

THE
ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

3500 BC - 395 AD



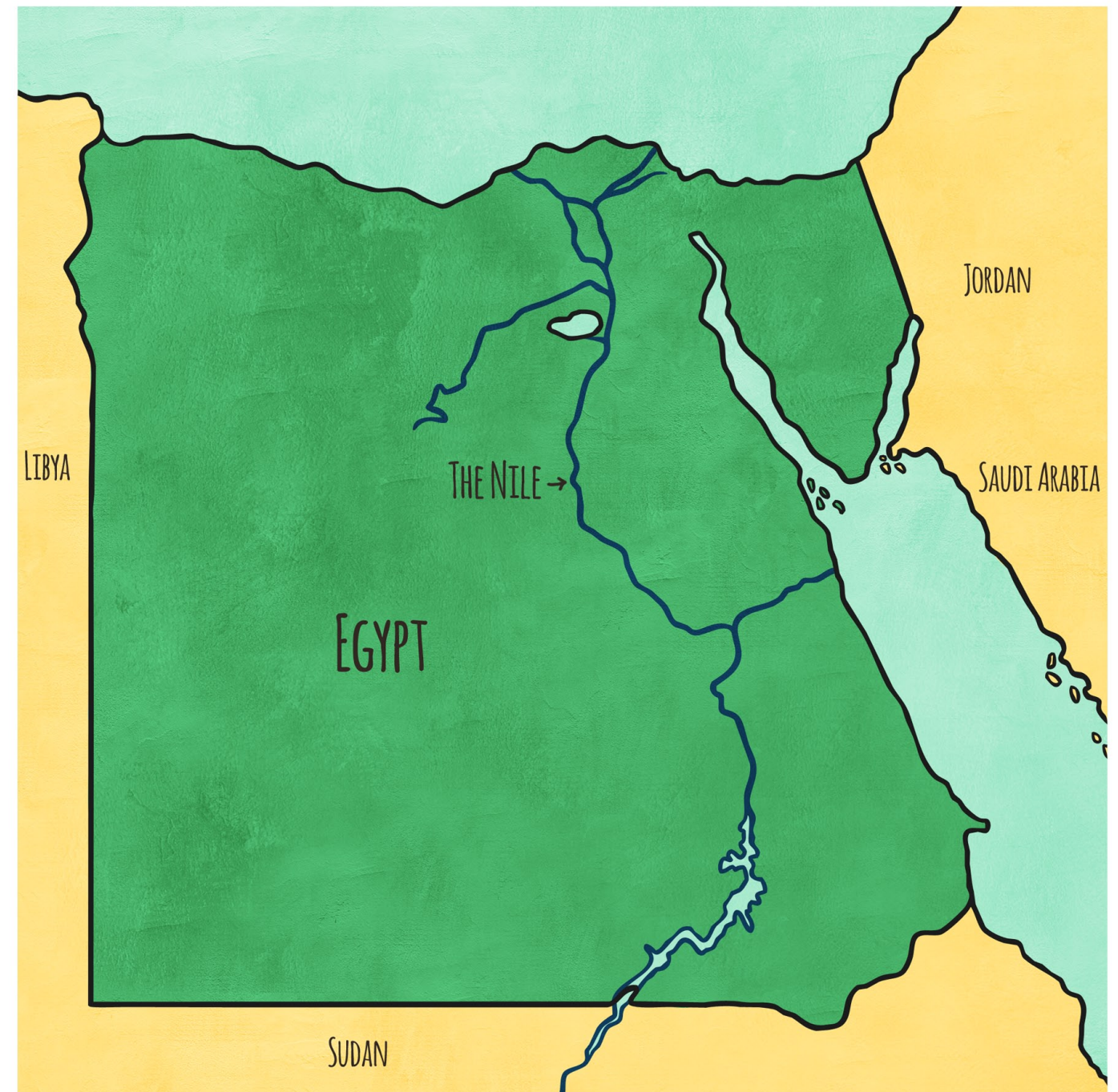
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Who They Were

The ancient Egyptians were an ancient civilisation which existed from around 3100 to 332 BC. They lived in the lower end of the river Nile, which now lies in the modern country of Egypt. They were very successful due to their skills in medicine, farming and construction. Remains of their civilisation can still be seen today in their buildings, art and hieroglyphics.

The Egyptians had many rivals when they were at their most powerful, including the Hittite, Assyrian and the Mitanni Empires. The civilisation was invaded many times over its existence until it finally fell to the Greeks and then the Romans by 30 BC.

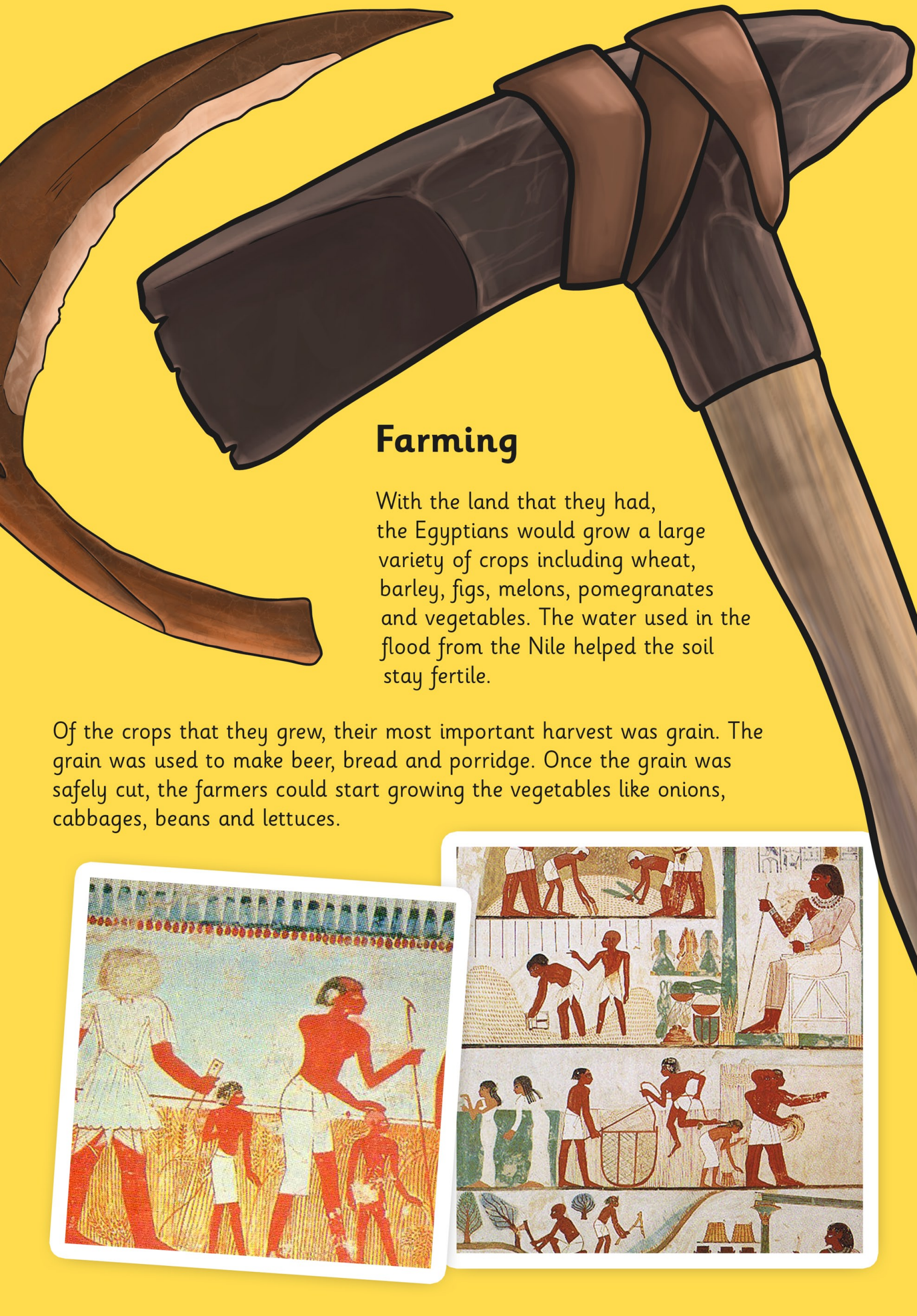
Most of the Egyptians lived by the Nile, a river which runs through the country and almost all of the people in Egypt today live along the same river.



The Land

The ancient Egyptians lived mainly around the Nile and northern coast of Africa because on the rest of the land it was hard to grow crops. However, at the beginning of the ancient Egyptian civilisation the climate was very different, the land was green and filled with plants and animals.

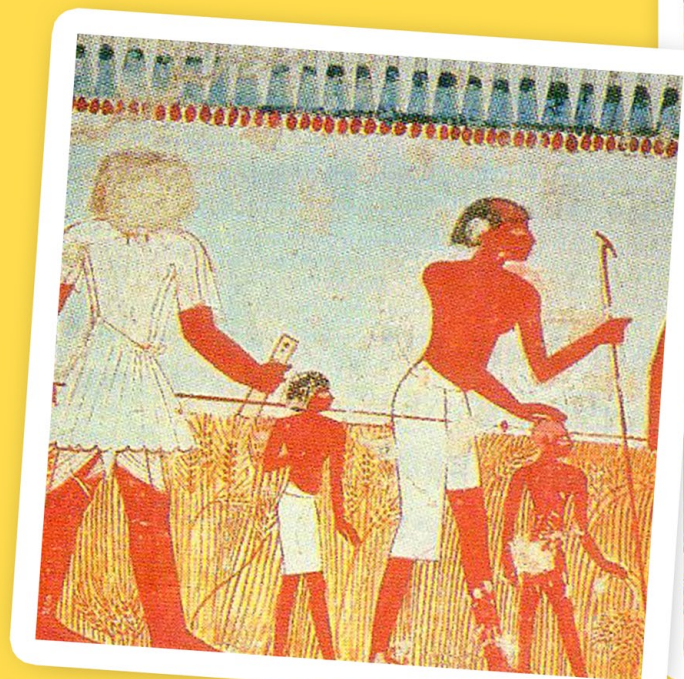
Their continued success was because of their skills at adapting to the conditions of the Nile River valley. They knew how to predict a flood and used the water to grow more crops than they needed, giving many a comfortable life.



Farming

With the land that they had, the Egyptians would grow a large variety of crops including wheat, barley, figs, melons, pomegranates and vegetables. The water used in the flood from the Nile helped the soil stay fertile.

Of the crops that they grew, their most important harvest was grain. The grain was used to make beer, bread and porridge. Once the grain was safely cut, the farmers could start growing the vegetables like onions, cabbages, beans and lettuces.



The Seasons

A farmer's year was split into three seasons:

Akhet (June-September): The Flooding Season.

In the floods, no farming could be done so the workers would have to do other jobs to make money and pass the time like taking care of animals, serving their King (the Pharaoh) and fixing their tools for the year ahead.

Peret (October-February): The Growing Season.

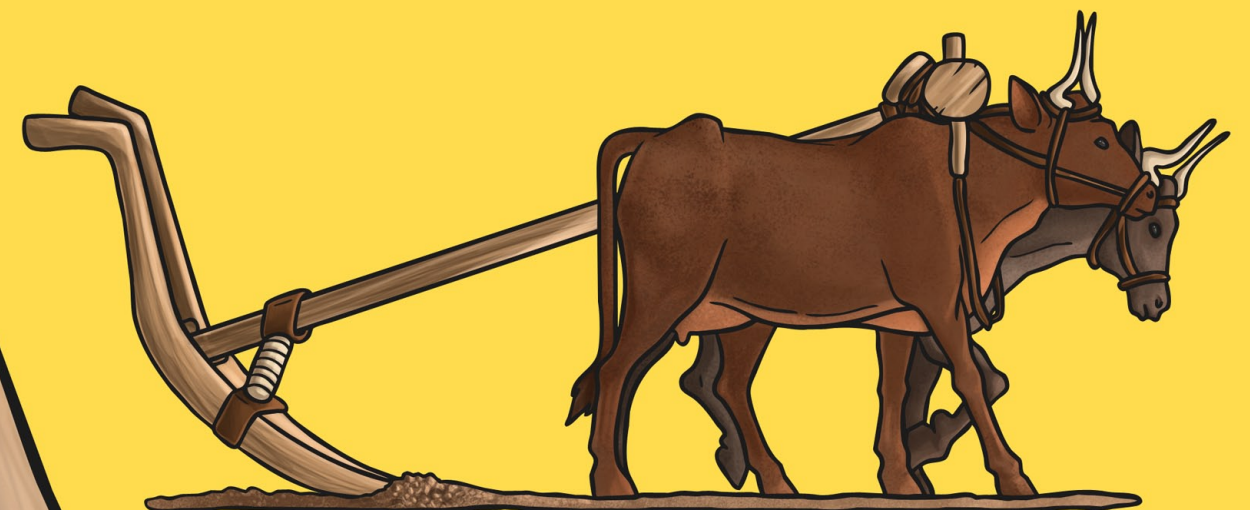
The flood water leaves behind the rich soil so the farmers can go into the fields to plough and sow them.

Shemu (March-May): The Harvesting Season.

By March, many of the crops are ready to be harvested. This job must be done quickly before the floods return.

Tools They Used

The Egyptians used tools similar to those still used today. They would use a hand plough or use an oxen to pull a larger plough. They also had tools like the mattock (left) which was a mix between a hammer and an axe, used to loosen the soil and remove stones. Other useful tools used in farming were rakes, hoes and a sickle; a curved piece of wood with a sharp blade of copper or flint on the inside, used to harvest crops (top left).



DAILY LIFE

Keeping Clean

Most ancient Egyptians were farmers but they still found great importance in staying clean and well dressed. Most of them would bathe in the Nile using a soap made from animal fats and chalk, followed by strong perfumes and ointments which were used to hide their body odour and sooth the skin.

Clothing

As Egypt was so hot, it meant that people needed to wear lighter materials to keep them cool during the day. Most men and women would wear white sheets of linen. These were made into dresses for the women and loincloths or shirts for the men. Linen was very common as it was made from the flax plant which most farmers would have grown. The clothing would give them some protection from the sun but most children would be without clothing until around 12 years old.

Finishing Touches

If you were a family that had more money, you would usually wear more accessories to show off your wealth. The women would wear wigs but both men and women would wear makeup, usually blue and green eyeshadow and black eyeliner. Jewellery was also worn. The most popular was an amulet which they believed gave them strength and protection from the Gods.

The Egyptians would usually go barefoot but if it was a special occasion they might wear a pair of sandals made of leather.



Home Sweet Home

Trees were very rare in ancient Egypt so the buildings had to be made of bricks, consisting of mud and straw. This was perfect as the bricks kept the inside of the house cool even when the weather was so hot outside. Most houses were lived in by a farmer and his close family. Each home would have a kitchen with no roof to allow the heat from cooking to rise out. There would be a grindstone to mill the grain into flour as well as a small oven for bread.

Most Egyptian houses had at least three rooms and a flat roof which would also be used as an outdoor living room. Examples of these houses can still be seen today at places like El-Qasr (below).



Dinner Time

The Egyptian diet started with bread and beer. The rest of the meal would have included some of the fruit and vegetable crops. On feasts or meal times for the rich, the Egyptians would have also enjoyed some wine, meats and fish.

THE NILE

The Water

Where the river Nile starts is not certain. Some people think that it originates in Burundi. The water in the Nile comes from the White Nile and the Blue Nile. The White Nile water comes from Lake Victoria whilst the Blue Nile water comes from lake Tana in Ethiopia.



The Uses

Nile was the reason that the first farmers settled there around 5000BC. The river was used for water, food and transport, as well as making the soil in the area perfect for growing crops.



The river banks were also filled with a reed called papyrus, which was turned into a kind of paper. The ancient Egyptians also used these reeds to build the boats that they would use to transport people, goods and materials up and down the river.



The ancient Egyptians would also use the river to catch fish with spears and nets as well as catch birds that came to the water.

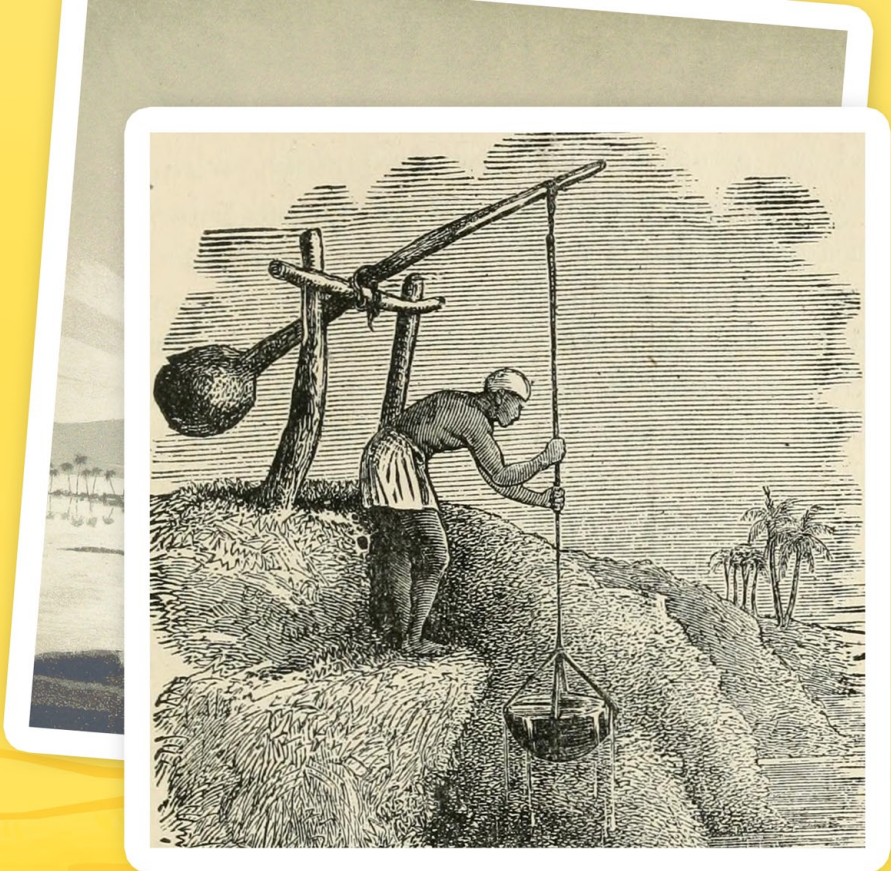
Quick Facts!

1. The Nile is approximately 4132 miles long (6650km). That makes it the longest river in the world.
2. The river starts in the country of Burundi and runs through Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan and touches a few more before it reaches Egypt, where it flows into the Mediterranean Sea.
3. Since ancient Egyptian times, Crocodiles have lived in the water, most measuring in at 4 metres long.

Flooding

The melting snow on the Ethiopian mountains and the summer rain is what caused the flood. The water would rush down the Nile and into Egypt where it would burst the banks and flows onto all the nearby flat fields.

The farmers would then build mud-brick reservoirs to keep the water in. They would then build canals to allow the water to flow near their land to make it easy to move to the crops.



Moving the Water

The farmers would lift the water from the canals using a tool called a shaduf (or shadoof) (above). A shaduf is a large pole balanced on a beam. At one end of the pole was a heavy weight and on the other end was a bucket. The ancient Egyptian farmer would pull the bucket down into the water, then the weight would pull the filled bucket back out again. He would then swing the bucket round and empty the bucket onto his crops.

The God

It was very important to pay thanks to a God for their gifts so people would pay tribute to the God Hapi for bringing the flood to the land to allow them to grow their crops. A lot of farmers would keep an amulet of Hapi or a statue as a sign of respect.



Pyramids

The pyramids were the tombs that were built for the Pharaohs – the kings. The size of the pyramid was built to show the importance of the person who is buried in it. The ancient Egyptians believed that if a person was mummified that they would live forever, so they built these tombs to keep their bodies.

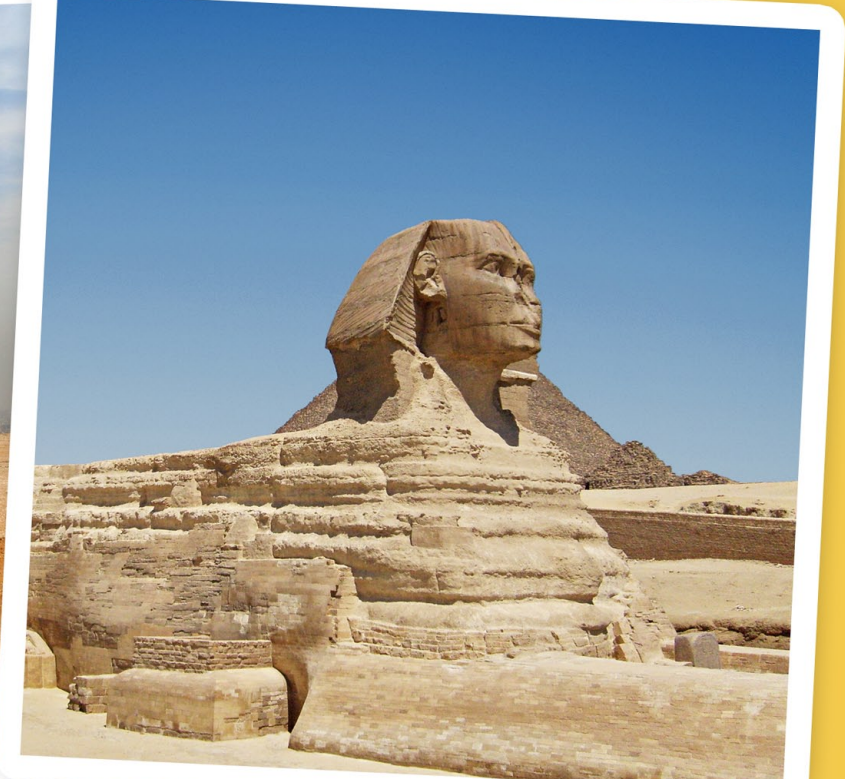
The most famous pyramid is the Great Pyramid (right), built for Pharaoh Khufu. When it was built it was over 140 metres high and took 20 years to build. It stands alongside many other smaller ones. The Great Pyramid has a rough rocky surface because the outer layer of rock has worn down. When the pyramid was originally built, it would have had an outer layer of stone with a smooth appearance.

Inside the pyramid there are a lot of hieroglyphics which tell the story of the pharaoh that was buried there. These would be used to tell the achievements and adventures of the Pharaoh. These hieroglyphics are why we know so much about the ancient Egyptian civilisation and the people who ruled it.

There are over 130 pyramids that have been found in Egypt, the earliest being the Pyramid of Djoser which was built around 2650BC. The last pyramids were finished around 1800 BC.

The Afterlife

The Egyptians believed that after you died, you would go into a new life. They also believed that when you did this you would take all your items that you owned with you. This meant that Egyptian families would put things into the grave of their loved one that they thought they would need.

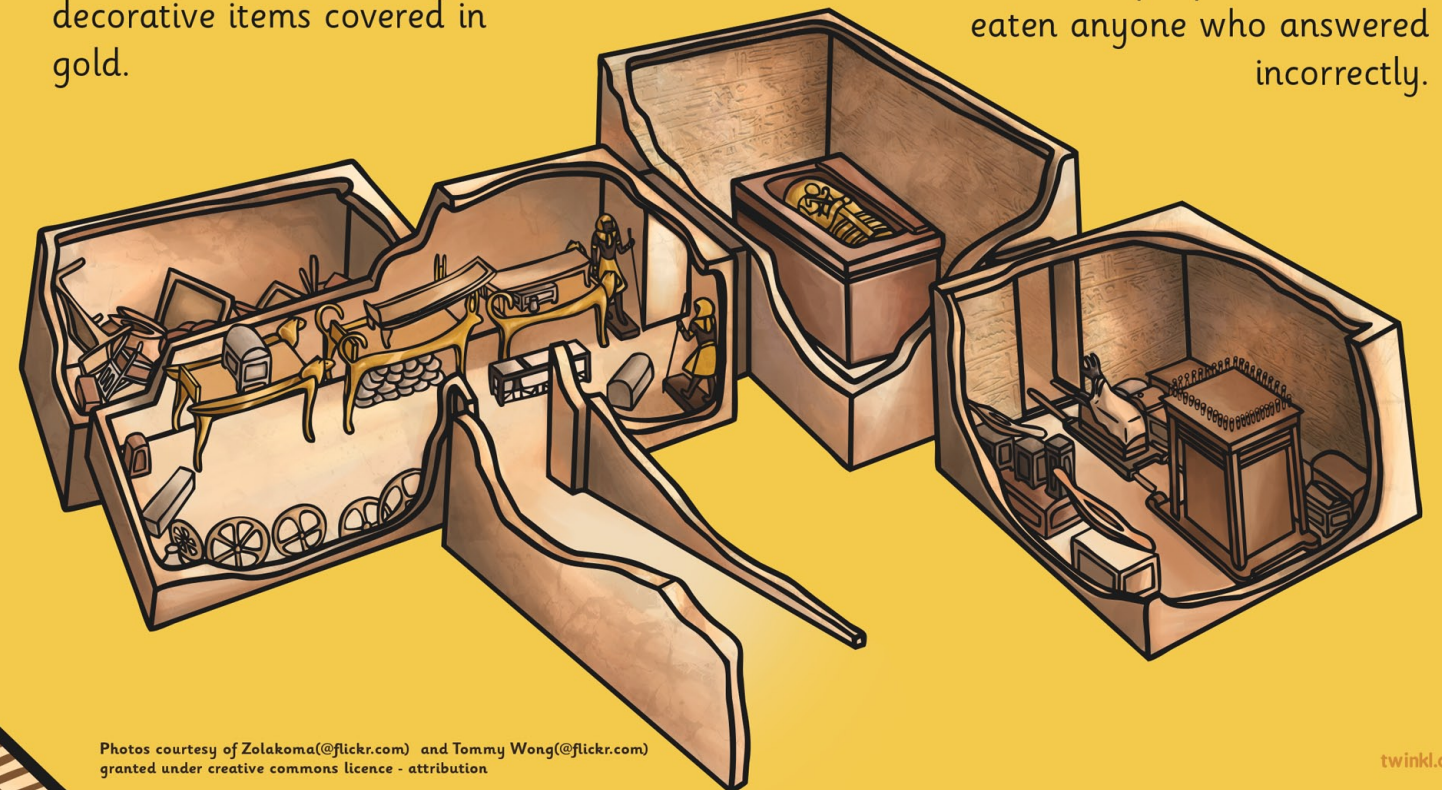


The Tomb

The inside of an Egyptian tomb looked something like the example below. The body of the pharaoh was placed in a sarcophagus (a large stone coffin) which was then surrounded by other chambers, filled with items that they thought they would need in the afterlife, mostly decorative items covered in gold.

The Sphinx

The sphinx (above) had the body of a lion and the head of a pharaoh and sometimes the wings of a large bird. It was a mythical creature which was meant to guard the pyramid from harm. In myth, the sphinx is said to have asked people riddles and eaten anyone who answered incorrectly.

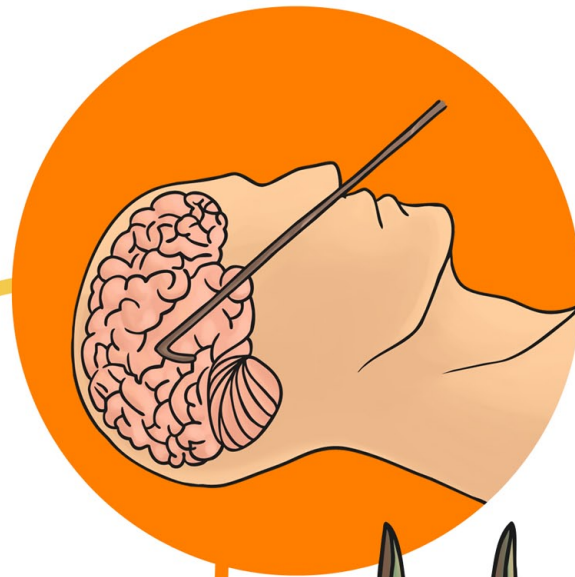


Mummification Process

From Body to Burial

1. The body was put on a table and it would be washed and purified.

2. They would then take out the organs, leaving only the heart. The brain would be taken out through the nose using a hook.



3. At this point, the body was filled with stuffing ready for the next stage.

Some of the organs removed from the body were placed in special jars called canopic jars. The jars were carved into the shape of the four sons of Horus – one of the ancient Egyptian Gods. Each one protected a different organ.

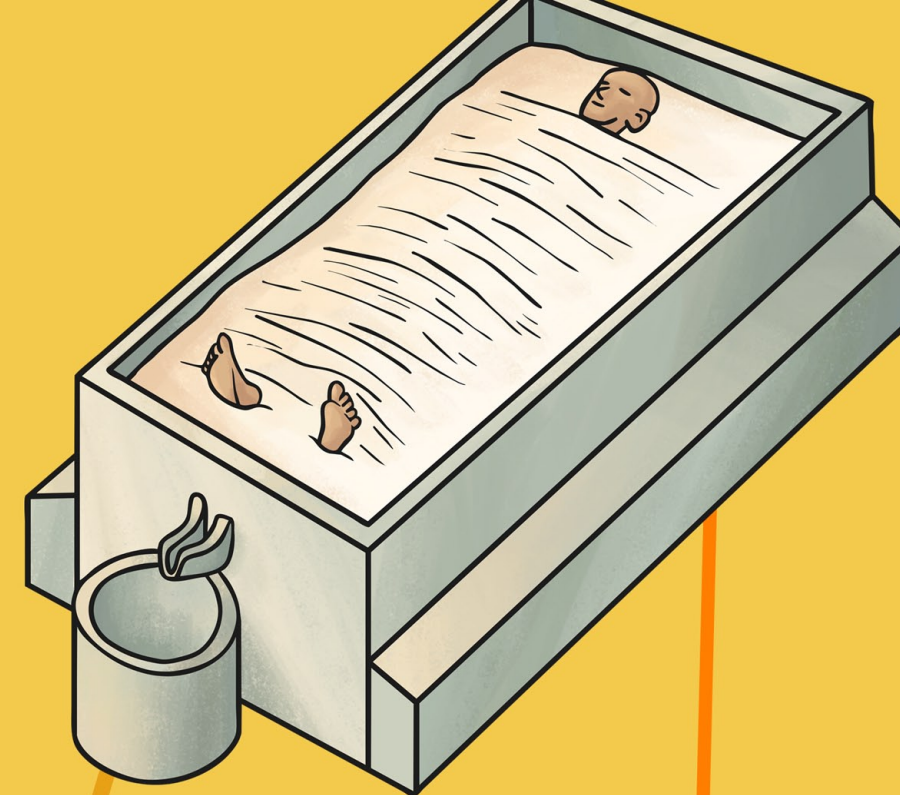
a. Duamatef has the head of a jackal and it protects the stomach.

b. Imsety has a human head and he guards the liver.

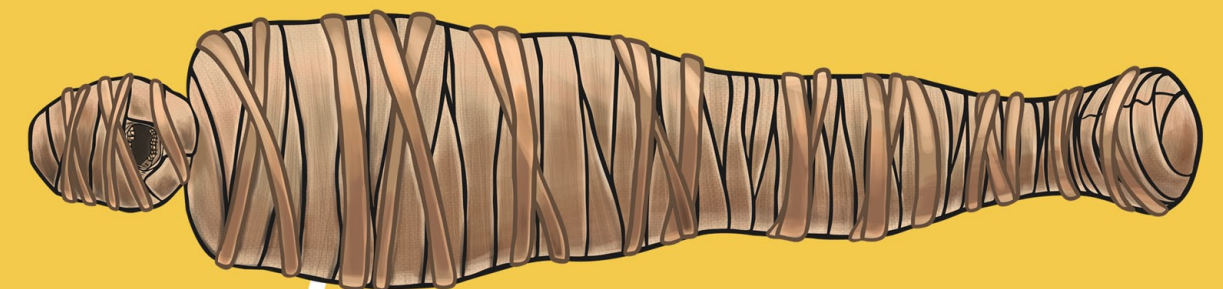
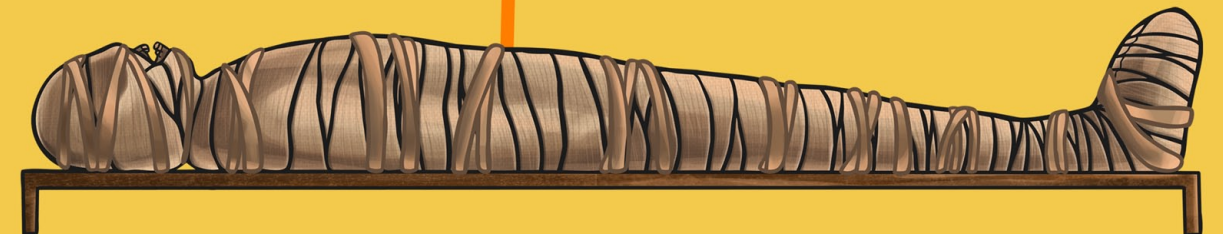
c. Qebehsenuf had a falcon's head and protected the intestines.

d. Hapi, with the baboon head protects the lungs.

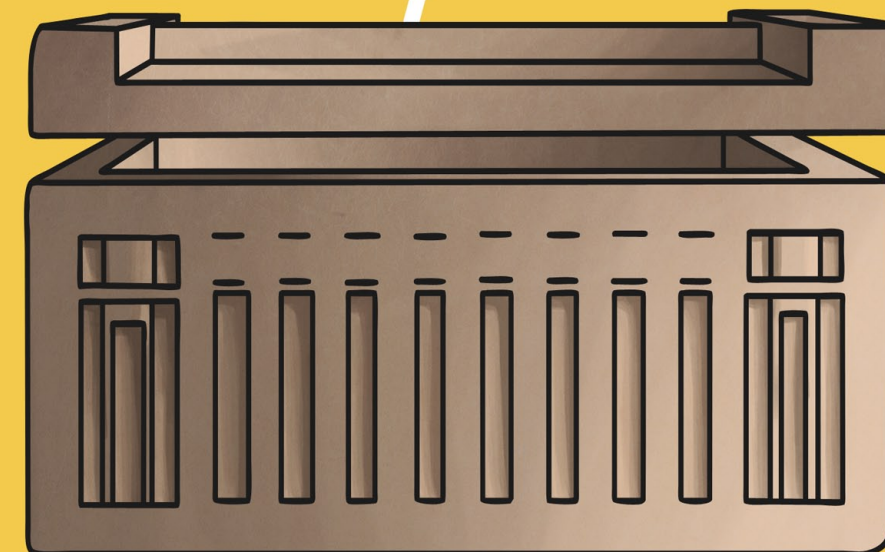
The four jars would be put in a chest and left in the tomb with the mummy.



4. The body was placed in a bath of a substance called natron. The natron would be used to dry up the rest of the moisture in the body.

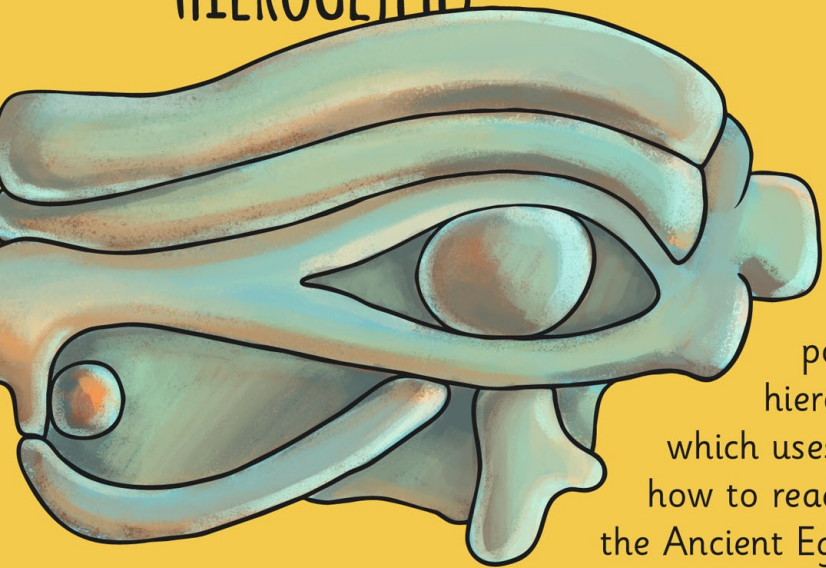


5. After about 40 days, the stuffing in the body was removed and sawdust of linen was put in. The mummy was then wrapped in long rolls of linen and then covered in a sheet called a shroud.



6. Finally, the body was placed in a large stone coffin called a sarcophagus which was inside the tomb.

HIEROGLYPHS



What are they?

The word hieroglyphics comes from the Greek translation 'holy writing'. You can see examples of this writing on ancient Egyptian artifacts like wall carvings, pottery and the papyrus paper. The hieroglyphs are the ancient writing system which uses symbols and pictures. We have found how to read the hieroglyphics to understand how the Ancient Egyptians lived.

Why did they write them?

The ancient Egyptians thought it was important to write down all the information they could about their Kings and their religion. So they made the hieroglyphs to tell people in the future what happened. Hieroglyphs were one of the ways the Egyptians would write. They mainly used them in religious texts, on statues and in tombs.



Who wrote them?

Not everyone could read and write the hieroglyphs, only a group of people called scribes would learn how to do it. The scribes would almost all be men but there is proof of female doctors who could also read them for understanding medical texts.

To become a scribe you would need to go to a special school. At school you would learn to read and write hieroglyphic and other scripts. The children would spend hours writing on sheets of papyrus and practice on pieces of rock and pottery.



Where would they write them?

In school – The scribes would be taught how to write and carve in hieroglyphics. Many students would spend hours copying hundreds of signs and it was hard work – there is even evidence that some of the scribes skipped class so they didn't have to do it.

In the fields – After the scribes finished in school, one of the first jobs many of them had was working in fields, counting crops and animals. They would let the government know how many of these would be taken as tax.

In tombs – The Egyptians believed that the hieroglyphics in the tomb helped the body get to the afterlife. The scribes would write spells on the walls then the craftsmen would come and carve away what the scribes had written. It was very important that the craftsmen did it perfectly or the spell would not work.

In temples – The temples were the houses of the gods and goddesses. The priests would be the scribes, they would carve the walls with hieroglyphics and drawings to show their respect. Instructions for rituals to please the gods would also be written on the walls and on paper for other people to use.

How can we read them?

The secret to reading the ancient Egyptian text was found in 1799 when the Rosetta stone was uncovered. It is called this because it was found in a town in Egypt with the same name.

The text on the stone is thought to have been written by priests, it lists all the good things that the pharaoh has done for the priests and the people of Egypt.

The reason why this stone is so important to reading the language is that it is written in three languages which makes it very easy to translate. It is written in hieroglyphs, Demotic (a more common Egyptian way of writing) and an old Greek text. It took scholars twenty years to translate all the text into a modern language.



Ancient Egyptian Religion

There were more than 2000 gods in ancient Egypt. Most took human form but some had the heads of animals. Here is a selection of the more important gods that Egyptians would have worshipped.

1. Ra - Ra was God of the sun and the lord of the gods. He is shown to have the body of a human and the head of a falcon. Above his head sits a sun disc with a sacred cobra twisted round it. It is said that Ra sailed the heavens in a boat called 'Barque of Millions of Years'. At the end of every day many thought Ra had died as he sailed through the night in the Underworld leaving the moon to light the night sky until he was born again at dawn.

2. Amun - Amun was an important God because it is said that he created all things. However, there are not many stories or pictures of him as he was invisible. Many of the pictures of him come from when he mixes with another God like Ra, when he becomes Amun-Ra. Amun is usually in human form but sometimes has a ram's head.

3. Horus - Horus has the head a hawk which makes him look similar to Ra but Horus has a crown made to look like the two parts of Egypt, the red and the white to show that he ruled all of the land. Horus was the God of the sky and it was believed that the pharaohs were a living version of Horus making them godlike.

4. Thoth - Thoth was the God of wisdom, writing, time and the moon. The ancient Egyptians believed that Thoth created hieroglyphics and kept a record of all knowledge. He has the head of an ibis bird, a long beaked bird common in Egypt.

5. Ma'at - Ma'at was the goddess of truth, justice and harmony and the wife of Thoth. A pharaoh had to promise to follow Ma'at and be a fair and honest leader.

6. Isis - Isis is the mother of Horus and the queen of the goddesses. Sometimes she is shown to have a throne on her head and other times she has a sun disk similar to Hathor.

7. Osiris - Osiris is the God of the dead and husband of Isis. He is shown wearing the white linen wrapping from a mummy. He wears a white crown with large feathers. Although he was the God of the underworld, Egyptians still liked him for helping people pass on to the next life.

8. Hathor - Hathor was the goddess of love, music and dance. She looked after all women in life and death. Hathor sometimes took the form of a cow with a sun disk above her head.

9. Anubis - Anubis was the God of embalming, the mummification ritual. It is believed he made the first mummy, Osiris. Anubis was the guide of the dead, he helped them pass to the next life. It was said that Anubis would wait for you in the hall of the dead to weigh your heart. If your heart was lighter than Ma'at's feather, you would live forever. If it was heavier, your heart would be eaten by the demon Ammit. Anubis had the head of a jackal.

10. Sekhmet - Sekhmet was goddess of war, fire and medicine. She has a head of a lion, the best hunter known to the Egyptians and her breath is said to have created the desert.



EGYPTIAN PHARAOSHS

Who Were They?

Who were they? The pharaohs were the kings and queens of all of Egypt. Most were men but there were some famous female pharaohs like Nefertiti and Cleopatra. The pharaoh was the most important person in the kingdom and was in charge of the government and every temple. The Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was half-man, half-god. The God half of them was thought to be taken from Horus, the God of the sky. It was thought that after a pharaoh died, they would be joined with the sun and a new Horus would be sent to rule on earth.

The First Pharaoh

Egypt used to be split into two kingdoms, the Upper Egypt (known as the white crown) and the Lower Egypt (known as the red crown). We know that at some time around 3100BC the north took the south and joined them together and the first true pharaoh, King Narmer ruled over it. Narmer created the new capital of Egypt, known as Memphis which sat on the border of the north and south.

Quick Fact!

The ancient Egyptians did not call their king a pharaoh. The word pharaoh is first used in the ancient Greek language.



IMPORTANT PHARAOSHS

Ramses II (Ramses the Great)

Born: 1303 BC. **Died:** 1213. **Reign:** (1279 – 1213 BC)
Ramses II is one of the most famous pharaohs because of his achievements over his long life. He was a great war leader and he led the Egyptian army against many different enemies like the Hittites, Syrians and Libyans. Ramses is known for creating one of the first peace treaties with the Hittites to allow peace. Many of the statues still standing today were built for him including the four statues of himself outside of the temple of Abu Simbel (below).



Thutmose III

Born: 1481 **Died:** 1425 **Reign:** 1479-1425 BC
Thutmose was too young to rule at first so he had his Aunt Hatshepsut rule with him. He was not fond of Hatshepsut even though she was a good ruler and it is thought that he had her killed. Thutmose took the throne and went on to be a famous warrior king, not afraid to go first into battle. He never lost a war and he became very well-liked by all for his bravery and strength. In his time as pharaoh, he took back the countries of Syria and Palestine into Egyptian rule which created the largest kingdom at that point.

Cleopatra VII, the Last True Pharaoh

Born: 69BC **Died:** 30BC **Reign:** 51 - 30 BC
Cleopatra was born a princess, her father was Pharaoh Ptolemy XII. The Ptolemy family was actually Greek but had ruled Egypt for over 300 years. Cleopatra ruled with her brother who then made her leave the palace. In 48 BC, Julius Caesar came to Egypt and they fell in love. Cleopatra got Caesar's army to take back Egypt and they defeated her brothers' army so she could rule as pharaoh. Even though she was Greek, Cleopatra loved Egyptian culture and spoke the language. She made a lot of money for the Egyptian kingdom and the people loved her for it.



TUTANKHAMUN THE BOY KING

Who Was He?

Born: 1341 BC Died: 1323 BC

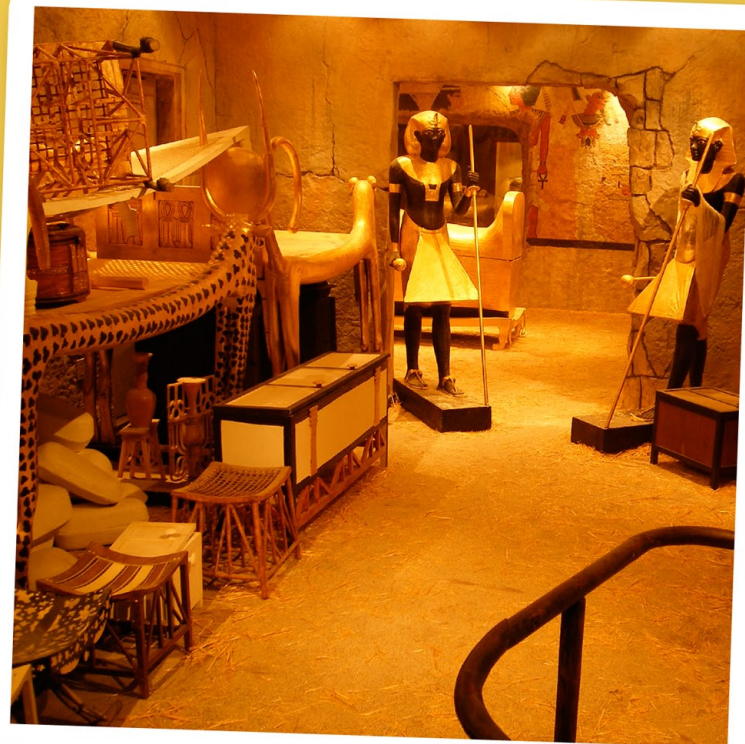
Reign: 1332-1323 BC

Tutankhamun became the pharaoh at the age of nine and ruled at a time when the Egyptian empire was at its strongest. He ruled for about 9 years until his death at the age of about 18. We are still not sure how he died but there are many opinions about this. Some people say it was from an accident and others say it was from a disease that he suffered from after he broke his leg. We do know now that his death was a surprise for many as he was buried in a tomb which had been built very fast and messily.

Who Found His Tomb?

The tomb was found by a group of researchers lead by Howard Carter (below). The reason why Tutankhamun is one of the most famous and talked about pharaohs is because his tomb was only found in 1922 which means that all of the treasures and the body inside have been left in very good condition. Carter knew where to look because he worked out from other important finds that the tomb would be in the Valley

of the Kings. A cup found by a man named Theodore Davis with Tutenkhamun and his wife on it was a clue that Carter said helped him find the area of the tomb of the Boy King.



What They Found

Inside the tomb they found over 3000 treasures that were put in for Tutankhamun to take with him into the afterlife. Many of the items were made or covered in gold, only fitting for a king to own. The tomb itself was split into many different rooms. Most of the rooms were for the objects apart from the burial chamber which just held his sarcophagus.

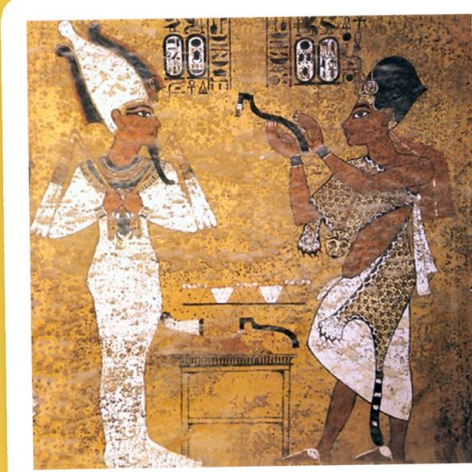
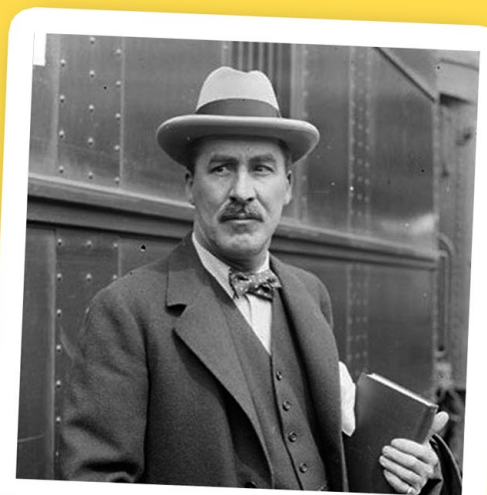
Decoration

The burial chamber with the body is the only decorated room in the tomb which is very unusual for the resting place for a king. Normally, all the walls would be carved or painted which is how we know that Tutankhamun died very suddenly. Many historians also believe that the tomb itself was not made for him in the first place and the burial chamber and decorations were added later. The images on the walls were from a ritual called the 'opening of the mouth' (an example of it can be seen below).



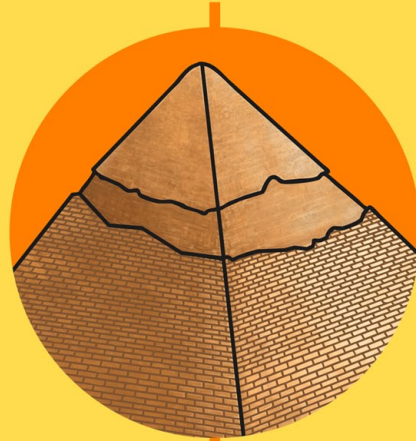
The Curse of the Mummy!

The curse of the mummy started after Tutankhamun's tomb was opened. Mummies have been thought to have magical powers over any who disturb them. It started with Lord Carnarvon, the man who paid for the dig of King Tut's tomb died soon after it was opened. As soon as he died, all the lights in Cairo went out mysteriously. Other stories are that Carter's pet canary was killed by a cobra and Carnarvon's dog died the same night. Some think it was a germ but others say it was magic.



ANCIENT EGYPT TIMELINE

2551-2472 BC
Pyramids of Giza



Upper and Lower Egypt
were two separate lands



3100 BC
Hieroglyphics starts



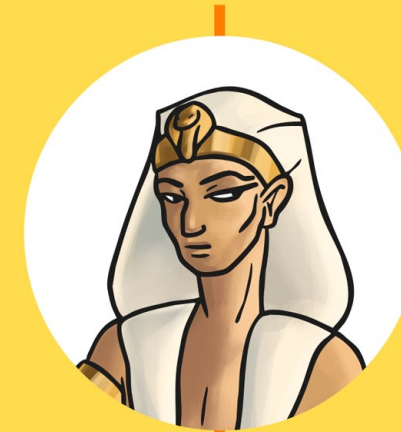
2600 BC
Mummification begins



Osiris (God of life and
death) becomes most
important God



1279-1213 BC
Ramses the Great ruled



51-30 BC
Cleopatra VII ruled



Pre-dynastic Egypt
5500 - 3100 BC

Early Egypt
3100 - 2600 BC

Old Kingdom
2600 - 2100 BC

Middle Kingdom
2000 - 1650 BC

New Kingdom
1539-1075

Greek & Roman Egypt
332 BC - 395 AD



3100 BC
The first pharaoh
(Pharaoh Narmer)



2558-2532 BC
Great Sphinx is built



Pyramid building
stopped. Pharaohs
buried in tombs



1332-1323 BC
Tutankhamun ruled



196 BC
Rosetta Stone is carved



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