

Please note y5 + 6 that because this is a **historical report** past tense **does** need to be used (whereas in non-historical reports, present tense is the appropriate feature) so explain this point in your present tense box in the analysis grid.

Egyptian Ships

Background

Almost all Egyptian transport was by water, up and down or across the Nile. There were practically no roads. Again the Nile was predictable and beneficent. The current of course flowed north towards the Mediterranean. The wind was nearly always from the north. So if you wished to travel south up the river, you raised your sail; if you wished to go north you lowered it and rowed with the current. Even the Egyptian word for 'sail' was the same as 'go south', and 'downstream' the same as 'go north'.

They never sailed at night, storms were rare, and the main dangers were sandbanks and the shallowness of the river (for this reason boats did not have keels, and had a very shallow draft). Perhaps the lack of variety of Egypt's needs on the water, compared to sea-going peoples with less predictable weather, partly caused the relative lack of development.

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of development.

But because boats were such a basic part of their lives, model boats were often left in tombs as an essential part of the dead's equipment for the afterlife, and most of what we know comes from these and from pictures in tombs.

Nearly all illustrations are of river-going boats. There are almost none of the sea-going vessels used to fetch timber from Byblos (Lebanon). The Egyptians also built ships on the Red Sea for their expeditions to Punt (Somalia).

The earliest boats were bunches of papyrus reeds lashed together to make simple canoes. People went on using these for thousands of years. In the Old Kingdom they made larger ships with rows of oars and a single, graceful sail; in the Middle Kingdom these were at least 60 m long, with crews of 120. Boats also became specialised – for carrying huge blocks of granite for building, for ceremonies, trading, fishing, pleasure and so on.

