES AND BELIEFS IN ANCIENT EGYPT

The Nile River, one of the longest rivers in the world, flows northward through northeastern Africa. Though most of this region is desert, a wide fertile area runs along the banks of the Nile. By 3100 BCE, the Nile River valley was united into one kingdom called Egypt.

The ancient Egyptians believed in and worshipped hundreds of gods and goddesses. They told stories about these **deities**. The stories explained the powers and abilities of their gods and goddesses. The stories also explained the origins of the world and how things came to be.

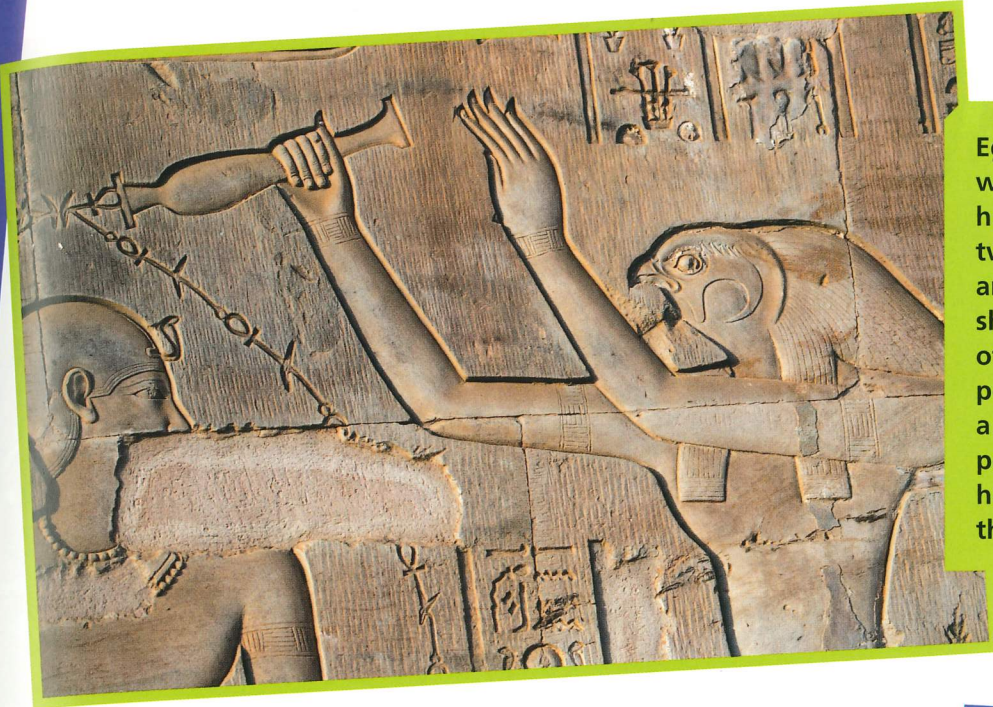
The Egyptians tried to please the deities and keep them from becoming angry. People believed that when something bad happened, such as a drought or the death of a loved one, it was because they had angered a deity. They believed they had failed to behave in the right way or to please a god or goddess. **Q:** What does this belief tell you about the perspective of ancient Egyptians on why things happened?

Egypt



Q: Examine the map. What do you notice about Egypt's physical features?

This photo was taken from a boat on the Nile River in Egypt. Every year, the Nile flooded. Ancient Egyptians believed that this happened because the goddess Isis was shedding tears over the death of her husband, the god Osiris. **Q:** What does this belief reveal about ancient Egyptians' view of the environment?



Egyptian gods and goddesses were portrayed as animals, humans, or a combination of the two, with a human body and an animal's head. This carving shows Horus, the Egyptian god of the sky. Horus was often portrayed with the head of a falcon. **Q:** What does this portrayal of Horus reveal about how ancient Egyptians viewed the world?

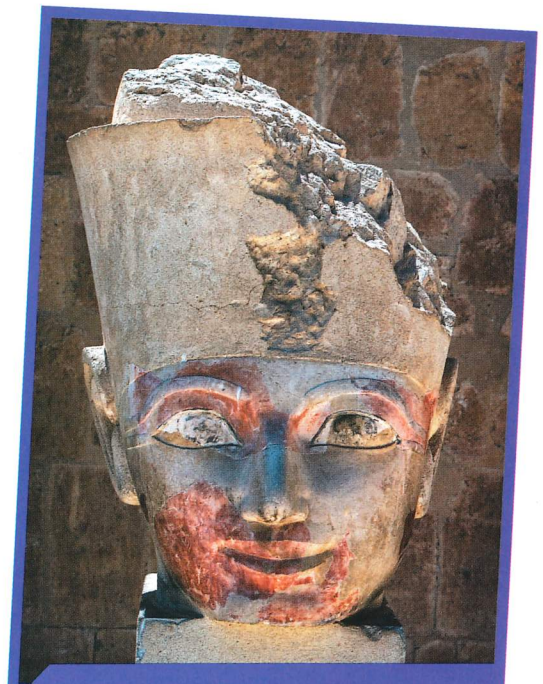
Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

Each god or goddess was responsible for a specific area of life. Ra, for example, was the king of the gods and looked after the Sun and the air. He is often portrayed with a solar disc on his head. Horus was the god of the sky and guarded the **pharaoh**, or ruler. Nut, the goddess of the sky, was considered the mother of the gods.

Ancient Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was the son or daughter of a god. People viewed the pharaoh as a godlike figure who spoke directly to the gods and goddesses, and worked with them to make sure that everyone had a good life.

The pharaoh built temples and made offerings to please the gods and goddesses. People believed that, in return, the deities blessed their communities with good harvests, health, and victory in battle. When a pharaoh died, people believed that he or she joined the deities in the sky. **Q:** How might these beliefs support the power of the pharaoh?

One way Egyptians tried to please a deity was by holding a festival in the deity's honour. Festivals often included food and music. A statue of the god or goddess being honoured was carried during the festival.



Egyptian pharaohs were nearly always men, but there were a few exceptions. Hatshepsut, pictured here, was one of these exceptions. After Hatshepsut's death, her stepson took over as pharaoh. He tried to erase all evidence of her rule. **Q:** How do you think the actions of Hatshepsut's stepson would affect Egyptians' view of their history?