

Science V11/S4: Irrigation in Ancient Egypt

Egypt is a country in Northeastern Africa. Its climate is hot, dry, and mostly desert. Though that type of climate is not typically preferred for living, ancient Egyptians learned to change the world around them to meet their needs. Ancient Egyptians used a technique called “basin irrigation” to bring water from the Nile River to local farms and construction sites.

Basin irrigation systems relied on the seasonal flooding of the Nile River. The seasonal flooding, which took place from May to August, was caused by the monsoons in the highlands of Ethiopia. The rainwater from the monsoons would travel down through other rivers that connected to the Nile. Ancient Egyptians relied on the pharaoh to communicate with the gods to flood the river. If the river did not flood like it should, the pharaoh could be blamed.

Water in ancient Egypt was important for both agriculture (farming) and construction. Egypt is famous for its large pyramids. The pyramids were made of large bricks that were difficult to move. One way ancient Egyptians might have used water to move the large blocks was to make the pathway slippery, thus making the blocks easier to drag. These water canals were most likely used to float the blocks to the construction sites.

Nile River floods	Water moves through canals	Water reaches work sites	Water is retrieved
			