

TEACHER'S GUIDE






By Jennifer Karsh, B.Ed., and Rosanne Papiernik, B.Ed.





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I OVERVIEW OF BOOK 1

The Lost Scroll of the Physician is the first book in the Secrets of the Sands series.

The main character, Sesha, is the daughter of the pharaoh's previous physician, Ay, and is close friends with the royal family. After the suspicious death of her parents, Sesha is intent on finding an ancient scroll that her father was transcribing. Sesha believes information in the scroll will help cure her brother's life-threatening illness. Pharaoh wants the scroll found because he believes it contains information that will give him an advantage in the possible upcoming conflict with the Hyksos. Sesha convinces the pharaoh to allow her to continue her studies as a scribe in the temple and secretly search for the scroll.

Sesha and her friends find the scroll in a hidden room filled with treasure. The queen orders her soldier Crooked Nose to kill Sesha and her friends to prevent knowledge of the scroll's contents and of the royal treasures from coming out. Prince Tutan arrives at the last moment, preventing their execution; however, they can no longer safely remain in Thebes and decide to flee north to the Hyksos kings.

II SUMMARY

Students should be able to read this book in six weeks. The book summary has been divided into six sections accordingly. The book study itself takes eight weeks. In the first week, students can complete pre-reading activities. The reading groups can then meet weekly to discuss each portion of the book, as part of the during-reading activities. Finally, the students can complete the after-reading activities.

This book provides the following opportunities for rich discussions with your students:

- An exploration racism and prejudice between the Thebans and the Hyksos
- A discussion of the advantages of privilege and education with Sesha and Pepi

WEEK 1 (CH. 1-10, P. 1-62)

This story begins immediately after the end of the first book. Sesha, Reb, and Paser are leaving Thebes and running north toward the Hyksos capital, Avaris. They just escaped death at the hands of Queen Anat's soldier Crooked Nose, thanks to the timely assistance of Prince Tutan and Ahmes (the pharaoh's physician). They are hoping to catch up to the Hyksos chieftain, his men, and Princess Merat, who is being forced by her parents to marry the Hyksos chieftain. They intend to join the Hyksos chieftain's party, offer their services as healers, and hopefully rescue the princess, who does not wish to marry. Paser has family in Avaris, but he is not sure whether they will be welcomed. Sesha has to leave her brother, Ky, behind because he is recovering from recent surgery, but Ahmes and Prince Tutan promise to care for him.

Sesha, Reb, and Paser worry about whether they will be able to make it to the Hyksos without help. Paser suggests they free Pepi, the Hyksos spy, from the Place of Confinement and hope he will help them on their journey. Reb is doubtful this plan will be successful. In order to attempt the rescue, they need to gather any items they might need from Sesha's parents' tomb, or mastaba.

Sesha takes a few valuable items from her parents' crypt that can help them with their journey. Paser takes a few items as well, but Reb does not, fearing that doing so will curse him. They head to the Place of Confinement to find Pepi. In exchange for freeing him, Sesha asks him to help them travel north to his people and find the chieftain who has taken their friend. He agrees to help them reach his people. Sesha, Reb, and Paser split up to prepare for their voyage.

On her way to the storehouses to steal food and drink, Sesha spots Crooked Nose entering the storehouse. Sesha decides she will need to get food from inside the palace. She runs into her friend Bebi, who tells her that she and Kewat are caring for Ky. Sesha asks Bebi to tell her brother that she loves him and to give him her amulet. Bebi helps Sesha obtain food and drink before they say goodbye.

Sesha meets Reb, Paser, and Pepi on the banks of the Nile. They select a skiff with a small sail. As they cut the rope mooring the boat, someone shouts at them from the dock, and soldiers begin to run toward them. They evade capture and row the boat into the Nile. As they pass a large cargo barge, the captain recognizes the fishing boat, realizes it has been stolen, and begins shooting arrows at them. To escape the flying arrows, they jump overboard. Reb hits his head on an oar, and Pepi saves him. Pepi suggests they learn to trust each other if they are to survive.

Sesha tells Pepi that they need to find Princess Merat. Instead of letting him know of their plan to rescue her, she suggests the princess might need company. She reveals to him that she cannot return to Thebes because she betrayed the queen by learning the truth and is a threat to the queen's power. Pepi asks Sesha to describe the Hyksos chieftain who has Merat. He recognizes her description and tells her that the chieftain is the leader of the main Hyksos camp located in an oasis in the desert. Reb notices a leak in their boat and they row furiously toward the shore. They have to swim the last part through the reeds in crocodile-infested water.

WEEK 2 (CH. 11-20, P. 63-128)

On the shore, Sesha treats Pepi's injuries, and Paser pulls splinters from Sesha's hands. Pepi tells them that there's a village with a small market nearby and asks whether they have anything to trade with. Sesha looks through her satchel and finds the gemstones from one of her mother's bracelets at the bottom of the bag. In order not to call attention to themselves, they decide that Pepi and Paser will trade at the market while she and Reb will remain where they are. Pepi returns from the market with a donkey, linens, sandals, and some supplies.

They begin their journey through the desert to the Hyksos camp. They decide to camp and sleep during the hot afternoons and travel during the cool nights, guided by the stars. On the second afternoon, the group arrives at a small oasis. On her way to the pond, Sesha steps into quicksand. Pepi advises her and helps her extricate herself from the quicksand. They bathe in the pond and discover the water is too salty to drink. That night they are awakened to discover that a hyena is stealing Sesha's satchel, which contains the food they had been rationing on their journey. Sesha manages to recover a few items that had fallen out of the bag. Hungry and thirsty, they camp one more afternoon under a makeshift tent in a ditch between two sand dunes.

Although Reb continues to be wary of Pepi, Sesha spends time talking to him. She learns that Pepi was on an information-gathering mission in Thebes to discover how the city fared, but he does not reveal his employer. Pepi obviously has experience travelling through and surviving in the desert, and he is familiar with the route they are travelling. However, Sesha notices that he frequently looks off into the distance behind them.

As they near the end of their journey through the desert, Pepi tells the group that their skills as scribes will not be highly valued by the Hyksos, since they are soldiers. He also suggests that unless she wishes to marry one of the Hyksos soldiers, Sesha might want to pretend she is to be his wife and that Reb and Paser are her brothers, in order to keep them all safe in the Hyksos camp. As they end their journey through the desert, they endure a sandstorm.

After surviving the sandstorm, Sesha, Paser, Reb, and Pepi walk toward the oasis, accompanied by a Hyksos scout. Sesha asks whether Princess Merat is there. The scout tells Pepi that the princess is in the camp and that they are just in time for her wedding celebration.

WEEK 3 (CH. 21-27, P. 129-79)

In the oasis, Pepi appears to be familiar with the people in the camp. Pepi asks Sesha, Paser, and Reb to wait outside as he enters the chieftain's residence. After a short while, the chieftain exits his residence with Pepi and announces that both he and his cousin Pepi will be married to their brides, daughters of Thebes, at sunset that night.

Sesha and Merat are reunited. Although Merat has been treated well, she still has no desire to marry the chieftain. In order to delay the nuptials, Sesha concocts a potion to cause vomiting and suggests their illness might be contagious. The wedding is postponed, but as their symptoms ease, Sesha worries the wedding will be back on. The potion wears off quickly, so the girls rub the sap from a fig tree all over their bodies to cause an itchy rash. Pepi, who quickly figures out what the girls are up to, suggests Reb and Paser see patients in the camp in order to isolate from the "contagious" girls and to show the community that they are useful, as their physician is in Avaris picking up supplies.

Sesha and Merat are awakened by shouts and cheers. They sneak over to the village to investigate and find a large crowd forming a circle around Pepi and Paser, who are facing each other in a fight. Merat suspects they are testing Paser's abilities as a warrior. This proves to be the case, and following the fight there is a ceremony to make Paser and Reb new members of the tribe.

On their way back, they hear a woman in labour. Sesha helps the woman, Amara, wife of the chieftain's man, deliver a healthy baby girl. Sesha is surprised when she hears Amara sing the same lullaby to her baby that Sesha's mother sang to her. Amara says that there are many similarities between their peoples, more than the people of Thebes wish to admit.

As Sesha and Merat continue their quarantine, they try to come up with an escape plan. They are unable to figure out how to survive the trek through the desert unseen. Sesha's friendship with Paser has changed slightly since she gave him a kiss on the cheek for his birthday the night before. She does not tell Merat, not wanting to make it appear more than what it was.

Yanassi, the chieftain, and Pepi arrive to end Sesha and Merat's quarantine. Yanassi asks the ladies which roles they wish to assume in the tribe. Sesha wants to be a physician alongside Paser and Reb. The chieftain denies her request, saying there will be enough physicians, especially once their physician returns any day with the caravan. Merat suggests she work in the garden and prepare medicines, to which Yanassi agrees. Merat says she can look after the village children to allow the village women focus on their tasks. The chieftain likes that idea since it will help Merat learn to care for the many children he wishes to have once they are married. During a conversation with Pepi, Sesha learns that the soldiers training in the desert are a special regiment. She also learns that Yanassi is a prince, son of the Hyksos king.

WEEK 4 (CH. 28–35, P. 180–235)

Recovering from their surprise at Pepi's revelations about his family, Sesha and Merat go with Pepi to see the caravan. They are disappointed to not find a way to use the caravan to escape. They meet the healer, Min, who is half Egyptian and half Hyksos. He tells them he trained in Thebes, and Sesha finds out he knew her father.

Merat and Sesha tell Reb and Paser that escape by caravan is unlikely, and they agree to try to think of another plan. Min teaches Sesha about herbal remedies, but Sesha's main work is looking after the garden. Pepi had asked her if another job interests her, and she realizes that she would like to be a spy. She thinks that spy skills may help her and her friends escape.

Akin, the chieftain's man, falls off a horse during training and has a badly broken leg. Sesha deals with it alone. When Min, Yanassi, Reb, Paser, and Pepi arrive, Min tells Yanassi that he could not have done a better job with the leg. Yanassi thanks Sesha and agrees to let her work with Min as a physician. As he is short a soldier, he tells Paser and Reb they will join his army. Sesha realizes the dangers of war and wonders if she can help prevent the war as a spy and diplomat. Sesha asks Pepi to train her to be a spy and he agrees.

That evening, Sesha tells Merat, Paser, and Reb her plans for getting to Avaris. Paser expresses his distrust of Pepi, while Merat decides to accept her fate.

Sesha and Min discuss bronze and copper as they walk to check on Akin, who is not recovering well from his injury. Min tells Sesha that her father had trained some physicians in the delta before she was born. As when Sesha set Akin's leg, he shows no pain when they touch his injury. They realize he must have a spinal injury but don't tell him.

Min tells the chieftain that Akin will probably never walk again. Sesha mentions the scroll, and the chieftain decides to send her to Thebes to get it in case it can cure Akin.

WEEK 5 (CH. 36–44, P. 236–301)

Pepi continues testing Sesha's skills. Paser and Sesha discuss the advantages the Hyksos have over the Egyptians in weaponry. Sesha feels that she and her friends are becoming part of the community.

Sesha overhears Pepi and the chieftain talking. She learns that Pepi had been looking for the scroll before they met and that there is a prophecy about the scroll. The chieftain confirms that he still wishes to go to war with Thebes. He is upset that the Egyptians look down on the Hyksos people and consider them to be inferior. He believes that the Egyptians feel threatened by the Hyksos and will attack if not attacked first.

Continuing her training, Pepi takes Sesha to meet Pentu, the beekeeper, and harvest honeycomb. She learns to keep calm.

Sesha discovers that the prophecy about the scroll says that the person who holds the scroll has power over life and death and power to rule. Pepi thinks the spells, which Sesha was mostly unable to understand, are very important. Sesha learns that Pepi is a brother of Yanassi, but he does not know if Yanassi knows. Amara tells Sesha that Akin does not completely trust Pepi and that Pepi may want the scroll to impress the king. That evening, Sesha notices that Merat is sitting very close to Paser, and she worries that the chieftain may notice her liking for him.

Sesha asks Min about her father as they prepare medicines. He tells her that her father went to Avaris to teach and to learn. He tells her that her father was open-minded and not prejudiced, unlike most Thebans.

WEEK 6 (CH. 45–53, P. 302–64)

Pepi and Sesha start their trip for Thebes with the caravan. Sesha learns that Pepi's mother trained him and his sister to be spies. They discuss the love of education that his mother and her father had and passed down to them. Pepi tells her to be mindful of her privilege that has allowed her to become a physician. He says that he would like to teach reading to anyone who wants to learn, to give others the chance of success. Pepi tells Sesha that he wants the scroll so he can keep it out of the wrong hands. He refuses to tell her the exact words of the prophecy in order to protect her, and she now understands how her friends and family feel when she does the same.

Sesha and Pepi dress as servants in order to sneak into the palace. They meet Ahmes in his chambers and tell him they have come to warn Pharaoh of the Hyksos's plans. Wujat tells Sesha that Pharaoh and Queen Anat are holding a ceremony to adopt Ky that day and that he will be betrothed to their daughter Tabira. Ahmes says that her disappearance is not public knowledge.

Ahmes and Sesha go to the council room. Sesha speaks to Pharaoh and the council and tells them not to underestimate the Hyksos rebels. She tells them that she has lived among them with Princess Merat. She gives them details about their advanced weapons and technology. Pharaoh asks if Avaris supports the rebels, and Pepi says not yet. He antagonizes the council by saying that if they continue to pay tribute to Avaris they could avoid a conflict. Pepi tells the queen that the oracle says that there is still more tribute to be paid. Queen Anat threatens to go to Avaris and consult with the oracle herself.

A fight breaks out. Pepi and Sesha are restrained and the queen orders Crooked Nose to put them in the pit, but Ky asks for Sesha and Pepi to be released. Sesha reminds Pharaoh of the connection he had with her father, and he agrees to release them. Sesha wants to stay with Ky but knows she needs to get back to her friends at the oasis and that Ky will be better off at the palace.

Pepi and Sesha enjoy each other's company on the trip back to the oasis. When they get there, they find that there has been an illness in the village, likely brought by a messenger. This messenger was from the king at Avaris, who summoned his son and Pepi to him, as he is ill and wants to announce his successor. The chieftain and his soldiers, including Akin, have already left for Avaris. Sesha speculates to herself that Yanassi did not wait for his cousin to get back before going to Avaris because he does not trust him.

They notice a stranger, a Theban spy, at the edge of the lake. He and his partner followed Sesha and Pepi from Thebes. The spy's partner has already started on the return trip to Thebes with directions to the oasis. Sesha, Pepi, Min, Paser, and Reb decide it is too dangerous to leave the people of the village unprotected from a possible attack from Thebes while they go to Avaris, so they decide to give everyone extra rations to help them recover before making the trip all together.

Pepi reveals to Sesha that there is an older prophecy, made by the same oracle, about her and her brother.

III PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

EXAMINING THE TITLE

Project an image of the front cover of the book for the whole class. Look at the cover illustrations and title for clues to make predictions about the story and the setting. A good title shines a light on the main idea of a book or something important in the story. Good readers make and verify predictions as they read. Introduce this important reading strategy to your students. Ask the students who they think the Desert Prince may be and why. Together, verify and update these and new predictions as they read.

DESERTS AND OASES

OPTION 1

Students can work in groups to research and present information about deserts or oases.

OPTION 2

As a whole class, read an article online or watch a video about the desert and oasis ecosystems. Discuss topics as they relate to the science curriculum for your students' grade level. For example, the National Geographic website and YouTube channel have resources.

Depending on the grade of your students, the activity can be focused on the following:

- Grade 4: Research some adaptations of plants and animals in a desert ecosystem
- Grade 6: Research and list the species of organisms that coexist in a desert or in an oasis, and describe the features of the physical landscape that supports them
- Grade 7: Research the interactions between the plants and animals in a desert or in an oasis ecosystem

IV DURING-READING ACTIVITIES

HYKSOS SPY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Assign this analysis to students after they have read chapter 3.

Paser suggests that they use the Hyksos spy to help them get to the north. As they spend more time together, Sessa will learn information about him. As students read, have them pay attention to what the character thinks, says, and does, as well as what other characters reveal about him. In the handout, students will identify two of his character traits and any facts they learn about him. Examples of character traits are devious, honest, loyal, caring, mischievous, athletic, and curious.

HYKSOS SPY CHARACTER ANALYSIS HANDOUT

Paser suggests that they use the Hyksos spy to help them get to the north. As they spend more time together, Sesha will learn information about him. As you read, pay attention to what the character thinks, says, and does, as well as what other characters reveal about him. In the table below, identify two of his character traits and any facts you learn about him. Examples of character traits are devious, honest, loyal, caring, mischievous, athletic, and curious.

Character Trait:		
Words	Thoughts	Actions
Character Trait:		
Words	Thoughts	Actions
Facts About the Hyksos Spy:		

CHAPTER QUESTIONS

The chapter questions may be used for discussions, homework, and/or reading responses. You may also choose to assign a few of these questions to each member of a reading group.

WEEK 1 (CH. 1-10, P. 1-62)

CHAPTER 1

1. Explain why Sesha, Reb, and Paser are running. Use information from the text to support your answer.
2. Why do they want to find the Hyksos chieftain and Princess Merat?
3. Where does Paser suggest they run? Why does he think they could be safe there?
4. Reb does not believe that they will be able to make it to the Hyksos without help, but Paser has a plan. Who does he suggest they seek help from?
5. What do the three fugitives plan to do in order to receive the assistance they need? Use information from the text to support your answer.

CHAPTER 2

1. What does Sesha take from the treasures in her parents' crypt?
2. Why does Sesha feel justified in removing these treasures, which her parents might need in the afterlife?
3. What did Paser take from the crypt?
4. What did Reb take? Why?
5. Who or what are Khonsu and Ra? Use clues in the text to help you infer the answer.
6. Who is Nebifu?
7. Why did the pharaoh order Nebifu to be confined in one of the pits?
8. Why can't Sesha use the rope they brought with them to rescue the Hyksos spy?
9. When Sesha dangles the scarf into the pit to free the spy, it hangs several "royal cubits" above his head. Royal cubits are ancient units of measurement. Research online to find an estimate of the length of a cubit and the average height of an ancient Egyptian man. Based on this information as well the information in this chapter, how deep could this pit be?

CHAPTER 3

1. Nebifu says, "He is not a native son of our Black Land. His kind are dogs." What do Nebifu's words reveal about his feelings toward the Hyksos?
2. How do they manage to free the Hyksos spy?
3. Why is Reb unhappy with Sesha's plan?

CHAPTER 4

1. How does Nebifu react when he realizes they released the Hyksos spy?
2. What agreement does Sesha reach with the spy?
3. Sesha suggests that the group should split up. What does each of them need to accomplish?
4. Nebifu asks to travel north with the fugitives. How does the spy react to that request?
5. What does Nebifu threaten when Sesha denies his request?
6. How does the spy respond to this threat?

CHAPTER 5

1. What do we learn about Crooked Nose in this chapter?
2. Why does Sesha suddenly decide that she needs to enter the palace to get food?

CHAPTER 6

1. Where is Sesha's brother, Ky?
2. How does Bebi help Sesha?
3. What does Sesha ask Bebi to give to Ky?

CHAPTER 7

1. What does Paser do with Sesha's scarf?
2. Who was Paser's grandfather?
3. As they select the boat they will sail on, Paser says, "At least the current will be on our side." What does he mean by that?
4. What happens as they are cutting the rope that ties the boat to the dock?

CHAPTER 8

1. On the river, they pass a larger vessel. What happens?
2. How do the fugitives dodge the arrows being shot at them?
3. What happens to Reb?
4. What is a *shaduf* bucket? (p. 45)
5. What is the spy's name?

CHAPTER 9

1. How does Pepi infer that Sesha, Reb, and Paser are scribes? What clues did he observe?
2. What is *Ma'at*?
3. What does Sesha wish she still had to trade for Merat? Why doesn't she have it?
4. What truth did Sesha learn that prevents her from returning to Thebes?
5. Why is Queen Anat against preserving the scroll?
6. Is Queen Anat concerned about the famine?

CHAPTER 10

1. On page 56, Sesha describes the chieftain she believes Merat was given to. Based on the description provided, draw what you believe he looks like. Compare your drawing with those of your classmates. What aspects of your drawings are similar? Why? What aspects are different?
2. Pepi recognizes the chieftain who has Merat from Sesha's description. Who is he?
3. Where does Pepi believe they will find Merat?
4. What is an oasis?
5. What unfortunate event does Reb report?
6. Explain this simile: "The waterskin idea is as useless as an ox without legs." (p. 58)
7. What is the name of the mighty crocodile god?
8. How does Pepi stop the crocodile from attacking him?

WEEK 2 (CH. 11-20, P. 63-128)

CHAPTER 11

1. What happened to Pepi's and Sesha's hands?
2. What does Sesha notice is missing from her satchel? What does she believe happened?
3. Where do Pepi and Paser go?
4. Why do Sesha and Reb stay behind?

CHAPTER 12

1. What supplies do Pepi and Paser acquire in the village?
2. What name has Pepi chosen for the donkey? What does that name mean?

CHAPTER 13

1. Pepi says, "We should stop speaking now. I find the desert kills those who talk most the quickest." What do you think he means by this?
2. What surprises Sesha about Pepi?
3. Why do Paser and Reb carry the waterskin?
4. What do we learn about Pepi's reason for being in Thebes?
5. Which lethal creatures do you think might be scurrying about at night in the desert?

CHAPTER 14

1. How long will it take for them to reach the oasis in the desert?
2. What supplies do they have left?
3. Why does Reb believe he is not as intelligent as Paser and Sesha?
4. Why does Pepi suggest they follow the animals instead of paying attention to the sand dunes?
5. How does Pepi know the desert as well as he does?
6. What does Sesha step into on her way to the pond?
7. What is quicksand? Research online, if necessary, to explain.

CHAPTER 15

1. How do Pepi's instructions help Sesha escape from the quicksand? Use what you know about quicksand and information from the text to support your answer.
2. When Sesha gets caught in the quicksand, Pepi tells her, "The danger comes not from below, but from above." Explain what he means, using information from the text to support your explanation.
3. Why can't they drink the water in the pond?
4. How did Pepi know to tell Sesha to spread her weight across the sand?

CHAPTER 16

1. Who or what is Khonsu?
2. What happens to Sesha's satchel?
3. What items do they have left?

CHAPTER 17

1. Sesha and Pepi talk and wonder about the lights streaking across the night sky. What do they believe those lights are? What are those lights in actuality?
2. Pepi is surprised when Sesha tells him that the pharaoh believes there will be an attack. Does Pepi believe that the Hyksos will attack Thebes? Why or why not?
3. Why doesn't Sesha believe the queen will harm her brother?
4. Pepi shares his strategy for playing Senet. What is his strategy?

CHAPTER 18

1. Why is Pepi licking rocks?
2. How do we know that Nefer belongs to Pepi and is not just a donkey he recently purchased at the village?
3. How do they escape the unbearable midday sun?
4. Does Pepi believe that Paser, Reb, and Sesha's skills as scribes will be valued by the Hyksos? Why or why not?
5. What does Pepi think will happen to Sesha at the camp?
6. Does Sesha want to be married?
7. What plan does Pepi suggest to keep Sesha, Paser, and Reb safe?

CHAPTER 19

1. Why does Nefer get nervous?
2. How can Pepi tell that a sandstorm is coming toward them in the dark of night?
3. How do Sesha, Paser, and Reb shelter during the sandstorm?

CHAPTER 20

1. Who is the man walking with Pepi?
2. What is Pepi's connection to the chieftain?
3. What does the chieftain announce at the end of the chapter that shocks Sesha?

WEEK 3 (CH. 21–27, P. 129–79)

CHAPTER 21

1. What does Reb tell Merat about her mother?
2. Why does Sesha make a concoction?
3. Is Pepi fooled by Sesha's ruse? Explain, using information from the text to support your ideas.

CHAPTER 22

1. Why do Sesha and Merat suffer from itchy rashes?
2. Merat wonders why her mother gave her away. What explanations does Sesha propose to justify her mother's actions?
3. How do you feel about the fact that Sesha is defending Queen Anat while speaking to Merat?
4. What does Sesha share with Merat about her feelings toward Pepi?
5. Why does Pepi suggest that Paser and Reb should treat patients in the camp while Sesha and Merat are sick?
6. Does the camp have a physician? Where is he?
7. What does Sesha ask Paser to bring back to her? Why?

CHAPTER 23

1. Who did Reb treat in the village? What was his ailment?
2. How does Paser suggest they escape the camp? Why will this idea most likely fail?
3. Reb says something that disappoints Sesha. What was it?
4. How does Merat feel about Paser? Why is this dangerous?
5. Merat and Sesha are awakened by shouting and cheering. When they investigate, what do they see?

CHAPTER 24

1. What has Merat observed about the way Paser looks at Sesha?
2. What is the purpose of the fight?
3. How does Paser convince the chieftain that he will be able to fight with them against the Egyptians?
4. What is the purpose of the ceremony Merat and Sesha witness in the village?

CHAPTER 25

1. What do Merat and Sesha hear on their way back to their quarantine area?
2. Why does the woman in labour not want Sesha's assistance?
3. What does Sesha tell the woman in order to get her to allow her to help?
4. Explain why "Merat stands frozen, a look of horror on her face."
5. What do we learn about Sekhmet?
6. Why is this day special for Paser?
7. What does Reb suggest Sesha give Paser? Why do you think Reb makes this suggestion?

CHAPTER 26

1. How old is Paser?
2. Why is Sesha surprised at hearing the lullaby Amara sings to her newborn child?
3. How does Amara respond to Sesha's surprise?
4. What do Merat and Sesha do to pass their time in quarantine?

CHAPTER 27

1. How does the chieftain react to seeing the hieratic script drawn in the sand?
2. What is the chieftain's name?
3. What role does Merat suggest for Sesha when the chieftain tells her they already have enough physicians in the camp?
4. How does Sesha feel about assuming that role?
5. Why are soldiers training in the desert?
6. What new information has Pepi shared about the chieftain?

WEEK 4 (CH. 28–35, P. 180–235)

CHAPTER 28

1. What do you think might be in the baskets the caravan brings to the oasis? Explain your thinking.
2. What surprises Merat about the physician Min?
3. What is Sesha's opinion of Min?

CHAPTER 29

1. What is Sesha's new plan for escaping the oasis?
2. What item of Min's does Sesha covet and why?
3. A soldier comes to the physician's home to get help. He does not expect that Sesha can help because she is "a young girl." What does Sesha do to convince him to allow her to help?

CHAPTER 30

1. Akin has a badly broken leg. How does Sesha deal with it? Write the sequence of events in point form as a procedure.
2. How does the incantation for healing help?
3. The chieftain makes some changes in the lives of Sesha, Paser, and Reb because of Akin's accident. What are these changes?
4. Sesha thinks about the dangers of the possible upcoming war between Thebes and the Hyksos. How does she think she may help?

CHAPTER 31

1. The Hyksos use bronze, and the Egyptians use copper. What advantage does bronze have over copper? How might this affect a war between the two peoples?
2. What are at least three reasons Sesha has for wanting to become a spy?
3. Why does Pepi think Sesha is capable of learning to be a spy?
4. What are Pepi's reasons for training her?
5. What is a poultice? What would a doctor use today instead of a poultice?
6. Pepi gives Sesha advice about how to "remain unseen in plain sight." What does she need to do to accomplish this? Explain two things she needs to do.
7. What do you think Sesha's first training task will be and why?

CHAPTER 32

1. Why does Pepi think that horse riding will be a useful skill for Sesha to learn?
2. How does Sesha attempt to communicate with the horse? Is it successful?

CHAPTER 33

1. List at least three reasons why Paser distrusts Pepi.
2. What decision does Merat make about her future?

CHAPTER 34-35

1. Why is Sesha surprised that Amara and Akin would name their baby after her?
2. What do Min and Sesha learn about Akin's injury?
3. What hope does Sesha give the chieftain for Akin's possible recovery?
4. What bargain does Sesha make with the chieftain and why?

WEEK 5 (CH. 36–44, P. 236–301)

CHAPTER 36

1. How is Sesha feeling about going back to Thebes? List at least two emotions she is feeling and why.
2. What is Sesha's third task in spy training?

CHAPTER 37

1. Why are Sesha and Paser worried about the Hyksos's weapons?
2. What does Sesha tell Paser about her reasons for going to Thebes?
3. Why is Paser upset with Sesha?
4. How does the children's performance help Sesha feel a sense of belonging?

CHAPTER 38

1. Why does Reb feel that the scroll is cursed? How does this show how he is feeling about being in the oasis?
2. How do Merat and Reb react to Sesha's plan for escape?
3. What is Sesha referring to when she reflects that "the oasis casts its spell on us all"?

CHAPTER 39

1. Sesha is shocked to learn why Pepi was in Thebes. What was that reason?
2. The Hyksos immigrated to the Delta several generations ago. What advantages does the chieftain say his people brought to the Egyptians?
3. Why does the chieftain believe he must start a war with Thebes?

CHAPTER 40

1. Why is honey useful in trade? List as many reasons as you can find.
2. In a Venn diagram, compare how Pentu collects the honeycomb with how a modern beekeeper does the same task. You can find information online at the Canadian Agricultural and Food Museum or Ontariohoney.ca.
3. What lesson does Pepi expect Sesha to learn from her beekeeping experience?

CHAPTER 41

1. What does Sesha find out about the prophecy?
2. Why does Pepi think that Yanassi or his supporters might want to kill him?

CHAPTER 42

1. Sesha has her hair coloured with henna to change her appearance for when she is in Thebes. What would you do to change your appearance if you had to go on a secret mission in a place you may be recognized? Draw a picture of yourself in your disguise. Remember Pepi's advice that you want to "remain unseen in plain sight." (p. 208)
2. What does Amara tell Sesha about Pepi's possible reasons for searching for the scroll?

CHAPTER 43

1. Do you think Sesha is jealous of Merat?
2. What does Sesha do to try and keep Merat's feelings for Paser hidden from the chieftain?
3. Why does Sesha feel guilty after kissing Paser?

CHAPTER 44

1. Paser asks Sesha if she will bring Ky back with her from Thebes. What does she answer? What reasons does she have for this?
2. On the training field, Sesha notices several advantages the Hyksos's army will have over Pharaoh's army. What are these advantages?

WEEK 6 (CH. 45–53, P. 302–64)

CHAPTER 45

1. Sesha is the daughter and granddaughter of physicians. This gives her an advantage over other students who do not have the same privilege. Explain.
2. Why does Pepi want the scroll?
3. Why do you think Pepi won't share the exact words of the oracle with Sesha?
4. What do you think the oracle said?

CHAPTER 46

1. Sesha learns that the queen has made plans for Ky. What are these plans?
2. What advantage will the queen have if Ky is her son-in-law?

CHAPTER 47

1. What do you think Queen Anat did with the copy of the scroll that she took from Sesha at the end of book 1 and why?
2. Sesha reflects on the first step to accomplishing what you wish to do. What is this first step?
3. Sesha feels that "belief is the first step in accomplishing what you want to do." What is an accomplishment that you have achieved by believing in yourself? Explain.

CHAPTER 48

1. Sesha uses Bebi to gain access to Queen Anat's rooms to look for the scroll. How does Bebi react?
2. Sesha is afraid that the council will feel the same way that Ahmes feels about Pepi. What are those feelings? Do you think the council will listen to Sesha? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 49

1. What does Sesha do to avoid being recognized in the grand chamber?
2. What does Sesha do to avoid being noticed in the council chamber? How does she avoid getting in trouble with the food servant?

CHAPTER 50

1. What does Pepi say at the council meeting that makes Pharaoh angry?
2. What does Pepi tell Queen Anat about the oracle that is news to Sesha? Do you think he is telling the truth? Why or why not?
3. Queen Anat commands Crooked Nose to throw Sesha and Pepi into the pit. Who stops this from happening and how?

CHAPTER 51

1. How does Queen Anat try to influence Ky against Sesha?
2. What does Ky do?
3. Queen Anat and Sesha both try to persuade Pharaoh about what to do with Pepi. Who does he listen to and why?
4. Pharaoh says Sesha can stay at the palace with Ky. What does she decide to do and why?
5. Why does Wujat give Pepi the scroll? Include more than one reason in your answer.

CHAPTER 52

1. A messenger came to the oasis while Sesha and Pepi were away. What message did the messenger bring?
2. What did the messenger bring to the camp in addition to information?
3. Sesha thinks of a few reasons why the chieftain did not wait for them to get back to the oasis before going to Avaris. What are those reasons? Which reason do you think is most likely and why?
4. A stranger is spotted near the water. Who do you think he is? Why do you think he is there?

CHAPTER 53

1. Sesha makes a deduction about the spy before Pepi does. What is it?
2. What do Sesha, Pepi, Min, Paser, and Reb decide to do about going to Avaris while still protecting the people of the oasis?
3. What final tidbit of information about the oracle does Pepi share with Sesha?

V AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

BOOK TRAILER

View examples of book trailers on YouTube:

- youtu.be/UtPdqv2crQ0
- youtu.be/BYC9jnj--Yc
- youtu.be/vyvyGFjLiZY

Co-create success criteria for book trailers with students based on the trailers viewed together. This could include a brief description of the main characters, the plot at the beginning of the novel, and a cliffhanger.

In small groups, have students create their book trailers. They may use iMovie or Google Slides for the trailer. They can create a voice-over with Screencastify (a free screen recorder extension in Google Chrome) or make a soundtrack. A starting site to find audio clips for sound is search.creativecommons.org.

BOOK TRAILER RUBRIC

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Text and conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation)	Text is not written in an easily read font, size, and colour, with many errors in conventions that interfere with the communication of ideas	Some text is written in an easily read font, size, and colour, with several errors in conventions that do not interfere with communication of ideas	Text is written in an easily read font, size, and colour, with a few errors in conventions that do not interfere with communication of ideas	Text is creatively displayed in an easily read font, size, and colour. Correctly uses appropriate language conventions
Artistic choices (images, voice-over, soundtrack)	Little or no attempt to create an appropriate atmosphere or tone	Attempts to create an appropriate atmosphere or tone	Artistic choices create an atmosphere or tone that matches the trailer	Artistic choices create a distinct atmosphere or tone that matches the trailer
Description of characters	Identifies main characters but does not describe their character traits	Describes superficial traits of the main characters	Describes several traits of the main characters	Accurately describes important, relevant traits of the main characters
Plot summary	Incorrectly identifies the problem that the characters are trying to resolve	Partially summarizes the problem that the characters are trying to resolve	Summarizes the problem that the characters are trying to resolve	Accurately summarizes the problem that the characters are trying to resolve
Question or cliff-hanger	No question or cliffhanger	Question or cliffhanger does not fit the storyline	Question or cliffhanger fits the storyline	Question or cliffhanger fits the storyline and engages the audience

MOVIE POSTER

Have students pretend that they have been tasked with making a movie based on this book and need to design a poster advertising this movie. Co-create success criteria for movie posters based on movie posters viewed together. To find examples of movie posters, visit a movie theatre website. Students should also write a short paragraph explaining their casting choices that includes descriptions of character traits.

Student movie posters should include:

- Prominently and creatively displayed title
- Tagline or slogan that concisely and clearly hints at the main idea or conflict
- Names of actors playing the main characters
- Background and/or image that gives clues about important aspects of the story and is different from the book cover

MOVIE POSTER RUBRIC

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Text and conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation)	Text is not written in an easily read font, size, and colour, with many errors in conventions that interfere with the communication of ideas	Some text is written in an easily read font, size, and colour, with several errors in conventions that do not interfere with communication of ideas	Text is written in an easily read font, size, and colour, with a few errors in conventions that do not interfere with communication of ideas	Text is creatively displayed in an easily read font, size, and colour. Correctly uses appropriate language conventions
Artistic choices (images)	Artistic choices do not communicate aspects of the plot and characters or is the same as the book cover	Artistic choices communicate some clues about aspects of the plot and characters	Artistic choices give clues about important aspects of the plot and characters	Artistic choices incorporate relevant aspects of the plot and characters to creatively communicate the main idea of the book
Casting choices	Casts main characters but does not describe their character traits or justify casting choices	Describes superficial traits of the main characters when justifying casting choices	Describes several traits of the main characters when justifying casting choices	Accurately describes important, relevant traits of the main characters when justifying casting choices
Tagline or slogan	No tagline or slogan, or unrelated to book	Tagline or slogan fits the storyline but does not hint at the main idea or conflict	Tagline or slogan fits the storyline and hints at the main idea or conflict	Tagline or slogan fits the storyline and engages the audience to find out more about the main idea or conflict

LEARN HOW TO PLAY SENET

Pepi and Sesha talk about playing Senet in the book. As a class, research how to create a Senet Board and play this Ancient Egyptian game.

Here are a few links that may be useful:

- [wikehow.com/Play-Senet](https://www.wikihow.com/Play-Senet)
- youtu.be/WV71lpHc0T0

Learn how to make a Senet board: youtu.be/J6EcgCQRJmA

GETTING TO KNOW PEPI

Have students use their Hyksos Spy Character Analysis to assess how their opinion of Pepi has changed over time. Ask students to explain how and why their opinion of Pepi has changed and whether they believe that Sesha should trust him.

CROSSING THE DESERT

Sesha and Pepi travel in the Sahara three times together. As a class, make a list of the supplies they took with them to survive. Then, have students work in small groups to research what they would need to take with them today to hike in a hot desert. Student groups can present their comparison of modern and ancient supplies in a Venn diagram or T-Chart.

LOOKING FORWARD TO BOOK 3

At the end of the novel, Pepi reveals that the oracle made a prediction about Sesha and Ky. Ask students to share what they think the oracle has predicted. They must support their thinking with information from the text.

VI ONTARIO CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Language: Grades 5–8 Curriculum Expectations

Reading

1. Use stated and implied ideas in texts to make inferences and construct meaning.

Applies to: Examining the Title

Writing

1. Determine whether the ideas and information they have gathered are relevant, appropriate, and adequate for the purpose, and do more research if necessary.

Applies to: Deserts and Oases

Oral

1. Use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary, including inclusive and non-discriminatory language, and stylistic devices suited to the purpose, to communicate their meaning accurately and engage the interest of their audience.
2. Use a variety of appropriate visual aids (e.g., posters, charts, maps, globes, computer-generated organizers) to support or enhance oral presentations.

Applies to: Deserts and Oases

Science: Grades 4, 6, and 7 Curriculum Expectations

Habitats and Communities (Grade 4)

1. Build food chains consisting of different plants and animals, including humans.
2. Describe structural adaptations that allow plants and animals to survive in specific habitats.

Applies to: Deserts and Oases

Biodiversity (Grade 6)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of biodiversity as the variety of life on earth, including variety within each species of plant and animal, among species of plants and animals in communities, and among communities and the physical landscapes that support them.

Applies to: Deserts and Oases

Interactions in the Environment (Grade 7)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of an ecosystem (e.g., a log, a pond, a forest) as a system of interactions between living organisms and their environment.

Applies to: Deserts and Oases

DURING-READING ACTIVITIES

Language: Grades 5–8 Curriculum Expectations

Reading

1. Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by summarizing important ideas and citing supporting details.
2. Use stated and implied ideas in texts to make inferences and construct meaning.
3. Extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them.
4. Make judgments and draw conclusions about the ideas and information in texts and cite stated or implied evidence from the text to support their views.

Applies to: Chapter Questions; Hyksos Spy Character Analysis

Science: Grade 6 Curriculum Expectations

Biodiversity

1. Identify everyday products that come from a diversity of organisms (e.g., traditional pain relievers are derived from the bark of the white willow tree; tofu is made from soybeans; silk is made from silkworm cocoons; nutritional supplements, shampoos, toothpastes, and deodorants contain pollen collected by bees).

Applies to: Chapter Questions

AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

Language: Grades 5–8 Curriculum Expectations

Oral

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in increasingly complex oral texts in a variety of ways.

Applies to: Learn How to Play Senet

Reading

1. Identify a variety of purposes for reading and choose reading materials appropriate for those purposes.
2. Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by summarizing important ideas and citing supporting details.
3. Use stated and implied ideas in texts to make inferences and construct meaning.
4. Extend understanding of texts by connecting, comparing, and contrasting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them.
5. Make judgments and draw conclusions about the ideas and information in texts and cite stated or implied evidence from the text to support their views.

Applies to: Learn How to Play Senet; Book Trailer; Movie Poster; Looking Forward to Book 3; Crossing the Desert; Hyksos Spy Character Analysis

Media

1. Produce a variety of media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques.

Applies to: Book Trailer; Movie Poster

Writing

1. Determine whether the ideas and information they have gathered are relevant, appropriate, and adequate for the purpose, and do more research if necessary.
2. Produce revised, draft pieces of writing to meet identified criteria based on the expectations related to content, organization, style, and use of conventions.

Applies to: Book Trailer; Movie Poster

History and Geography: Grades 7-8 Curriculum Expectations

Geography

1. Analyze some challenges and opportunities presented by the physical environment and ways in which people have responded to them.

Applies to: Crossing the Desert

