

# Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

Over three millennia, ancient Egypt worshipped over 2000 gods and goddesses. Some deities changed, were combined or were forgotten entirely while others maintained their popularity throughout the rise and fall of the ancient Egyptian empire.

Ra



Ra was sometimes the leader of the gods and the main god of the Sun. Often displayed as having the body of a human, the head of a falcon and a sun disc with a sacred cobra above him, legend said that he travelled across the sky every day in a bark (a type of sailboat).

Initially, Amun was the invisible god of air. Over time, he was eventually merged with Ra to form one god: Amun-Ra. His main role was the father and protector of the pharaoh. Amun-Ra was usually painted blue to represent Amun's invisibility and he was often portrayed as a man (or a man with a ram's head) wearing a hat with two large feathers sticking out of it.

Amun and  
Amun-Ra



Osiris



In many stories, Osiris was originally the first pharaoh of ancient Egypt. According to a popular story, Osiris was tricked and then killed by his fellow god and brother, Set. His wife, the goddess Isis, was distraught by what had happened and eventually Osiris became the god of the underworld after entering the afterlife. As such, his skin was often coloured green (the ancient Egyptian colour of rebirth) and he was sometimes shown wearing linen wrappings around his legs like a mummy.

Originally a goddess with low-level powers, Isis's powers changed and grew over thousands of years. At the height of her popularity, she was commonly referred to as Osiris's wife and the supreme goddess with many different powers, such as the ability to bring magic and protect women. She was also the goddess of medicine, motherhood and marriage. Her original Egyptian name was Aset (Isis was actually her Greek name) and she was often portrayed as a winged woman with a vulture headdress or a sun disk crown with two horns on either side.

Isis



Horus



Similar to Ra, Horus was often represented as a falcon-headed god. Many ancient Egyptians thought he was the son of Osiris and Isis, the god of the sky and the protector of the pharaoh. According to some ancient Egyptian myths, Horus challenged and defeated his uncle Set for the Egyptian throne.

According to legend, Hathor was sometimes the daughter of Ra, the wife of Horus and the goddess of love, beauty, music and dancing. Like Isis, she was often illustrated as a woman with a horned sun disc crown but sometimes she was depicted as a cow-headed woman.

Hathor



Set



Considered by many to be the god of darkness and chaos, Set also was often featured in Osiris's origin story as his brother. He was usually pictured as a combination of many real and imaginary animals but was most often shown as having a canine body, a forked tail and a long, curved, pointed snout.



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Usually pictured as a man with the head of a jackal (a slender canine found in Africa and Asia), Anubis was considered the god of embalming (preserving something from decay). He was also referred to as Osiris's assistant and the son or nephew of Set.

Anubis



Thoth



Thoth was the god of the Moon, writing, science and knowledge. He was often shown as a man with the head of an ibis (a giant bird with a long, downturned beak) with papyrus reeds in his hand.

Ma'at, Thoth's wife, was the goddess of truth, balance and justice. She was often portrayed as a winged woman with a feather on her head or in her hand.

Ma'at



# Questions

1. How did Ra travel across the sky? Tick one.

- ☐ in a chariot  
☐ by flying  
☐ in a bark  
☐ on a falcon

2. Draw **four** lines and match each god or goddess to their animal head.

Horus

Anubis

Hathor

Thoth

jackal

cow

falcon

ibis

3. Why was Amun-Ra usually painted blue?

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4. Look at the section called **Ra**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'holy' or 'blessed'.

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5. Fill in the missing words.

Over three millennia, \_\_\_\_\_ Egypt \_\_\_\_\_  
over 2000 gods and goddesses.

6. If you could create your own ancient Egyptian god, what would your god or goddess be in charge of and why?

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7. Do you think Isis cared for Osiris? Explain your answer.

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8. Which fact about ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses surprised you the most? Explain your answer.

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9. Which god was your least favourite? Explain your answer.

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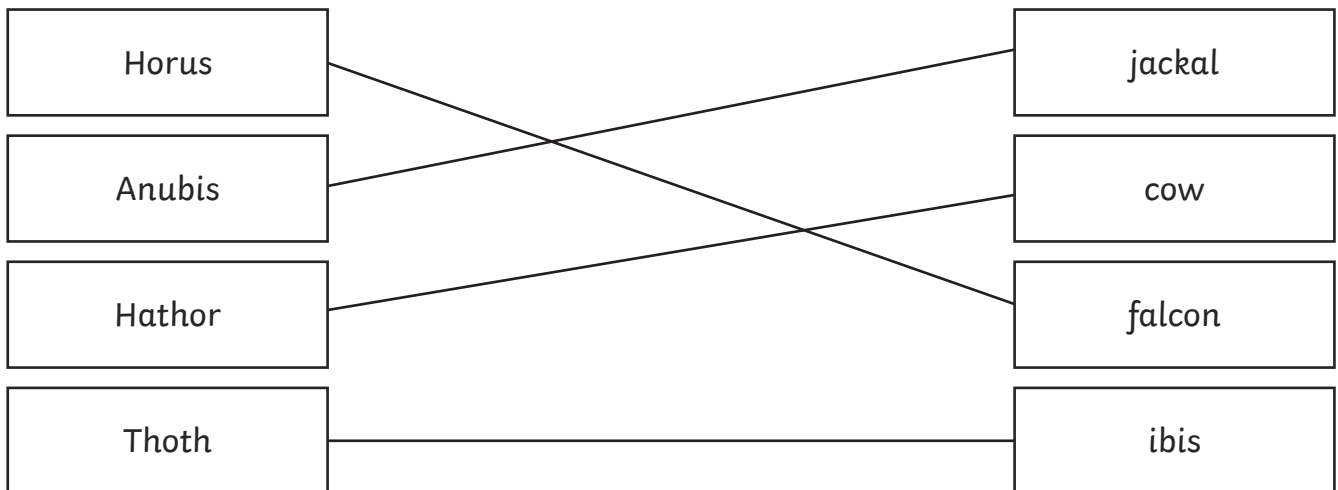
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# Answers

1. How did Ra travel across the sky? Tick one.

- ☐ in a chariot
- ☐ by flying
- ☒ **in a bark**
- ☐ on a falcon

2. Draw **four** lines and match each god or goddess to their animal head.



3. Why was Amun-Ra usually painted blue?

**He was painted blue to represent Amun's invisibility.**

4. Look at the section called **Ra**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'holy' or 'blessed'.

**sacred**

5. Fill in the missing words.

Over three millennia, **ancient** Egypt **worshipped** over 2000 gods and goddesses.

6. If you could create your own ancient Egyptian god, what would your god or goddess be in charge of and why?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would create a god of friendship because lots of people struggle with friendships and could use the help.**

7. Do you think Isis cared for Osiris? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I think that she cared for him a lot because the text says that she was distraught by what had happened to Osiris which means she was very upset. She obviously loved him very much.**

8. Which fact about ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses surprised you the most? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the fact that they were worshipped for over three thousand years surprised me the most. That is longer than most gods people worship, even today.**

9. Which god was your least favourite? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think my least favourite god was Set because his description makes him appear a bit scary looking. He also tricked and killed his brother and was the god of chaos and darkness so he wasn't very nice.**