



Egyptian Gods

The Ancient Egyptians worshipped many gods and goddesses. A collection of gods is called a “pantheon”, and the Egyptian pantheon was one of the largest in the world. Most of the gods had something that they were responsible for. However, some changed over time or became known for different things. The Ancient Egyptian empire ruled for over 3,000 years, so there was a lot of time for stories and beliefs to change. Despite this, the main gods remained the same throughout.

Osiris

Osiris was one of Egypt’s most important gods. He was known as the god of the underworld and symbolised death and resurrection. He was also responsible for ensuring the Nile flooded every year. This was important because it made farmland fertile each year.

According to an Ancient Egyptian myth, Osiris began his life as a king. He was murdered by his brother and thrown into the Nile for the crocodiles. Isis was married to Osiris and reassembled his body. Unfortunately, he could never return to Earth and was cast into the underworld where he ruled. Osiris and Isis had a son who became the god Horus. Osiris was represented as a mummified king.



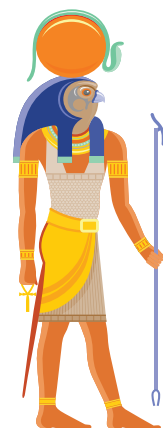
Isis



Isis began her life later in Egyptian mythology. She was married to Osiris and soon became the most important goddess. She was often involved in rituals involving the dead. She represented motherhood and in myths often cared for the dead. She was one of the last Egyptian gods to be worshipped. Many people believe that she changed into the Greek goddess Aphrodite when the Egyptian empire ended.

Re (also known as Ra)

Re was one of many sun gods. He was normally shown with the body of a man and the head of a hawk. Egyptians believed that he sailed across the sky in a wooden boat, guiding the sun on its journey. During the night, he dropped below the horizon and sailed through the underworld. Each night, Re would fight the snake god Apophis. The sun would only rise again if Re won the battle.



Anubis

Anubis was another god associated with death. Originally, Anubis was the main Egyptian god of the dead. Eventually, Osiris replaced him, and Anubis was worshipped at funerals. In mythology, Anubis was the god who wrapped Osiris as a mummy when he entered the afterlife.

In the afterlife, Anubis was said to weigh the soul of the deceased against a feather. He had the body of a man and the head of a jackal. Egyptians were well aware of jackals as scavengers in the desert. This may be why their god of the dead took the form of a jackal.



RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Which god lost their position as god of the dead?
2. Which god started life as a king?
3. Which Greek goddess did Isis possibly become?
4. What did Anubis weigh a person's soul against?
5. How long did the Egyptian empire last?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

S

What did Osiris's brother do once he had murdered him?

I

Why was it important that the Nile flooded?

V

In the Osiris section, which word means something was put back together?

V

In the Anubis section, which word refers to somebody who has died?

E

How has the author used images to help show what the gods looked like?