

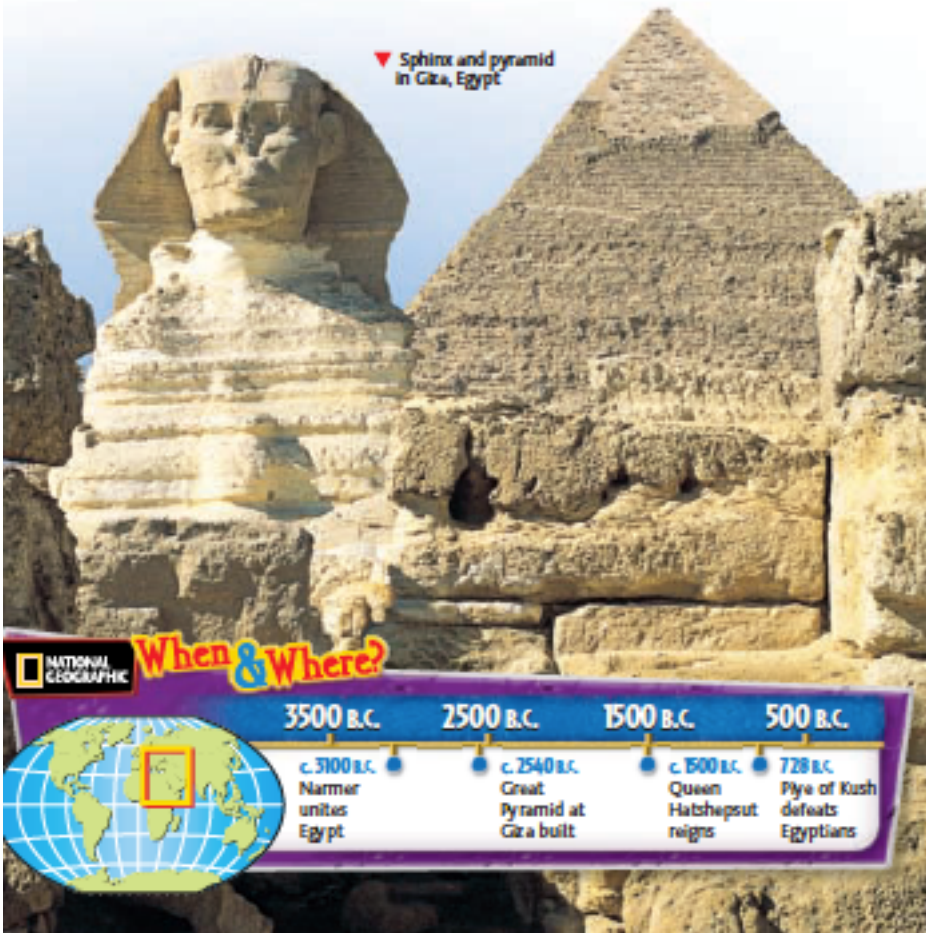
Chapter

2

Ancient Egypt

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▼ Sphinx and pyramid in Giza, Egypt



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

When & Where?



3500 B.C.	2500 B.C.	1500 B.C.	500 B.C.
c. 3100 B.C. Narmer unites Egypt	c. 2540 B.C. Great Pyramid at Giza built	c. 1500 B.C. Queen Hatshepsut reigns	720 B.C. Pharaoh Psamtik I defeats Egyptians

Settling the Nile

Main Idea The Egyptian civilization began in the fertile Nile River valley, where natural barriers discouraged invasions.

Reading Focus Did you know that the Nile River is longer than the Amazon, the Mississippi, and every other river in the world? Read on to find out when ancient peoples first moved to its fertile banks.

Between 6000 B.C. and 5000 B.C., hunters and food gatherers moved into the green Nile River valley from less fertile areas of Africa and southwest Asia. They settled down, farmed the land, and created several dozen villages along the riverbanks. These people became the earliest Egyptians.

A Mighty River Although Egypt (EE•jht) was warm and sunny, the land received little rainfall. For water, the Egyptians had to rely on the Nile River (NYL). They drank from it, bathed in it, and used it for farming, cooking, and cleaning. The river provided fish and supported plants and animals. To the Egyptians, then, the Nile was a precious gift. They praised it in a song: "Hail O Nile, who comes from the earth, who comes to give life to the people of Egypt."

Even today, the Nile inspires awe. It is the world's longest river, flowing north from the heart of Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. This is a distance of some 4,000 miles (6,437 km). Traveling the length of the Nile would be like going from Atlanta, Georgia, to San Francisco, California, and then back again.

The Nile begins as two separate rivers. One river, the Blue Nile, has its source in the mountains of eastern Africa. The other, the White Nile, starts in marshes in central Africa. The two rivers meet and form the Nile just south of Egypt. There, narrow cliffs and boulders in the Nile

form wild rapids called **cataracts** (KA•tuh•sahrz). Because of the cataracts, large ships can use the Nile only for its last 650 miles (1,046 km), where it flows through Egypt.

A Sheltered Land In Egypt, the Nile runs through a narrow, green valley. Look at the map below. You can see that the Nile looks like the long stem of a flower. Shortly before the Nile reaches the Mediterranean Sea, it divides into different branches that look like the flower's blossom. These branches fan out over an area of fertile soil called a **delta** (DEHL•tuh).





▲ Today, the Nile River valley makes up only about 3 percent of Egypt's land, yet most Egyptians live and work in the area. **How did the deserts surrounding the Nile Valley help protect Egypt?**

On both sides of the Nile Valley and its delta, deserts unfold as far as the eye can see. To the west is a vast desert that forms part of the **Sahara** (suh•HAR•uh), the largest desert in the world. To the east, stretching to the Red Sea, is the Eastern Desert. In some places, the change from green land to barren sand is so abrupt that a person can stand with one foot in each.

The ancient Egyptians called the deserts "the Red Land" because of their burning heat. Although these vast expanses could not support farming or human life, they did serve a useful purpose: they kept outside armies away from Egypt's territory.

Other geographic features also protected the Egyptians. To the far south, the Nile's dangerous cataracts blocked enemy boats from reaching Egypt. In the north, the delta marshes offered no harbors for invaders approaching from the sea. In this regard, the Egyptians were luckier than the

people of Mesopotamia. In that region, few natural barriers protected the cities. The Mesopotamians constantly had to fight off attackers, but Egypt rarely faced threats. As a result, Egyptian civilization was able to grow and prosper.

Despite their isolation, the Egyptians were not completely closed to the outside world. The Mediterranean Sea bordered Egypt to the north, and the Red Sea lay beyond the desert to the east. These bodies of water gave the Egyptians a way to trade with people outside Egypt.

Within Egypt, people used the Nile for trade and transportation. Winds from the north pushed sailboats south. The flow of the Nile carried them north. Egyptian villages thus had frequent, friendly contact with one another, unlike the hostile relations between the Mesopotamian city-states.

Reading Check Summarize What was Egypt's physical setting like?

The River People

Main Idea The Egyptians depended on the Nile's floods to grow their crops.

Reading Focus When you hear about floods, do you picture terrible damage and loss of life? Read on to learn why the Egyptians welcomed, rather than feared, the flooding of the Nile.

In Chapter 1, you learned that the people of Mesopotamia had to tame the floods of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in order to farm. They learned to do so, but the unpredictable rivers loomed as a constant threat.

Regular Flooding Like the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians also had to cope with river floods. However, the Nile floods were much more dependable and gentle than those of the Tigris and the Euphrates. As a result, the Egyptians were able to farm and live securely. They did not worry that sudden, heavy overflows would destroy their homes and crops, or that too little flooding would leave their fields parched.

Every spring, heavy rains from central Africa and melting snows from the highlands of east Africa added to the waters of the Nile as it flowed north. From July to October, the Nile spilled over its banks. When the waters went down, they left behind a layer of dark, fertile mud. Because of these deposits, the Egyptians called their land *Kemet* (KEH•meht), “the Black Land.”

How Did the Egyptians Use the Nile? The Egyptians took advantage of the Nile's floods to become successful farmers. They planted wheat, barley, and flax seeds in the wet, rich soil. Over time, they grew more than enough food to feed themselves and the animals they raised.

One reason for their success was the wise use of irrigation. Egyptian farmers first dug basins, or bowl-shaped holes, in the earth to trap the floodwaters. The farmers then dug canals to carry water from the basins to fields beyond the river's reach. The Egyptians also built dikes, or earthen banks, to strengthen the basin walls.

In time, Egyptian farmers developed other technology to help them in their work. For example, they used a shadoof (shuh•DOOF), a bucket attached to a long pole, to lift water from the Nile to the basins. Many Egyptian farmers still use this device today.

Primary Source

Hymn to the Nile

This passage is part of a hymn written around 2100 B.C. It shows how important the Nile River was to the people of ancient Egypt.

“You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, assuring perpetuity [survival] to the temples. If you cease your toil and your work, then all that exists is in anguish.”

—author unknown, “Hymn to the Nile”



▲ A shadoof

DBQ Document-Based Question

How does this hymn show that the ancient Egyptians thought of the Nile as a god?

Early Egyptians also developed geometry to survey, or measure, land. When floods washed away boundary markers dividing one field from the next, the Egyptians surveyed the fields again to see where one began and the other ended.

Egyptians used **papyrus** (puh•PY•ruhs), a reed plant that grew along the Nile, to make baskets, sandals, and river rafts. Later, they used papyrus for papermaking. They did this by cutting strips from the stalks of the plant. Then they soaked them in water, pounded them flat, dried them, and then joined them together to make paper.

What Were Hieroglyphics? The Egyptians used their papyrus rolls as writing paper. Like the people of Mesopotamia, the Egyptians developed their own system of writing. Originally, it was made up of thousands of picture symbols. Some symbols

stood for objects and ideas. To communicate the idea of a boat, for example, a scribe would draw a boat. Later, Egyptians created symbols that stood for sounds, just as the letters of our alphabet do. Combining both picture symbols and sound symbols created a complex writing system that was later called **hieroglyphics** (HY•nuh•GUH•fikhs).

In ancient Egypt, few people could read and write. Some Egyptian men, however, went to special schools located at Egyptian temples to study reading and writing and learn to become scribes. Scribes kept records and worked for the rulers, priests, and traders. Scribes also painstakingly carved hieroglyphics onto stone walls and monuments. For everyday purposes, scribes invented a simpler script and wrote or painted on papyrus.

Reading Check Identify What crops did the ancient Egyptians grow?



The Way It Was

Focus on Everyday Life

From Farming to Food Harvesting wheat and turning it into bread was vital to the ancient Egyptians. Some people were full-time farmers, but many others were drafted by the government to help during busy seasons.



▲ Tomb painting showing Egyptian man and woman plowing and planting



▲ Tomb painting showing wheat being harvested

The process began as men cut the wheat with wooden sickles and women gathered it into bundles. Animals trampled the wheat to separate the kernels from the husks. The grain was then thrown into the air so the wind would carry away the lightweight seed coverings. Finally, the grain was stored in silos for later use.

A United Egypt

Main Idea Around 3100 B.C., Egypt's two major kingdoms, Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, were combined into one.

Reading Focus What types of services does your local government provide? Read on to find out about the government in ancient Egypt.

In Egypt, as in Mesopotamia, skillful farming led to surpluses—extra amounts—of food. This freed some people to work as artisans instead of farmers. They wove cloth, made pottery, carved statues, or shaped copper into weapons and tools.

As more goods became available, Egyptians traded with each other. Before long, Egyptian traders were carrying goods beyond Egypt's borders to Mesopotamia. There they may have picked up ideas about writing and government.

The Rise of Government The advances in farming, crafts, and trade created a need for government in Egypt. Irrigation systems had to be built and maintained, and surplus grain had to be stored and passed out in times of need. In addition, disputes over land ownership had to be settled. Gradually, government emerged to plan and to direct such activities.

The earliest rulers were village chiefs. Over time, a few strong chiefs united groups of villages into small kingdoms. The strongest of these kingdoms eventually overpowered the weaker ones. By 4000 B.C., Egypt was made up of two large kingdoms. In the Nile delta was Lower Egypt. To the south, upriver, lay Upper Egypt.

Egypt's Ruling Families About 3100 B.C., the two kingdoms became one. Credit for this goes to **Narmer** (NAR•muhr), also known



◀ Wheat being harvested today

Baking bread in pots ▶



Turning grain into bread was a long process. Women ground the grain into flour, then men pounded it until it became very fine. For the wealthy, seeds, honey, fruit, nuts, and herbs were added to the dough for flavor. Unfortunately, it was almost impossible to keep small stones and sand out of the flour. As a result, many Egyptians developed tooth decay as these particles wore down their tooth enamel.



▲ A replica of an ancient Egyptian bakery

Connecting to the Past

1. How did the government ensure that enough people were available to harvest the wheat?
2. Why do you think seeds, fruit, and other additives were reserved for the wealthy?

Comparing Mesopotamia to Egypt

	Mesopotamia	Egypt
Natural Defenses	Flat mud plains; few natural defenses	Many defenses: Nile delta, Sahara, Eastern Desert, and cataracts
Rivers	Tigris and Euphrates Rivers	Nile River
Floods	Unpredictable, and a constant threat to the people	Dependable and regular; not feared
Economy	Farming and trade	Farming and trade
Government	City-state led by kings and priests; eventually empires formed	Villages led by chiefs, then united into kingdoms; kingdoms later united and ruled by pharaohs
Work of Artisans	Metal products, pottery, cloth	Metal products, pottery, cloth
Advances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuneiform writing • Number system based on 60 • 12-month calendar • Wagon wheel, plow, sailboat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hieroglyphic writing • 365-day calendar • Number system based on 10, and fractions • Medicine and first medical books

Understanding Charts

The civilizations of both Mesopotamia and Egypt depended on rivers for fertile lands and irrigation.

1. Which civilization had greater natural defenses? Explain.
2. **Compare** Use the chart to compare the governments of the two civilizations.

as Menes (MEE•neez). As king of Upper Egypt, he led his armies north and took control of Lower Egypt.

Narmer ruled from Memphis, a city he built on the border between the two kingdoms. To symbolize the kingdom's unity, Narmer wore a double crown: the helmet-like white crown represented Upper Egypt, and the open red crown represented Lower Egypt.

Narmer's united kingdom held together long after his death. Members of his family passed the ruling power from father to son to grandson. Such a line of rulers from one family is called a **dynasty** (DY•nuh•stee). When one dynasty died out, another took its place.

Over time, ancient Egypt would be ruled by 31 dynasties, which together lasted about 2,800 years. Historians group Egypt's dynasties into three main time periods called kingdoms. The earliest period, the Old Kingdom, was followed by the Middle Kingdom and then the New Kingdom. Each marked a long period of strong leadership and stability.

Reading Check Define What is a dynasty?

Early Egyptian Life

Main Idea Egyptian society was divided into social groups based on wealth and power.

Reading Focus Did you play with dolls or balls when you were young? Egyptian children did too. Keep reading for more details about the Egyptians' daily life.

If you made a diagram of the different social groups in ancient Egypt, you would find that they make a pyramid shape. At the top was the king and his family. Beneath that level was a small upper class of priests, army commanders, and nobles. Next came a larger base of skilled middle-class people, such as traders, artisans, and shopkeepers. At the bottom was the largest group—unskilled workers and farmers.

Egypt's Social Classes Egypt's upper class was made up of nobles, priests, and other wealthy Egyptians who worked as the government officials. They lived in cities and on large estates along the Nile River. They had elegant homes made of wood and mud bricks, with beautiful gardens and pools filled with fish and water lilies. Wealthy families had servants to wait on them and to perform household tasks. The men and women dressed in white linen clothes and wore heavy eye makeup and jewelry.

Egypt's middle class included people who ran businesses or produced goods. They lived in much smaller homes and dressed more simply. Artisans formed an important group within the middle class. They produced linen cloth, jewelry, pottery, and metal goods.

Ancient Egyptian society was highly structured. At the top was the pharaoh and his family. At the bottom was the group with the least wealth—unskilled workers. **What group was just below the pharaoh in Egyptian society?**



Farmers made up the largest group of early Egyptians. Some rented their land from their ruler, paying him with a hefty portion of their crops. Most, however, worked the land of wealthy nobles. They lived in villages along the Nile, in one-room huts with roofs made of palm leaves. They had a simple diet of bread, beer, vegetables, and fruit.

Many of Egypt's city dwellers were unskilled workers who did physical labor. Some unloaded cargo from boats and carried it to markets. Others made and stacked mud bricks for buildings. Workers lived in crowded city neighborhoods. They had small mud-brick homes with hard-packed dirt floors and a courtyard for the family's animals. On the flat rooftops, families talked, played games, and slept. Women worked on the rooftops, drying fruit, making bread, and weaving cloth.

Family Life In ancient Egypt, the father headed the family. However, Egyptian women had more rights than females in most other early civilizations. In Egypt, women could own and pass on property. They could buy and sell goods, make wills, and obtain divorces. Upper-class women were in charge of temples and could perform religious ceremonies.

Few Egyptians sent their children to school. Mothers taught their daughters to sew, cook, and run a household. Boys learned farming or skilled trades from their fathers. Egyptian children had time for fun, as well. They played with board games, dolls, spinning tops, and stuffed leather balls.

Reading Check Identify Who made up the largest group in Egyptian society?

Section 1 Review

History online

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Reading Summary

Review the **Main Ideas**

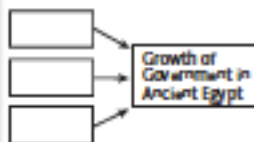
- The deserts on either side of the Nile Valley, along with the Nile cataracts and delta marshes, protected Egypt from invaders.
- The Egyptians became successful farmers using the Nile River's floods and irrigation.
- About 3100 B.C., Namer united Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt.
- Egypt's society was divided into upper-class priests and nobles, middle-class artisans and merchants, and lower-class workers and farmers.

What Did You Learn?

1. What is papyrus and how did the Egyptians use it?
2. What rights did women have in ancient Egypt?

Critical Thinking

3. **Cause and Effect** Draw a diagram to show three things that led to the growth of government in ancient Egypt.



4. **Geography Skills** How did the geography of the Nile River valley lead to the growth of a civilization there?
5. **Describe** Describe the Egyptian writing system.
6. **Analyze** What was the significance of Namer's double crown?
7. **Reading Predicting** Use what you have learned in this section to write a paragraph predicting what life might have been like on an ancient Egyptian farm.

Section

2

Egypt's Old Kingdom

Get Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

In Section 1, you learned that Egyptian dynasties are divided into the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom. In Section 2, you will learn about the Egyptians' leaders, religion, and way of life in the Old Kingdom.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- Egypt was ruled by all-powerful pharaohs. (page 48)
- The Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses and in life after death for the pharaohs. (page 49)
- The Egyptians of the Old Kingdom built huge stone pyramids as tombs for their pharaohs. (page 50)

Locating Places

Giza (GEE•zuh)

Meeting People

King Khufu (KOO•foo)

Building Your Vocabulary

pharaoh (FEHR•oh)
 deity (DEE•uh•tee)
 embalming (ihm•BAHM•ihng)
 mummy (MUH•mee)
 pyramid (PIHR•uh•MEI•o)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information Use a graphic organizer like the one below to identify the different beliefs in Egypt's religion.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC When & Where?



Old Kingdom Rulers

Main Idea Egypt was ruled by all-powerful pharaohs.

Reading Focus Would you want your student body president or your sports team captain to have unlimited authority? Think what it would be like to have such a leader as you read about the rulers of ancient Egypt.

Around 2600 B.C., the period known as the Old Kingdom began in Egypt. The Old Kingdom lasted until about 2300 B.C. During those years, Egypt grew and prospered. The Egyptians built cities and expanded trade, and their kings set up a strong government.

The Egyptian kings, or **pharaohs** (FEHR•ohs) as they were called, lived with their families in grand palaces. In fact, the word *pharaoh* originally meant “great house.” The pharaoh was an all-powerful ruler who guided Egypt’s every activity. His word was law, and it had to be obeyed without question.

Pharaohs appointed many officials to carry out their wishes. These officials saw to it that irrigation canals and grain storehouses were built and repaired. They made

sure that crops were planted as the pharaoh directed. They also controlled trade and collected tax payments of grain from farmers.

Why did Egyptians willingly serve the pharaoh? One reason was that they believed the unity of the kingdom depended on a strong leader. Another was that they considered the pharaoh to be the son of Re (RAY), the Egyptian sun god. As a result, his subjects paid him the greatest respect. Whenever he appeared in public, people played music on flutes and cymbals. Bystanders along the road had to bow down and “smell the earth,” or touch their heads to the ground.

The Egyptians thought their pharaoh was a god on earth who controlled Egypt’s welfare. He carried out certain rituals that were thought to benefit the kingdom. For example, he drove a sacred bull around Memphis, the capital city. The Egyptians believed this ceremony would keep the soil rich and ensure good crops. The pharaoh was also the first to cut ripe grain. Egyptians believed this would bring a good harvest.

Reading Check Analyze Why did the pharaohs hold so much power?



◀ The Great Sphinx, a huge statue with the head of a man (perhaps a pharaoh) and the body of a lion, stands guard outside the tomb of a pharaoh. *What did the word pharaoh mean, and why was it used for Egypt’s rulers?*

Egypt's Religion

Main Idea The Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses and in life after death for the pharaohs.

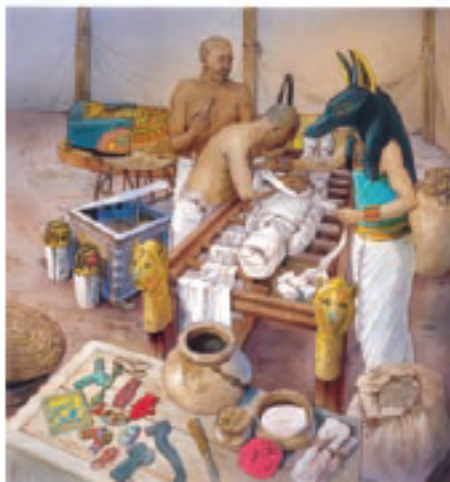
Reading Focus Have you seen mummies in horror movies? Maybe you've even wrapped yourself in strips of cloth to be a mummy for a costume party. Keep reading to find out how the ancient Egyptians made mummies, and why.

Religion was deeply woven into Egyptian culture. Like the people of Mesopotamia, the ancient Egyptians worshiped many **deities** (DEE•uh•teez), or gods and goddesses. The Egyptians believed these deities controlled the forces of nature and human activities.

The main Egyptian god was the sun god Re. This was probably because of Egypt's hot, sunny climate and the importance of the sun for good harvests. Another major god was Hapt (HAH•pee), who ruled the Nile River. The most important goddess was Isis (EYE•suhz). She represented the loyal wife and mother, and she ruled over the dead with her husband Osiris (oh•SY•ruhs).

Life After Death Unlike the Mesopotamians, who imagined a gloomy life after death, the Egyptians took a hopeful view. They believed that life in the next world would be even better than life on Earth. Following a long journey, the dead would reach a place of peace and plenty.

One of the most important manuscripts written in ancient Egypt was the *Book of the Dead*. This was a collection of spells and prayers that Egyptians studied to obtain life after death. They believed that the god Osiris would meet newcomers at the entrance to the next world. If they had led good lives and knew the magic spells, Osiris would grant them life after death.



▲ During the embalming process, the pharaoh's body was placed on a special table. The chief embalmer was dressed as Anubis, the god of mummification. **Why did the Egyptians embalm the pharaoh's body?**

For centuries, Egyptians believed that only the pharaohs and an elite few could enjoy the afterlife. They also believed that the pharaoh's spirit needed a body to make the journey to the afterlife. If the pharaoh's body decayed after death, his spirit would be forced to wander forever. It was vital that a pharaoh's spirit reach the next world. There, the pharaoh would continue to care for Egypt.

To protect the pharaoh's body, the Egyptians developed a process called **embalming** (ihm•BAHM•ing). First, priests removed the body's organs. A special salt, natron, was then applied to the body, and it was stored for a number of days to dry. After this, the body was filled with spices and perfumes, then stitched closed. Next, it was cleaned with oils and tightly wrapped with

long strips of linen. The wrapped body was known as a **mummy** (MUH•mee). It was put in several wooden coffins, one fitting inside the other. The pharaoh was then ready for burial in a tomb.

Egyptian Medicine In the course of embalming the dead, the Egyptians learned much about the human body. Egyptian doctors used herbs and drugs to treat many different illnesses. They grew skilled at sewing up cuts and setting broken bones.

Some doctors focused on treating particular parts of the body, becoming the first specialists in medicine. Egyptians also wrote the world's first medical books on scrolls of papyrus.

Reading Check Identify Who were some of the Egyptians' main gods and goddesses?

The Pyramids

Main Idea The Egyptians of the Old Kingdom built huge stone pyramids as tombs for their pharaohs.

Reading Focus Do you think the Statue of Liberty or the White House will still be here in 4,000 years? The giant pyramids of Egypt have stood for about that long. Read to find out how and why they were built.

No ordinary tomb would do for a pharaoh of Egypt. Instead, the Egyptians built mountainlike **pyramids** (PIHR•uh•mehs) entirely of stone. These gigantic structures, the size of several city blocks, protected the bodies of dead pharaohs from floods, wild animals, and grave robbers. The pyramids also held supplies that the pharaoh might need in the spirit world, including clothing, furniture, jewelry, and food.

Egypt's Religion

▼ Osiris



▲ In this painting, the god Osiris (seated at right) watches as other animal-headed gods weigh a dead man's soul and record the results. The scales have balanced, so the dead man may enter the underworld. **What was the Book of the Dead?**

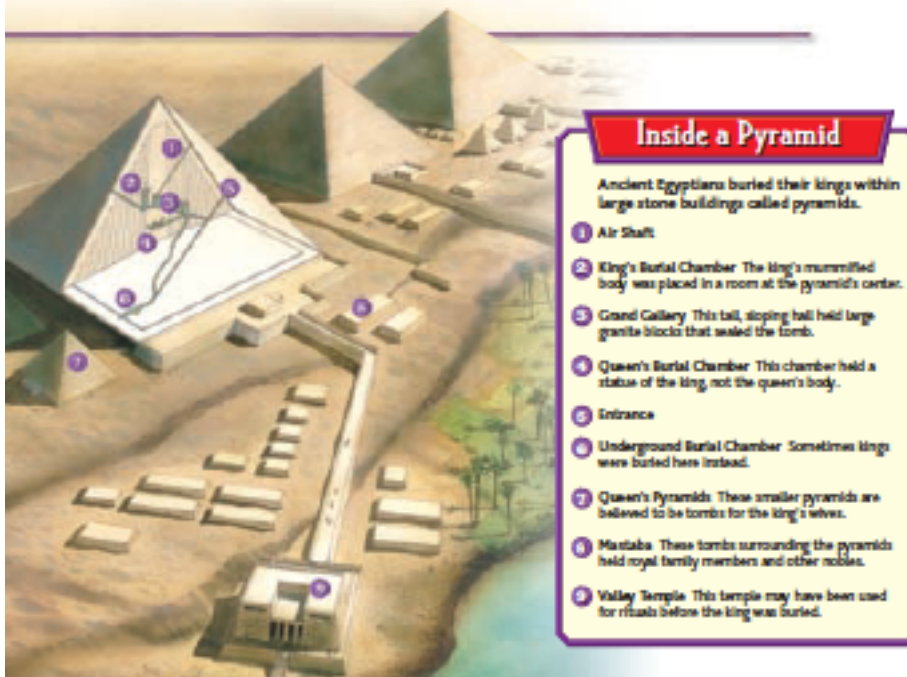
How Was a Pyramid Built? It took thousands of people and years of backbreaking labor to build a pyramid. Most of the work was done by farmers during the Nile floods, when they could not tend their fields. In addition, surveyors, engineers, carpenters, and stonemasons lent their skills.

Each pyramid sat on a square base, with the entrance facing north. To determine true north, the Egyptians studied the heavens and developed principles of astronomy. With this knowledge, they invented a 365-day calendar with 12 months grouped into 3 seasons. This calendar became the basis for our modern calendar.

To determine the amount of stone needed for a pyramid, as well as the angles necessary

for the walls, the Egyptians made advances in mathematics. They invented a system of written numbers based on 10. They also created fractions, using them with whole numbers to add, subtract, and divide.

After the pyramid site was chosen, workers went wherever they could find stone—sometimes hundreds of miles away. Skilled artisans used copper tools to cut the stone into huge blocks. Other workers tied the blocks to wooden sleds and pulled them to the Nile over a path “paved” with logs. Next, they loaded the stones onto barges that were floated to the building site. There, workers unloaded the blocks and dragged or pushed them up ramps to be set in place.





▲ The pyramid shown above is that of King Khufu, son of Khufu. Although smaller than the Great Pyramid, Khufu's pyramid was built on higher ground so as to appear taller. **About how tall is the Great Pyramid?**

The Great Pyramid About 2540 B.C., the Egyptians built the largest and grandest of the pyramids known as the Great Pyramid. It is located about 10 miles from the modern city of Cairo. This pyramid, built for **King Khufu** (KOO•foe), is one of three still standing in **Giza** on the west bank of the Nile. It rises nearly 500 feet (153 m) above the desert, covers an area about the size of nine football fields, and contains more than 2 million stone blocks. Each block weighs an average of 2.5 tons.

The Great Pyramid was the tallest structure in the world for more than 4,000 years. It is equal to the size of a 48-story building and is the largest of about 80 pyramids found in Egypt. The Great Pyramid is truly a marvel because the Egyptians built it without using beasts of burden, special tools, or even the wheel.

Reading Check Explain What was the purpose of pyramids?

History *online*

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Section 2 Review

Reading Summary

Review the **Main Ideas**

- The all-powerful rulers of Egypt, called pharaohs, were believed to be related to Egypt's main god.
- The Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses. They also believed in life after death for the pharaoh, whose body would be mummified before burial.
- The pyramids, built as huge stone tombs for the pharaohs, required many years and thousands of workers to construct.

What Did You Learn?

1. How was stone for a pyramid transported to the building site?
2. What did Egyptians learn from embalming bodies?

Critical Thinking

3. **Organize Information** Draw a diagram like the one below. Fill in details about the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom and their duties.



4. **Math/Science Link** How did the building of the pyramids lead to advances in science and mathematics?

5. **Compare and Contrast** How did the Egyptians' religious beliefs compare to those of the Mesopotamians?

6. **Persuasive Writing** Suppose you are an Egyptian pharaoh who wants a pyramid built to house your tomb. Write a letter to the farmers and workers in your kingdom explaining why it is their duty to build the pyramid for you.

The Middle Kingdom

Main Idea The Middle Kingdom was a golden age of peace, prosperity, and advances in the arts and architecture.

Reading Focus Have you heard older people talk about enjoying their “golden years”? Countries can also experience such happy, productive times. In the following paragraphs, you’ll learn why the Middle Kingdom was a golden age for Egypt.

About 2300 B.C., the pharaohs lost control of Egypt as nobles battled one another for power. Almost 200 years of confusion followed. Finally, a new dynasty of pharaohs came to power. They moved their capital south from Memphis to a city called **Thebes** (THEEBZ). There they restored order and stability, ushering in a new period called the Middle Kingdom.

The Middle Kingdom lasted from about 2050 B.C. to 1670 B.C. During this time, Egyptians enjoyed a golden age of stability, prosperity, and achievement.

The Drive for More Land During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt took control of new lands. Soldiers captured Nubia to the south and attacked what is now Syria. The conquered peoples sent **tribute** (TRIH•byoot), or forced payments, to the Egyptian pharaoh, enriching the kingdom. Within Egypt, the pharaohs added more waterways and dams. They increased the amount of land being farmed and built a canal between the Nile River and the Red Sea.

The Arts Blossom During the Middle Kingdom, arts, literature, and architecture thrived. Painters covered the walls of tombs and temples with colorful scenes of the deities and daily life. Sculptors created large wall carvings and statues of the pharaohs, showing them as ordinary people rather



▲ This artwork with gold inlay from the Middle Kingdom period shows a funeral boat. *How did architecture change during the Middle Kingdom?*

than godlike figures. Poets wrote love songs and tributes to the pharaohs.

A new form of architecture was also created. Instead of building pyramids, pharaohs had their tombs cut into cliffs west of the Nile River. This area became known as the Valley of the Kings.

Who Were the Hyksos? The Middle Kingdom came to an end in 1670 B.C. Nobles were again plotting to take power from the pharaohs. This time, however, Egypt also faced a serious threat from outside. A people known as the Hyksos (HIHK•sahs), from western Asia, attacked Egypt.

History Online

Web Activity Visit jef.gjncow.com and click on Chapter 2—Student WebActivity to learn more about ancient Egypt.

The Hyksos were mighty warriors. They crossed the desert in horse-drawn chariots and used weapons made of bronze and iron. Egyptians had always fought on foot with copper and stone weapons. They were no match for the invaders.

The Hyksos ruled Egypt for about 120 years. Then, around 1550 B.C., an Egyptian prince named **Ahmose** (AHM•ose) led an uprising that drove the Hyksos out of Egypt.

Reading Check Identify Who were the Hyksos?

The New Kingdom

Main Idea During the New Kingdom, Egypt acquired new territory and reached the height of its power.

Reading Focus Do you know the names of any women who hold political office? In ancient civilizations, women rarely held positions of power. Read to learn how a woman became ruler of Egypt.

Ahmose's reign in Egypt began a period known as the New Kingdom. During this time, from about 1550 B.C. to 1080 B.C., Egypt reached the height of its ancient glory.

Linking Past & Present

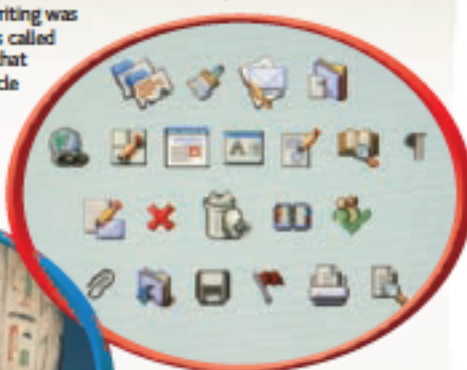
Hieroglyphs and Computer Icons

THEN The ancient Egyptian system of writing was made up of hundreds of different characters called hieroglyphs. Each hieroglyph was a picture that represented a word. For example, a large circle with a smaller circle drawn in its center meant "sun." Egyptian scribes carved hieroglyphic symbols on monuments and used them for everyday communication.



▲ Hieroglyphs

▼ Computer icons



NOW Today, millions of people use computer icons as symbols for words and even emotions in e-mails and other electronic communication. These icons are pictures—such as flags or paper clips—that represent other things. *In what way are hieroglyphs and computer icons similar?*

A Woman Ruler About 1473 B.C., a queen named **Hatshepsut** (hat•SHEHP•soot) came to power in Egypt. She ruled first with her husband and then, after his death, on behalf of her young nephew. Finally she made herself pharaoh. Hatshepsut became one of the few women to rule Egypt.

Hatshepsut was more interested in trade than conquest. During her reign, Egyptian traders sailed along the east coast of Africa. They exchanged beads, metal

tools, and weapons for gold, ivory, ebony, and **incense** (IHN•səns), a material burned for its pleasant smell.

Another product Egyptians wanted was wood. The Nile Valley had few trees, and the Egyptians needed wood for boats and other items. The search for wood took Egyptian traders to the eastern Mediterranean, where Lebanon is located today. The region had many trees, and its people, called the Phoenicians, were famous for their wooden furniture.

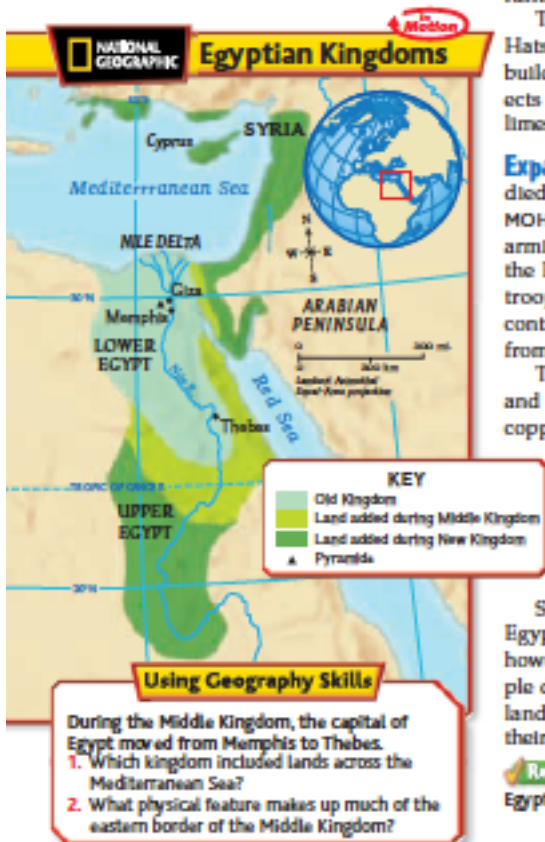
Trading brought great wealth to Egypt. Hatshepsut used some of this wealth to build monuments. One of her greatest projects was a huge temple and tomb in the limestone cliffs of the Valley of the Kings.

Expanding the Empire When Hatshepsut died, her nephew, **Thutmose III** (thoot•MOH•suh), became pharaoh. Thutmose's armies expanded Egypt's borders north to the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia. His troops also moved south and regained control of Nubia, which had broken free from Egypt earlier.

Thutmose's empire grew rich from trade and tribute. In addition to claiming gold, copper, ivory, and other valuable goods from conquered peoples, Egypt enslaved many prisoners of war. These unfortunate captives were put to work rebuilding Thebes. They filled the city with beautiful palaces, temples, and monuments.

Slavery had not been widespread in Egypt before. During the New Kingdom, however, it became common. Enslaved people did have some rights. They could own land, marry, and eventually be granted their freedom.

Reading Check Summarize Describe Egyptian trade during the rule of Hatshepsut.

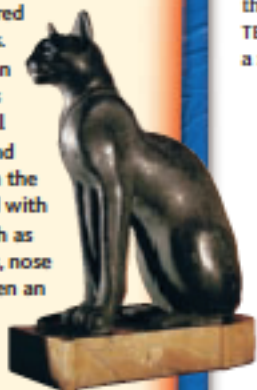


Focus on Everyday Life

Cats in Ancient Egypt In ancient Egypt, cats were loved and even worshipped. Egyptians valued the ability of wild cats to protect villages' grain supplies from mice and rats. Over several hundred years, cats became tame, and their role developed from valued hunter to adored family pet to goddess.

In ancient Egyptian tombs, archaeologists have found many wall paintings, carvings, and statues of cats. Often the statues were adorned with beautiful jewelry, such as silver or gold earrings, nose rings, and collars. When an Egyptian family's cat died, its owners shaved their eyebrows to show their grief and had the cat's body mummified.

Egyptians worshiped cats because they associated them with the goddess Bastet. She represented motherhood, grace, and beauty, and often appears in paintings and statues as a woman with the head of a cat.



▲ Egyptian goddess depicted as a cat

Connecting to the Past

1. Why did ancient Egyptians first value cats?
2. With what goddess did the ancient Egyptians associate cats?

The Legacies of Two Pharaohs

Main Idea Akhenaton tried to change Egypt's religion, while Tutankhamen is famous for the treasures found in his tomb.

Reading Focus If you ask people to name an Egyptian pharaoh, the answer you're likely to get is "King Tut." Read on to find out more about him and his predecessor.

About 1370 B.C., Amenhotep IV (AH•muhn•HOH•tee) came to the throne. With the help of his wife, Nefertiti (NEE•uhr•TEET•ee), Amenhotep tried to lead Egypt in a new direction.

A Religious Reformer Amenhotep realized that Egypt's priests were gaining power at the expense of the pharaohs. In an attempt to maintain his own power, Amenhotep introduced a new religion that swept away the old gods and goddesses. Instead, only one god, called Aton (AH•tuhn), was to be worshiped. When Egypt's priests resisted these changes, Amenhotep removed many from their positions, seized their lands, and closed temples. He then changed his name to

Akhenaton (AH•NAH•tuhn), which means "Spirit of Aton." He began ruling Egypt from a new city.

To most Egyptians, Akhenaton's attacks on the gods seemed to be an attack on Egypt itself. They refused to accept Aton as the only god. Meanwhile, Akhenaton became so devoted to his new religion that he neglected his duties as pharaoh. The administrators he appointed were not as experienced as the priests they replaced, and Akhenaton took no action when enemies from what is now Turkey, the Hittites, attacked Egypt. As a result, Egypt lost most of its lands in western Asia, greatly shrinking the empire.



◀ Tutankhamen's gold mask

The Boy King When Akhenaton died, his son-in-law inherited the throne. The new pharaoh, **Tutankhamen** (TOO • TANG • KAH • muhn), was a boy about 10 years old. He relied on help from palace officials and priests, who convinced him to restore the old religion. After ruling for only nine years, Tutankhamen died unexpectedly. He may have suffered a fall or been murdered; no one is sure.

What is certain is that “King Tut,” as he is nicknamed, played only a small role in Egypt’s history. Why, then, is he the most famous of all pharaohs? The boy king captured people’s imaginations after a British archaeologist, Howard Carter, found his tomb in A.D. 1922.

The tomb contained the king’s mummy and incredible treasures, including a brilliant gold mask of the young pharaoh’s face. Carter’s find was a thrilling discovery, because most royal tombs in Egypt were looted by robbers long ago.

Reading Check Evaluate Why is Tutankhamen so famous today?

The End of the New Kingdom

Main Idea Under Ramses II, Egypt regained territory and built great temples, but the empire fell by 1150 B.C.

Reading Focus Egypt remained mighty for thousands of years, but it finally fell to outsiders. Read to learn about Egypt’s last great pharaoh and the empire’s decline.

During the 1200s B.C., pharaohs worked to make Egypt great again. The most effective of these pharaohs was **Ramses II** (RAM • siz). He reigned for a remarkable 66 years, from 1279 B.C. to 1213 B.C. During this time, Egyptian armies regained lands in western Asia and rebuilt the empire. Ramses also launched an ambitious building program, constructing several major new temples.



▲ Temple of Karnak

Why Were Temples Built? Under Ramses II and other New Kingdom rulers, scores of new temples rose throughout Egypt. Many were built by enslaved people captured in war. The most magnificent was Karnak at Thebes. Its huge columned hall decorated with colorful paintings still impresses visitors today.

Unlike modern churches, temples, and mosques, Egyptian temples did not hold regular services. Instead, most Egyptians prayed at home. They considered the temples as houses for the gods and goddesses. Priests and priestesses, however, performed daily temple rituals, washing statues of the deities and bringing them food.

The temples also served as banks. Egyptians used them to store valuable items, such as gold jewelry, sweet-smelling oils, and finely woven cloth.

Egypt's Decline and Fall After Ramses II, Egypt's power began to fade. Later pharaohs had trouble keeping neighboring countries under Egyptian control. Groups from the eastern Mediterranean attacked Egypt by sea, using strong iron weapons. The Egyptians had similar arms, but they paid dearly for them because Egypt lacked iron ore.

By 1150 B.C., the Egyptians had lost their empire and controlled only the Nile delta. Beginning in the 900s B.C., Egypt came under the rule of one outside group after another. The first conquerors were the Libyans from the west. Then in 760 B.C., the people of Kush, a land to the south, seized power and ruled Egypt for the next 70 years. Finally, in 670 B.C., Egypt was taken over by the Assyrians.

Reading Check Identify What groups conquered Egypt starting in the 900s B.C.?

History Online

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Section 3 Review

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

- During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt expanded its borders, and the arts flourished.
- Under New Kingdom rulers, Egypt built a strong empire and expanded trade.
- Akhenaton failed in his attempt to create a new religion. Tutankhamen ruled briefly but gained fame because of treasures found buried with him.
- Ramses II was Egypt's last great pharaoh. In the 900s B.C., Egypt lost power to outside invaders.

What Did You Learn?

1. **What improvements** did the Middle Kingdom rulers make?
2. **What purposes** did temples serve in Egypt?
4. **Evaluate** What was unusual about the reign of Hatshepsut?
5. **Analyze** How did Akhenaton upset the traditional order?

Critical Thinking

3. **Organizing Information** Create a chart like the one below. Fill in details about Egypt's Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom.

Middle Kingdom	New Kingdom

6. **Compare and Contrast** Describe the similarities and differences between the rule of Hatshepsut and Ramses II.
7. **Expository Writing** Which of the rulers discussed in this section do you think had the greatest effect upon Egyptian history? Write a short essay to explain your answer.