

Ancient Egypt

Vocabulary

1. **artifacts**—things left over from ancient times
2. **cataract**—another name for a waterfall
3. **demotic**—a type of ancient Egyptian writing derived from Greek
4. **dynasty**—a period in history where members of the same family govern or rule
5. **Giza**—location in Egypt of largest pyramid ever built
6. **Great Sphinx**—ancient Egyptian monument located at Giza
7. **hieratic**—a type of ancient Egyptian cursive writing
8. **hieroglyphics**—ancient Egyptian form of writing using pictures
9. **ideogram**—a picture that stands for an entire word
10. **Middle Kingdom**—period of ancient Egyptian history from 2025 B.C. to 1782 B.C.
11. **mummification**—process that preserves the bones and soft tissues of a body after death
12. **New Kingdom**—period of ancient Egyptian history from 1539 B.C. to 1070 B.C.

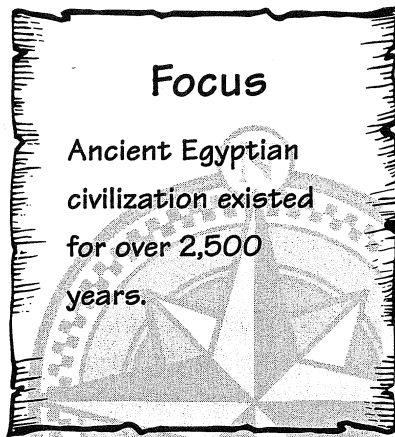
Ancient Egypt

Vocabulary (cont.)

13. **Nubia**—ancient civilization located to the south of Egypt
14. **Old Kingdom**—period in ancient Egyptian history from 2686 B.C. to 2181 B.C.
15. **papyrus**—a plant that was used to make paper
16. **pharaoh**—ancient Egyptian ruler who was believed to be part god and part human
17. **phonogram**—a picture that stands for the sound of a letter
18. **pyramid**—type of ancient Egyptian building used as a tomb
19. **step pyramid**—earliest type of ancient Egyptian building used as a tomb
20. **Rosetta Stone**—ancient Egyptian stone tablet that helped modern people decipher hieroglyphics
21. **Tutankhamen**—Egyptian pharaoh from around 1334 B.C.
22. **Valley of the Kings**—area in Egypt where many ancient Egyptian kings were buried

Ancient Egyptian Society

Brief #2



The ancient Egyptian civilization existed for thousands of years. It changed dramatically over that amount of time. Just think how much the United States has changed since 1776, and that's less than 250 years ago!

The ancient Egyptian civilization is dated from about 3100 B.C. to about 395 A.D.



The Unification of Upper and Lower Egypt

In the earliest stage of Egyptian civilization, the Nile River Valley was divided into two separate countries with their own kings. These countries were called Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.

In about 3150 B.C., both Lower and Upper Egypt became unified or one country. No one is really sure how this happened. There is a legend that says a powerful king named Menes of Upper Egypt marched into Lower Egypt and conquered it. There are no records from this period in time.



The Old Kingdom

During Egypt's first dynasty, Memphis was made the capital of the kingdom. A **dynasty is a period in history where members of the same family govern or rule**. It is during these first few dynasties that the ancient Egyptians built their famous pyramids. This period in ancient Egyptian history is also called the Old Kingdom. **The Old Kingdom dates from about 2686–2181 B.C.**



The Middle Kingdom

The years between about 2025 B.C. and 1782 B.C. are called the Middle Kingdom. **During this time the Egyptians conquered Nubia, the country located to the south of ancient Egypt.** It was during the Middle Kingdom that art and literature flourished in ancient Egypt.

Vocabulary

1. dynasty
2. Old Kingdom
3. Middle Kingdom
4. Nubia
5. New Kingdom

Ancient Egyptian Society

Brief #2 (cont.)



The New Kingdom

The period between about 1539 B.C. to 1070 B.C. is called the **New Kingdom**. This period is often referred to as the “golden age” because ancient Egypt had powerful and effective rulers that expanded the empire and created stability and wealth. Some of these rulers were Ramesses II and Hatshepsut, a powerful female ruler. It is during the New Kingdom that construction in the Valley of the Kings was begun.



Life in Ancient Egypt

- **Family and Work**

The ancient Egyptians lived in family units. The father was responsible for making sure the family had a shelter, food, and clothing. The mother took care of the household, preparing meals and keeping up the home. If you were from a wealthy family, you might have lessons in reading and writing from a scribe, a kind of tutor. If you were from a farming family, you would go with your father to the field to learn how to plant crops. If your father was a craftsman, you might become his apprentice. Ancient Egyptians married between the ages of 17 and 20, although it was not uncommon for girls as young as 13 to wed.

- **Fun and Games**

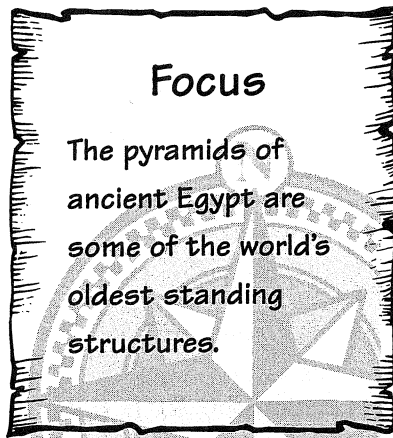
The ancient Egyptians played many different kinds of games. One of them was a game very similar to hockey in which they used long branches from palm trees as sticks. They played many games using balls, and board games called “Senet” and “Dogs and Jackals.”

- **The Home**

Houses in ancient Egypt were built out of bricks, which were made from mud. This method was used by many cultures of the past, including Native Americans living in the Southwest of the United States. The ancient Egyptians lived along the banks of the Nile River. Because the river flooded once a year, the houses were built up high. The houses of wealthier people could have two or three stories. The ancient Egyptians didn't have a lot of furniture. One of the most common pieces was a three- or four-legged stool that had a seat covered in leather. The ancient Egyptians decorated the walls of their homes with paintings and used clay tiles on the floors.

Pyramids

Brief #3



Egyptology is the study of the Ancient Egyptian civilization. Egyptologists study the things that the ancient Egyptians left behind to learn about how they lived. **Things that civilizations make are called artifacts.** Artifacts can be buildings, books, tools, or toys.



Pyramids

The ancient Egyptians left behind some very large artifacts. These artifacts are called pyramids. **A pyramid is an ancient Egyptian tomb, or burial place for the dead.** Other ancient people, like the Aztec and the Maya, also built pyramids. But the pyramids the ancient Egyptians built are the most famous in the world.

Ancient Egyptians built pyramids because of their religious beliefs. They believed that after a person died, they lived on in another place called the afterlife. They believed that in this afterlife people would need some of their possessions, like clothing and weapons. When an important ancient Egyptian was buried in a pyramid, he or she was buried along with many of his or her possessions.



Famous Pyramids

The oldest ancient Egyptian pyramid was built at Saqqara between 2686–2181 B.C. It is a step pyramid. **A step pyramid is made by placing rectangle blocks of decreasing size on top of each other.** It was built for the pharaoh named Zoser. **A pharaoh was an ancient Egyptian ruler who was believed to be both a human being and a god.** After Zoser died, he was buried under the pyramid.

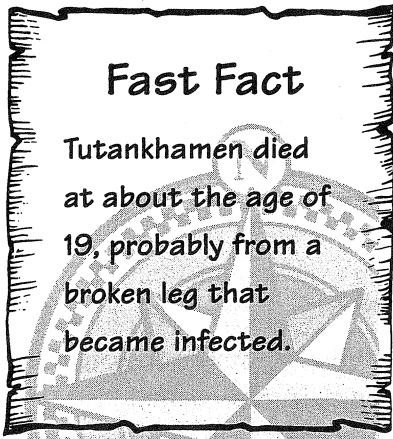
The pharaoh Snefru was responsible for building other important pyramids. One was called the Bent Pyramid. Another is called the Red Pyramid. The Red Pyramid is important because it is thought to be the first pyramid ever built that had smooth sides, unlike those of the traditional step design.

Vocabulary

1. artifacts
2. pyramid
3. pharaoh
4. step pyramid
5. Giza
6. Great Sphinx
7. Valley of the Kings
8. Tutankhamen

Pyramids

Brief #3 (cont.)



Famous Pyramids (cont.)

The largest pyramid ever built is called the **Great Pyramid of Giza**. It is 482 feet tall. The pyramid is made of over two million blocks of stone, each one weighing between two and 15 tons. The Great Pyramid of Giza was built by the pharaoh Khufu. It was built between 2589–2566 B.C.

One of the most famous ancient Egyptian monuments is the **Great Sphinx**. The Great Sphinx is located at the Giza site. A sphinx is a mythological creature that has the body of a lion and the head of a man. The Great Sphinx is 241 feet long and 65 feet high. It is believed to have been built by Khafre, the son of Khufu, but no one is really sure.



Valley of the Kings

Pyramids were not the only structures in which rich and powerful ancient Egyptians were buried. **During Egypt's New Kingdom, many important ancient Egyptians were buried in an area near the modern city of Luxor. This area is called the Valley of the Kings.** It contains about sixty different types of tombs.

Archeologists have been discovering the tombs of ancient Egyptians in the Valley of the Kings for a few centuries. Every time they discover a new tomb they give it a number. Before each number are the letters KV, which stand for King's Valley.

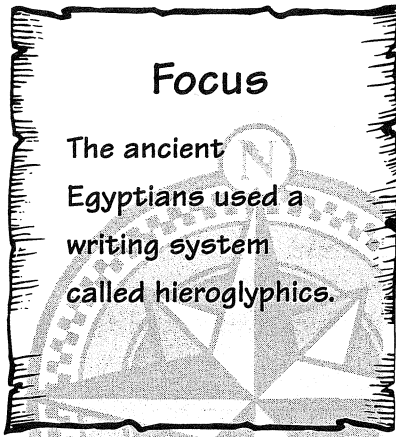
Because important ancient Egyptians were buried with many valuable possessions, including gold, these tombs had been robbed of their belongings long before archeologists in the 19th century discovered them.

One tomb, however, remained intact. This was the tomb KV 62, which belonged to the pharaoh Tutankhamen (King Tut). Tutankhamen was known as the boy king because he became ruler when he was eight or nine years old. He was pharaoh around 1334 B.C.

Archeologists found hundreds and hundreds of artifacts in Tutankhamen's tomb. They found containers of food and wine. They found gold and furniture. They also found a gold face mask in which Tutankhamen was buried. The coffin in which the boy king was buried was made of solid gold. The discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen was one of the most important archeological discoveries ever made. These treasures from ancient Egypt have been displayed in museums all over the world. Millions of people have seen them.

Hieroglyphs

Brief # 5



Much of what we know about the ancient Egyptians comes from the written records that they left behind. The ancient Egyptians used a system of writing known as hieroglyphics. **Hieroglyphics are pictures that represent ideas, things, or sounds.** Many ancient cultures used similar types of writing. Hieroglyphics were carved into buildings and on clay tablets.



The Rosetta Stone

For a long time archeologists had seen ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics on buildings and artifacts but they had no idea what they said. The hieroglyphics were a foreign language that people hadn't used for thousands of years. But all of that changed in 1799.

In that year, a French scholar named Jean Francois Champollion found a large stone tablet buried along the banks of the Nile River. The tablet was inscribed in 196 B.C. It contains a single passage translated into three different languages: hieroglyphics, demotic, and Greek. Champollion was able to figure out what the hieroglyphics said because he knew the other two languages. **This ancient Egyptian tablet that helped modern scholars decipher hieroglyphics is called the Rosetta Stone.**



Reading Hieroglyphics

The ancient Egyptians used different kinds of hieroglyphics. One type was called an ideogram. **An ideogram is a picture that stands for an entire word.** For example, a picture of a foot could stand for the word *foot*.

Another type of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics is called a phonogram. **A phonogram is a picture that stands for the sound of a letter.** For example, the foot ideogram also stood for the sound that our letter *B* makes. The phonograms only pictured consonant sounds. No vowel sounds had pictures to go along with them.

Hieroglyphics were often found engraved on large monuments and tombs.

Vocabulary

1. hieroglyphics
2. Rosetta Stone
3. ideogram
4. phonogram
5. hieratic
6. demotic

Hieroglyphs

Brief # 5 (cont.)



Hieratic and Demotic

The ancient Egyptians also had other ways of writing. One of these was called hieratic. **Hieratic was a kind of cursive writing that was faster than hieroglyphs to produce.** The Egyptians used it in their everyday lives to keep records or write letters. The ancient Egyptians wrote on papyrus.

The ancient Egyptians used another type of writing called demotic. This also was a cursive style of writing. It was a form of Greek. This was one of the written languages found on the Rosetta Stone. By about the fourth century, hieroglyphics, hieratic writing, and demotic writing were no longer used.

