**My Name is Hatshepsut Name:**

**Date: Block:**

**Directions:**

1. **READ the introduction and the story.**
2. **ANNOTATE while you read the introduction AND the story (circle unknown words, underline important phrases, “talk back” by writing your thoughts)**
3. **ANSWER the questions at the end of the reading.**

Talk Back Below!

Although only 12 miles wide, the Nile Valley regularly produces an abundance (a lot) of food on its nutrient rich riverbanks. This allowed the Egyptians to create a secure, rich, and complex civilization. Egypt was ruled by dynasties of pharaohs for nearly 3,000 years. (A dynasty is a line of rulers who are all related to a common ancestor).

Egyptian records were kept by scribes, as in Sumer. The Egyptians had a unique system of picture writing, which we call hieroglyphics. These were picture signs. Some signs stood for the words they represented; others stood for sounds.

The Egyptian scribes wrote their history on a paperlike surface made of the papyrus reed that grew in the Nile River. The Egyptians also carved their history on the great walls of their temples and public buildings. One of these carved records, which was discovered in 1799, gave scholars the keys they needed to decipher (learn the meaning of) Egyptian hieroglyphics. The carved stone record is called the Rosetta Stone. The stone is a huge tablet with writing in both Greek and Egyptian. Using their knowledge of Greek, scholars were able to understand Egyptian.

The Egyptians worshiped many gods and goddesses, and they believed in an afterlife. The pharaohs were considered divine (holy). The Egyptians built pyramids to serve as monuments and burial places for their pharaohs. Smaller tombs were built for members of the noble families. The bodies of the dead were mummified (preserved) and buried with the food, clothing, and objects it was believed they would need in the next life.

The status of women in Egyptian society was the highest in the ancient world. Women worked in many trades and industries. Their legal rights were equal to those of men. Women owned, inherited, and transferred property, and they could file lawsuits. Women also took an active role in religious life. At home, women taught religious beliefs to their children.

Our story is about a highly unusual Egyptian woman, who ruled Egypt for 20 years. Here is her story: **My name is Hatshepsut, and I am queen and pharaoh of Egypt. I am the daughter of the great pharaoh Thutmose I (the 1st). When my father died, he was succeeded (followed) by his son, Thutmose II, my half-brother. I married Thutmose II and became queen of Egypt. I gave birth to a daughter. Later, my husband had a son, Thutmose III, by another wife, whose social rank was far below mine.**

**Ten years passed and my husband died. A powerful group of people insisted that Thutmose III had every right to become the next pharaoh and rule all by himself. I thought otherwise. I believed that the boy was too young to rule by himself. He needed someone to advise him, guide him, and share power with him. That someone was me. I too had powerful people who supported me, and my claim was recognized. The boy Thutmose III would come to the throne as pharaoh, but I made the most of his decisions.**

**Now I moved to make myself even more powerful. I claimed that my father, Thutmose I, had really intended for me to rule. I also built a great temple at Thebes, and I created a story that was recorded on the walls. I claimed that Amon-Re, the king of the gods, promised to give Egypt a future ruler. He then turned himself into Thutmose I and lived with my mother. Later, the gods helped my mother to deliver me, and then they fed me. Thus people were to believe that I was the daughter of a god.**

**I was prepared to deal with any who would challenge my right to rule. Many people were confused by a woman who was sitting on what always had been a man’s throne. Scribes sometimes referred to me as “he” rather than “she.” To appear more powerful, I often wore a false beard and men’s clothing! Other times I wore a women’s dress and queen’s crown. But all that mattered to me was that I was accepted as pharaoh, ruler over all Egypt.**

**Now that I had the power, how would I use it? I decided to put my energy into building temples and monuments and in establishing trade with other lands. Under my reign, Egypt prospered (did well). I built new temples and rebuilt others that had been wrecked in wars. Best of all, I avoided wars so that the people of Egypt could live full, productive lives. Perhaps my greatest triumph was my expedition (trip) to the land of Punt (in modern day Somalia, Africa). My ships came home bearing gold, ivory, spices, animals, plants, and trees that would later surround my temple.**

Two years later, Hatshepsut, the only woman ever to sit on the Egyptian throne, was dead. Thutmose III was now allowed to ascend (rise) to the throne and rule in his own name. During his reign (rule), Hatshepsut’s name and her image were erased from the many temples she had built. Stone tablets recording her achievements were defaced, smashed, or buried. Only in the 20th century were historians able to reconstruct and understand her achievements. But Hatshepsut’s great temple still stands as proof that a woman born of royal blood had once taken power for herself and had used it wisely.

**Understanding the Story: Write F for each statement that is a FACT and O for each statement that is an OPINION.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Nile is only 12 miles wide.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Egyptians worshiped many gods and goddesses.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Egyptians would have been better off if the Nile were bigger.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Scribes kept Egyptian records.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ If Hatshepsut were alive today, she would be a successful politician.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Scribes sometimes referred to Hatshepsut as “he” instead of “she.”
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Hatshepsut built many temples and monuments.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Egypt should have had more female pharaohs.

**Questions for Review: Answer the questions ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER.**

1. Why was the work of the Egyptian scribes so important?
2. Describe the status of women in early Egypt.
3. Why was Hatshepsut considered to be “unusual” for her time?
4. In what ways did Hatshepsut try to convince Egyptians she should be accepted as pharaoh?

**Activities: Choose ONE of the following activities to complete.**

1. Prepare a report card for Hatshepsut. Grade her from A (highest) to F (lowest) in the following areas AND justify (give a reason for) each grade: (a) claim to the throne (b) achievements (c) leadership (d) solution of problems.
2. Imagine that you are an editor of an Egyptian newspaper. Write Hatshepsut’s obituary (notice of her death that includes biographical information and a summary of her achievements).