

Egypt

Introduction to Ancient Egypt



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Ancient Egyptian Culture

Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian Beliefs

Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.





Timeline of Ancient Egypt





Where is Egypt?



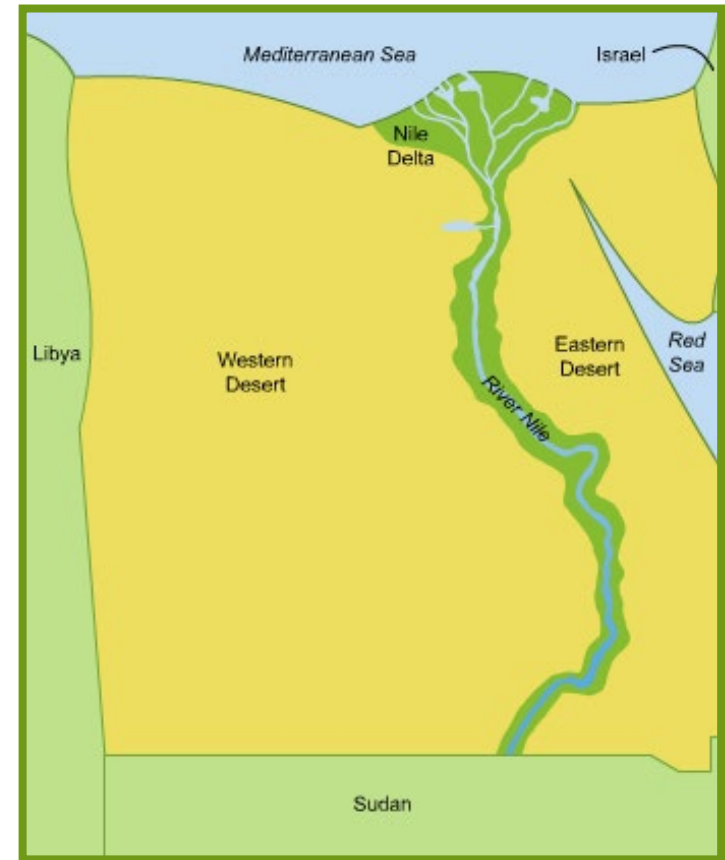
Mapping Egypt



The climate of Egypt

Egypt is found in northeast Africa. Today, it borders the Gaza Strip, Israel, Libya and Sudan. Egypt's coastal borders are the Mediterranean and Red Seas.

The climate is mostly hot, dry **desert**. There is very little rainfall. Egypt has only two seasons: a mild winter and a hot summer.





The River Nile

The River Nile is the longest river in the world. It runs from north to south. The Nile River runs through several countries in Africa and ends at the Mediterranean Sea in Egypt.

Plants and crops struggle to grow in the desert, which the Ancient Egyptians called the “red land”. However, they can grow alongside the Nile.

The large green area to the north is the Nile **delta**. Here the river splits into many smaller streams. More farming can be done in this area.



In ancient times, the Nile flooded every year, leaving behind a black **silt**. Ancient Egyptians referred to this as the “black land”. This made the area **fertile** so plants and crops could grow.

Some crops that grew alongside the Nile included onions, dates, wheat, beans and cucumbers.

Without the Nile, very little would have grown.





The history of Ancient Egypt



Egypt has a very long history. Predynastic Egypt was divided into two kingdoms: **Upper Egypt** in the south and **Lower Egypt** in the north. Each was ruled separately.

Around 3100 BC **Menes** united the two kingdoms and became the first **pharaoh**. The pharaoh ruled Egypt as a **monarch** (king) and high priest.

The pharaoh was a member of a powerful family called a **dynasty**. Dynasties would rule until they were overthrown or there were no heirs left.





Studying Egypt's history

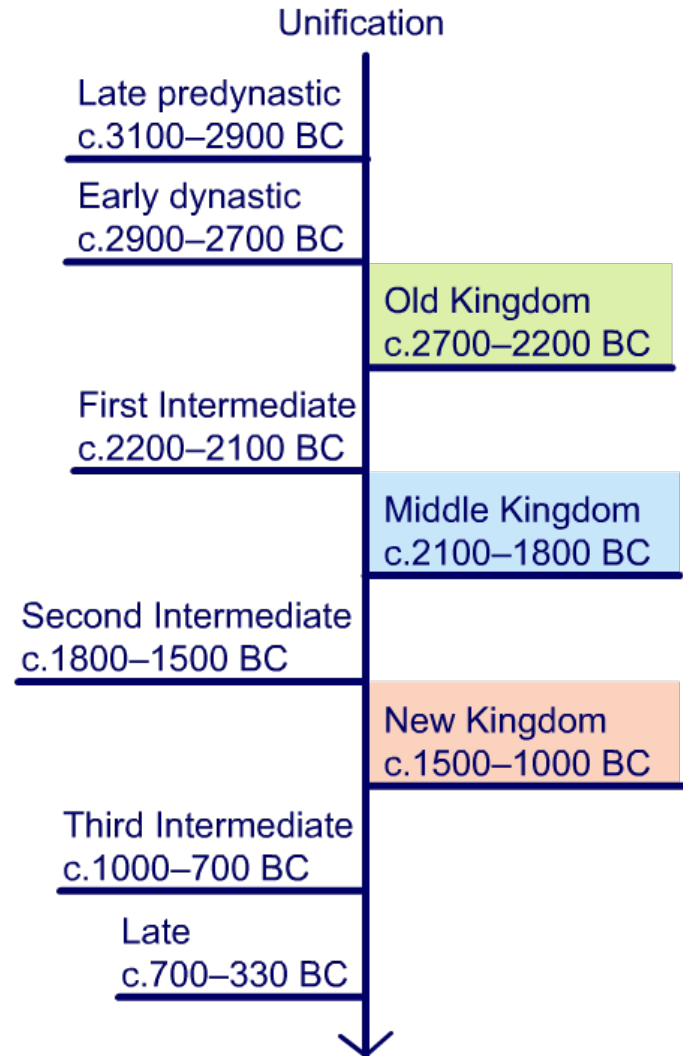
The history of Ancient Egypt is generally divided into three periods:

The Old Kingdom
(around 2700–2200 BC)

The Middle Kingdom
(around 2100–1800 BC)

The New Kingdom
(around 1500–1000 BC).

Each period is remembered for different achievements.





Most Egyptian pyramids were built during the **Old Kingdom**. The most famous are the pyramids at Giza, built around 2500 BC. This was a time of artistic and technological development.



The **Middle Kingdom** is recognised as a period of strength in the arts. Trade flourished during this period.

The **New Kingdom** was a period of expansion. During this time, the Egyptian Empire was at the height of its power.





Evidence for **trade** between Egypt and its neighbours can be found from as far back as the predynastic period. That is over 5000 years ago!

All social classes traded goods. The lower classes bought food, merchants swapped goods and the pharaoh exchanged gifts with other rulers.



Many different resources were traded, including pottery, papyrus and minerals. Even princesses were gifted between the pharaoh and foreign rulers.



The Egyptians both imported and exported goods.

Exports included pottery, papyrus and perfumes.

Imports were mainly luxury items and raw materials not found in Egypt. These included livestock, timber and minerals.



Imports from Nubia (modern Sudan) included gold, ivory and ostrich eggs!

What other items might the Egyptians have traded?



Caravan trade routes crossed the deserts. There were northern and southern routes. However, the further traders traveled into the desert, the less control the pharaoh had over the goods.

Sea routes were the easier and cheaper option for Egyptian traders. Goods were shipped up the River Nile to Mediterranean ports. Then they could be shipped overseas.



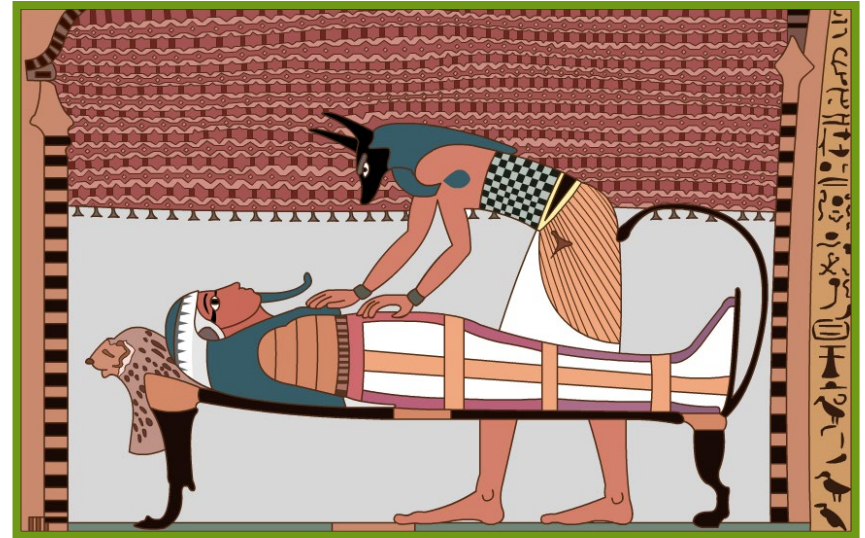
What might happen when the pharaoh lost control?



The Ancient Egyptians had many successes. One of their most well-known achievements is the building of **pyramids**. These were tombs for Ancient Egyptian pharaohs.

Pyramids took a lot of time and money to build. They showed power and wealth.

Kings were buried with gold and jewels. However, thieves broke into tombs to steal these goods.



The inside of the pyramids were decorated with paintings.

What would you want in your Egyptian tomb?



One of the most well-known pharaohs is **Tutankhamun**. He was crowned in 1336 BC at just nine years old.

In 1922, Howard Carter and a team of **archaeologists** discovered Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

The discovery was unusual because the tomb had not fallen victim to tomb robbers and his burial goods were still inside. This find has taught scholars a lot about Egyptian life and beliefs about life and death.



The Ancient Egyptians built much more than just pyramids.

Obelisks are tall stone monuments. Ancient Egyptians often built them in pairs outside temples. They are richly decorated. There are lots of modern examples of obelisks too.

The **Great Sphinx** is a statue of a man's face with a lion's body. It is an iconic symbol of Egypt.

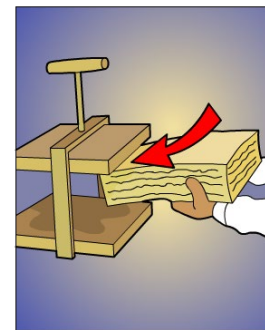
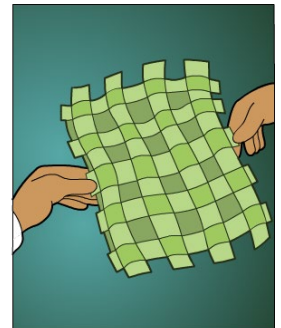
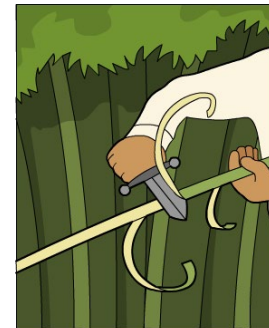
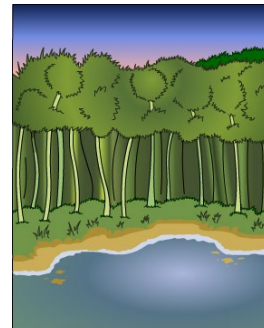
What else did the Ancient Egyptians build?



The Ancient Egyptians started making a paper called **papyrus** over 5000 years ago! Papyrus allowed the Egyptians to keep records of taxes, court cases and grain.

Here is a step-by-step guide to making papyrus.

- Step 1: Collect the papyrus plant from along the Nile.
- Step 2: Cut the inner layer of the stem into strips.
- Step 3: Soak the strips in water and combine them into sheets.
- Step 4: Dry and flatten the sheets to make papyrus paper.

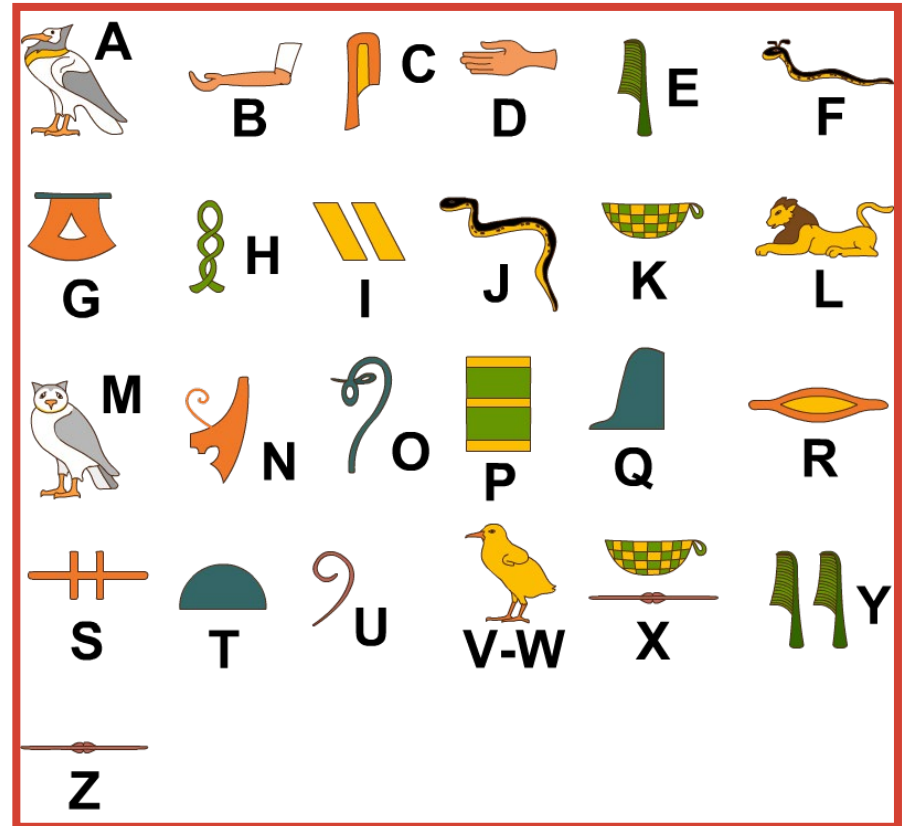


Hieroglyphics are symbols which represent certain words and sounds. Ancient Egyptians wrote using hieroglyphics.

They were mainly found on temple walls and other stone monuments. The Egyptians had other writing systems for papyrus documents.

There were over 700 different symbols!

What is your name in hieroglyphics?



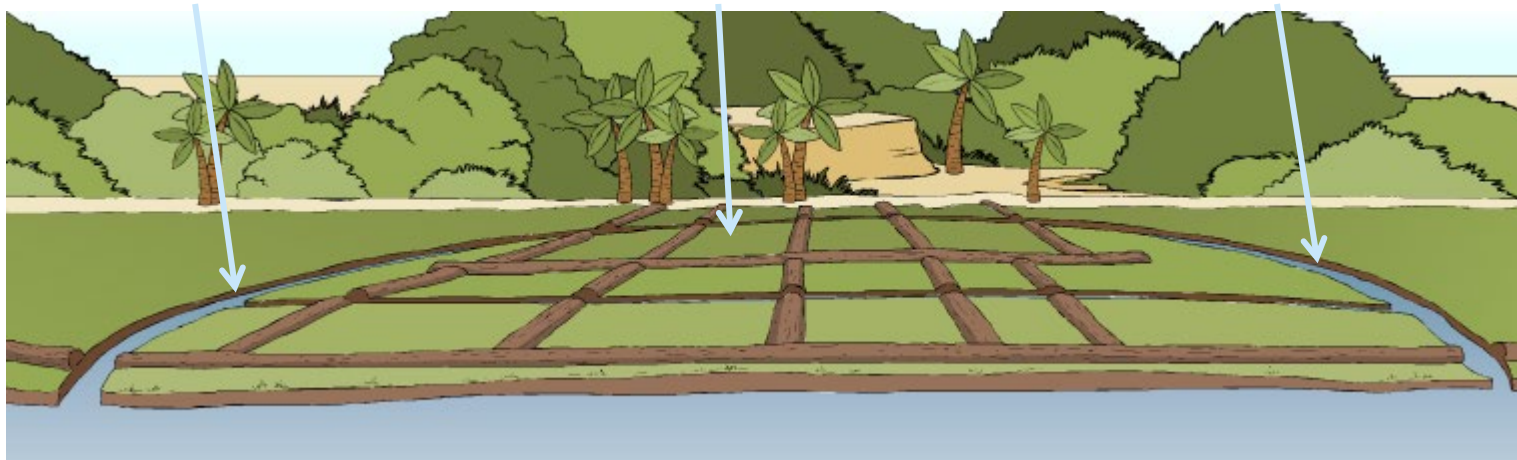
The Egyptians used a basin **irrigation** system to control the floodwater from the Nile and grow crops.

The Nile Valley was divided into basins and canals. Water would flood into the basins through the feeder canals. This water was left to soak the soil for around a month. It was then drained through the discharge canals and crops were planted.

Feeder canals

Basin

Discharge canals





Farming was split into three seasons in Ancient Egypt. These were based upon the flooding patterns of the River Nile.

- **Flooding season** ran from June to September. The Nile left a layer of silt on its river banks after flooding. This was very fertile.
- **Growing season** took place from October to February. Farmers ploughed and planted seeds once the floodwater had gone down.
- **Harvest season** was between March and May. After the crops had been harvested farmers repaired the canals ready for the next floods.



The Ancient Egyptian calendar

The Ancient Egyptians created a **calendar** of 365 days.

The calendar was based on the three **farming seasons**.

Each season was made up of four months of 30 days. Five extra days were added at the end.



New Year was marked by the appearance of the star Sirius towards the end of June. This was followed shortly by the rising of the Nile and flooding season.

This calendar was used in Egypt until the introduction of the **leap year** by Augustus in 30 BC.



Keywords

