

## Ancient Egypt and Kush

## Lesson 2 Life in Ancient Egypt

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*What makes a culture unique?*

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How was ancient Egypt governed?
2. What kind of religion did the ancient Egyptians practice?
3. Why and how were pyramids built?
4. How was Egyptian society organized?

## Terms to Know

**theocracy** a government in which the same person is the political and religious leader

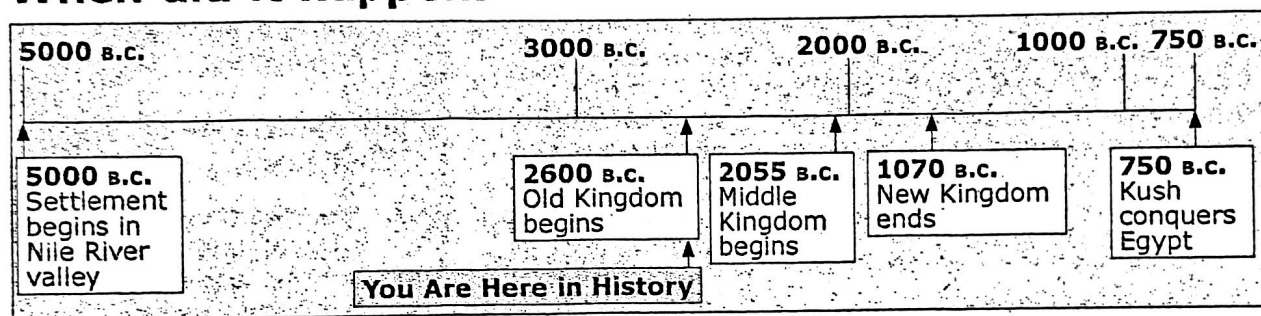
**pharaoh** ruler of ancient Egypt

**bureaucrat** government official

**embalming** the process of preserving dead bodies

**pyramid** a great stone tomb built for an Egyptian pharaoh

## When did it happen?



## What do you know?

In the K column, list what you already know about life in ancient Egypt. In the W column, list what you want to know. After reading the lesson, fill in the L column with the information that you learned.

K	W	L

# Ancient Egypt and Kush

## Lesson 2 Life in Ancient Egypt, Continued

### Egypt's Early Rulers

The Old Kingdom began in Egypt around 2600 B.C. It lasted about 400 years. During this time, the Egyptians built cities and expanded trade. Their kings, or **pharaohs**, set up a government. Egypt was a **theocracy**. That means that the pharaoh was both the political and religious leader.

The pharaoh had total power. He could use all the land in Egypt any way he wanted. His orders were obeyed without question. Pharaohs appointed officials called **bureaucrats**. They were in charge of irrigation canals and crop planting. They made sure grain was saved to help people get through hard times. Bureaucrats also controlled trade and collected tax payments from farmers.

As religious leader, a pharaoh participated in ceremonies that helped the kingdom. For example, he was the first to cut the grain at harvest time. Egyptians believed their pharaoh was the son of Re, the Egyptian sun god. They believed he protected the people during hard times.

#### Pharaoh's Duties

- to unify Egypt
- to lead during good and bad times
- to hire officials
- to give orders
- to participate in religious ceremonies

### Religion in Egypt

Religion affected every part of Egyptian life. Egyptians worshiped many gods and goddesses. They believed that the gods controlled nature. The sun god, Re, was important because the sun was necessary for good crops.

Egyptians believed that life after death was better than the present life. They thought that the dead made a long journey. At the end, they reached a place of peace.

*The Book of the Dead* was a collection of prayers and magic spells. Egyptians studied it, learned the spells, and tried to lead good lives. They believed that if they did these things, the god Osiris would grant them life after death.



#### Defining

1. Define the term **theocracy**.

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#### Marking the Text

2. Underline the duties of the pharaoh's bureaucrats.



#### Reading Check

3. How was the pharaoh both a political leader and a religious leader?

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#### Examining Details

4. List three ways that religion affected life in ancient Egypt.

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## Ancient Egypt and Kush

Lesson 2 Life in Ancient Egypt, *Continued***FOLDABLES****Describing**

5. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line. Write *Describe ...* on the anchor tab. Label the top tab *Embalming* and the bottom tab *Pyramid Building*. Use both sides of the tabs to describe each.

**Reading Check**

6. Why did Egyptians protect a person's body after death?

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**Explaining**

7. How were the pyramids built?

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**Reading Check**

8. Why did the Egyptians build the pyramids?

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For centuries, Egyptians believed that if the pharaoh's soul reached the afterlife, he would continue to protect Egypt. To live in the afterlife, the pharaoh's soul needed a body. Eventually, Egyptians believed all people could reach the afterlife. They developed a process called **embalming** to protect the body. It involved removing organs from the dead body and then drying and wrapping the body in cloth. Embalming taught the Egyptians about the human body. They learned how to treat illnesses. They wrote down what they learned in the world's first medical books.

**Pyramid Tombs**

Egyptians built **pyramids**, or large triangle-shaped tombs, to hold the bodies of the pharaohs. Pyramids protected the bodies from floods, wild animals, and grave robbers. They also held the things the pharaoh might need in the afterlife, such as clothing, furniture, and jewelry.

Thousands of people worked for many years to build a pyramid. Farmers, surveyors, engineers, carpenters, stonecutters, and enslaved people all worked on pyramids.

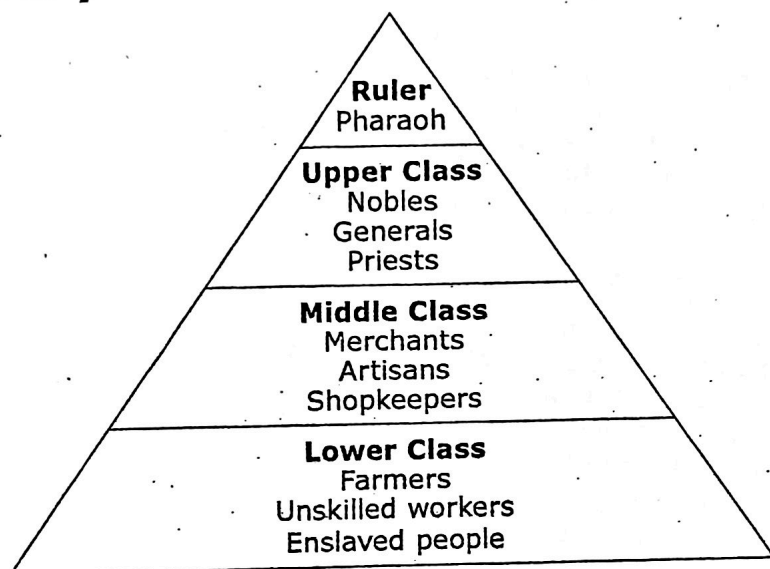
Workers found the stone. Artisans cut it into blocks. Others tied the blocks to wooden sleds and pulled them to barges, or boats. The barges floated to the building site. There workers unloaded the blocks, pushed them up ramps, and set them in place. Each pyramid sat on a square base with a north entrance. To find true north, the Egyptians studied the sky.

Egyptians had to figure out the amount of stone and the angles for the walls. They developed and used mathematics and geometry to do this.

**Egyptian Achievements**

- astronomy
- a 365-day calendar
- geometry/mathematics
- a system of written numbers
- fractions

About 2540 B.C., the Egyptians built the Great Pyramid. It is located about 10 miles south of the modern city of Cairo. It is one of three pyramids still standing in Giza. The Great Pyramid is about the height of a 48-story building and is made of more than 2 million stone blocks.

**Ancient Egypt and Kush****Lesson 2** Life in Ancient Egypt, *Continued***Daily Life**

Every Egyptian had a place in society. The pharaoh and his family were at the very top. The upper class lived in cities and on large estates along the Nile. Servants waited on them. The middle class ran businesses or made goods. They lived in smaller homes. Egypt's lower class was its largest class. Most farmers lived in one-room mud homes. Unskilled workers lived in small homes with dirt floors.

In ancient Egypt, the father headed the family. Women had the right to own property, buy and sell goods, and get divorced. Few Egyptians sent their children to school. Mothers taught their daughters to run a household. Boys learned job skills from their fathers.

☒ **Reading Check**

9. What types of people made up Egypt's upper class?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

☒ **Marking the Text**

10. Underline the rights of ancient Egyptian women.

**FOLDABLES®**

11. Place a one-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the Check for Understanding chart. Label the anchor tab *What made Egypt ...* and write ... *unique* in the middle of the tab. Make a memory map by drawing five arrows around the word and writing five things that were unique to ancient Egypt. Use your notes to help you complete the lists under the tab.

**Check for Understanding**

Name four duties of the pharaoh.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

List two inventions by the Egyptians.

5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_