

Nile Civilizations

THE BIG PICTURE

The Nile is the longest river in the world. In addition to this geographic distinction, it is also known as the site of one of the world's earliest civilizations—ancient Egypt. Egypt, the land of pyramids and pharaohs, is certainly the most famous civilization of the Nile, but it was not the only one. South of Egypt, in the region called Nubia, other civilizations grew and made great cultural advances of their own.



North Carolina Standards

Social Studies Objectives

2.01 Trace the development and assess the achievements of early river civilizations, including but not limited to those around the Huang-He, Nile, Indus, and Tigris-Euphrates rivers;

Language Arts Objective

3.03.2 Support an informed opinion using various types of evidence, such as experience or facts.

TIME LINE

CHAPTER EVENTS

4000 BC

c. 3100 BC
Egypt is unified as one kingdom.

The Old Kingdom
c. 2650–2150 BC

c. 1650 BC
The Hyksos take over Egypt.

The New Kingdom
c. 1550–1070 BC

WORLD EVENTS

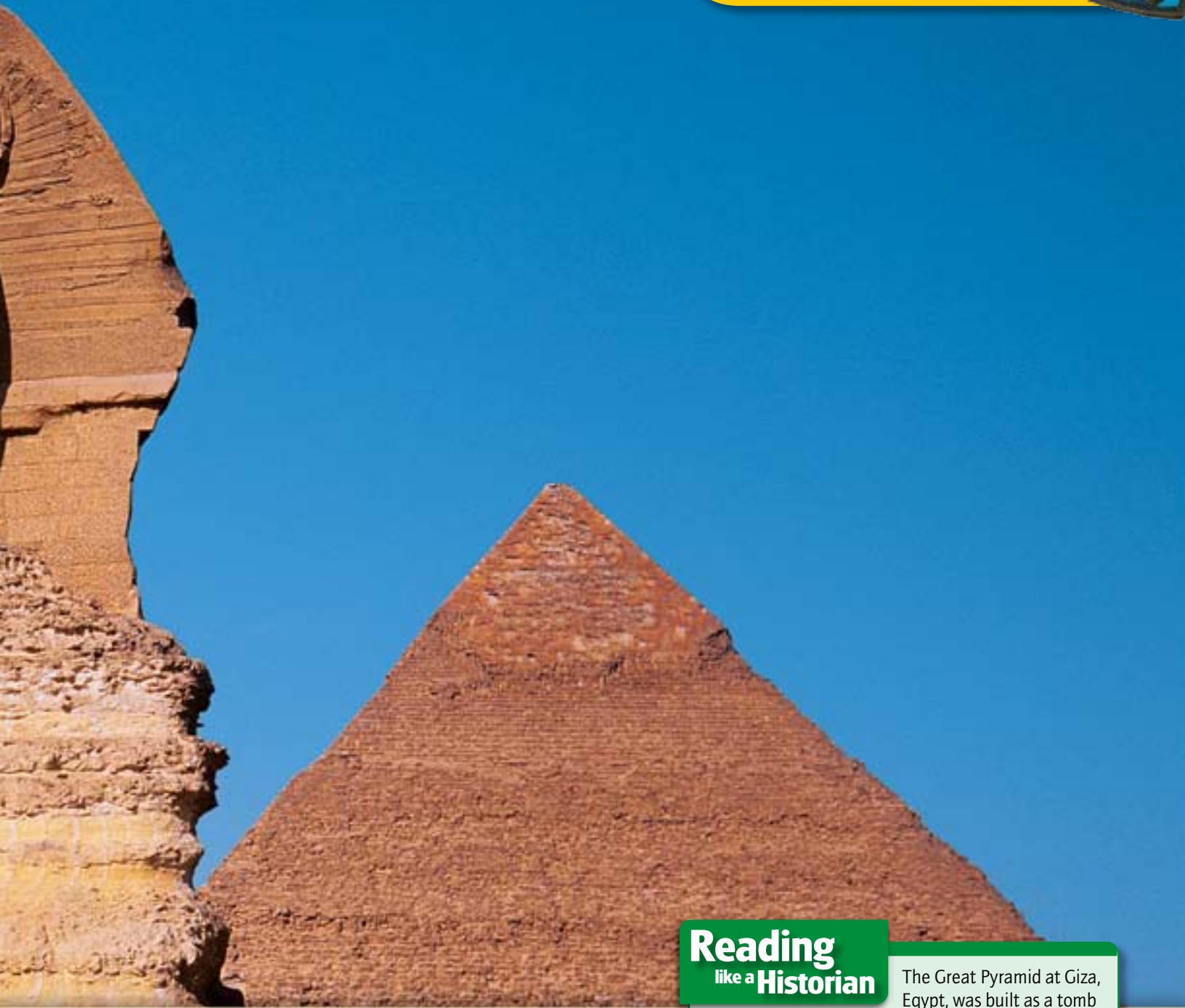
4000 BC
Large cities are built in Sumer.

c. 2500 BC
The Indus Valley civilization develops.

1766 BC
The Shang dynasty begins in China.

History's Impact video program

Watch the video to understand the impact of Egyptian pyramids.



Reading like a Historian

The Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, was built as a tomb for King Khufu of Egypt. Next to the pyramid stands the Great Sphinx, a huge statue of a mythical creature with the head of a man and the body of a lion. Both the pyramid and the sphinx are among the largest structures built in the ancient world.

Analyzing Visuals Why do you think the Egyptians built structures like the Great Pyramid and the Great Sphinx? What does this say about Egyptian culture?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H26

c. 280 BC

Meroë becomes the capital of Kush.

1000 BC

c. 600 BC

Nebuchadnezzar II rebuilds Babylon.

27 BC

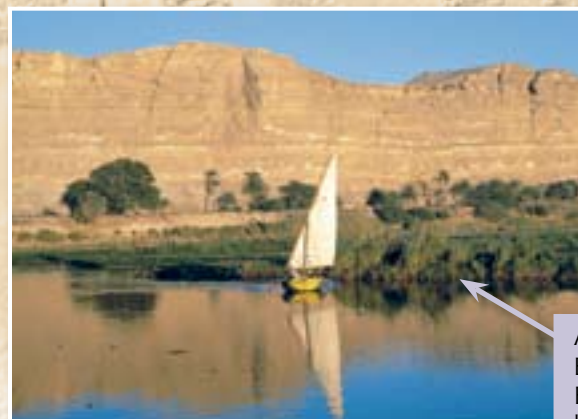
The Roman Empire begins.

GEOGRAPHY Starting Points



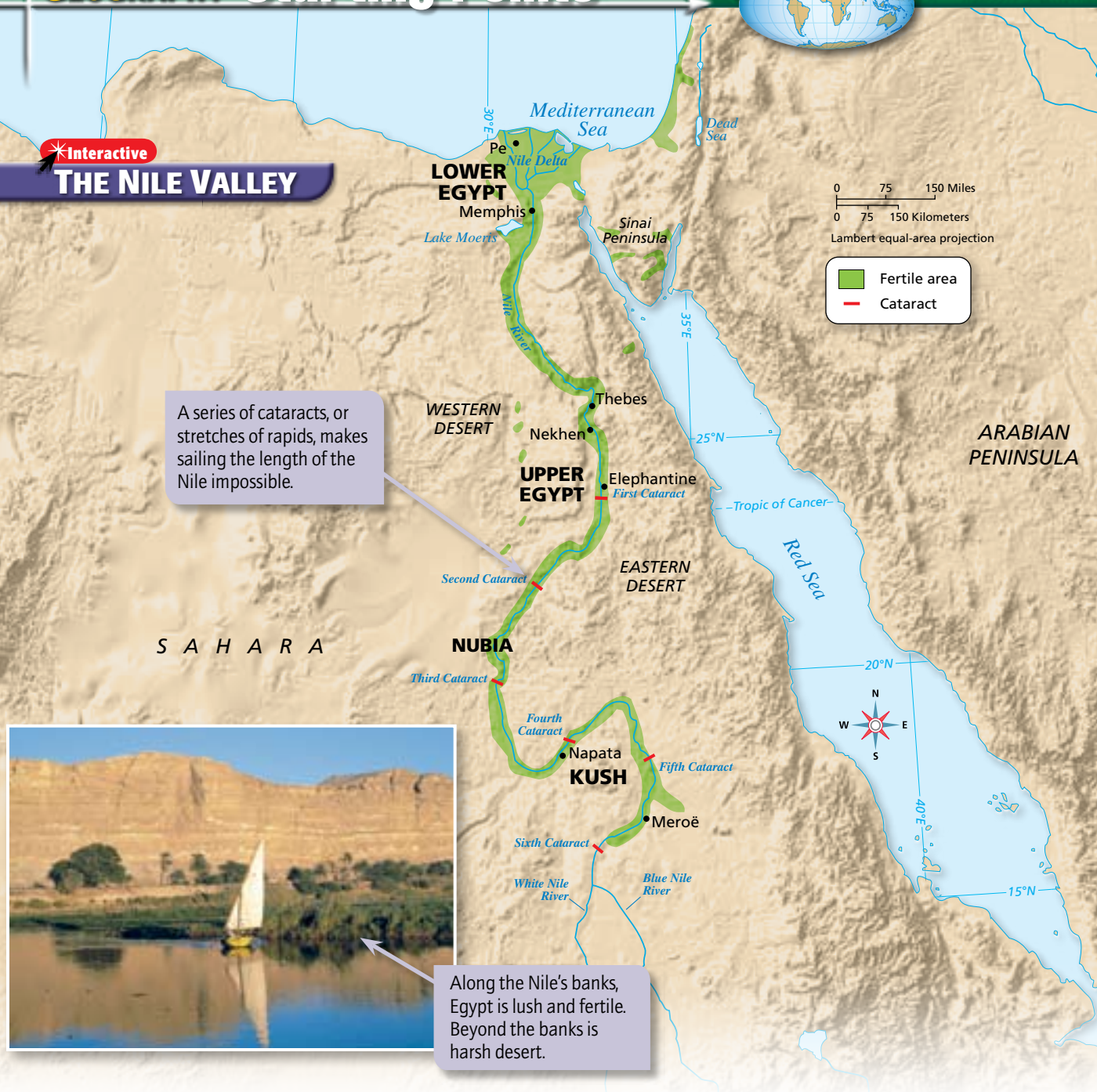
Interactive

THE NILE VALLEY



A series of cataracts, or stretches of rapids, makes sailing the length of the Nile impossible.

Along the Nile's banks, Egypt is lush and fertile. Beyond the banks is harsh desert.



Starting Points

The Nile, the longest river in the world, flows northward from eastern Africa to the Mediterranean. Over much of its course, the Nile flows through the Sahara, the largest desert in the world and one of the harshest. The civilizations that developed along the Nile depended on the river to irrigate their lands and to make life possible.

- 1. Predict** Look at the area labeled as fertile on the map. Based on this information, where do you think civilizations developed?
- 2. Predict** Egypt is isolated from other regions by the desert and by cataracts on the Nile. How might this isolation have affected early Egyptian society?



Listen to History

Go online to listen to an explanation of the starting points for this chapter.

go.hrw.com

Keyword: SHL NIC

SECTION

1

The Kingdom of Egypt

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

Egypt was one of the most stable and long-lasting civilizations of the ancient world.

READING FOCUS

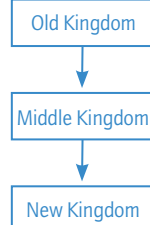
1. How did geography influence Egypt's early history?
2. What achievements were made in the Old Kingdom?
3. What happened during the Middle Kingdom?
4. What was Egypt like during the New Kingdom?

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

delta
cataracts
Menes
pharaoh
theocracy
bureaucracy
Hatshepsut
Ramses the Great

TAKING NOTES

In each box, record events in one period of Egyptian history.



THE INSIDE STORY

What was the Nile's gift? Some-time in the 400s BC, a Greek historian named Herodotus traveled to Egypt. Like many people in Greece, he had heard of Egypt but knew very little of life there. What he saw on his journey both impressed and amazed him.

Of all the sights Herodotus witnessed in Egypt, none left more of an impression on him than the Nile itself. For a Greek who took rain for granted, it was unthinkable that a society could depend on a river for all of its water. He was astounded at stories of the annual floods that brought water to the fields. These floods, he thought, made the work of Egyptian farmers incredibly easy. In contrast, the Egyptians to whom Herodotus spoke listened in disbelief to his descriptions of rain. They did not seem to trust the idea of water that did not come from a river.

Herodotus also could not believe the variety of animals that dwelled in or near the Nile, from fish and birds to crocodiles and hippopotamuses. Without the Nile, Herodotus concluded, Egypt could not exist: "For any one who sees Egypt, without having heard a word about it before, must perceive, if he has only common powers of observation, that the Egypt to which the Greeks go in their ships is an acquired country, the gift of the river." ■

Geography and Early Egypt

As Herodotus noted, the Nile is the most important physical feature in Egypt. The river, the longest in the world, flows more than 4,000 miles through north Africa. For much of this length, the river flows through the Sahara, the world's largest desert. Without the Nile's waters, no one could live there.

THE GIFT OF THE NILE



▲ The Nile provided Egyptians not only with water for farming but with many types of animals and plants.

The Geography of Egypt Like the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, the Nile flooded every year. Unlike floods on the Mesopotamian rivers, however, the Nile's floods were predictable. These floods occurred every year when spring rains fed the river's sources south of Egypt. The floodwaters that poured over the river's banks covered the surrounding land with a rich black silt. Because of these floods, a narrow band of fertile soil stretched all along the Nile. It was in this band that Egyptian civilization developed.

The richest and most fertile soils in all Egypt were found in the Nile Delta. A **delta** is an area at the mouth of a river, often triangle-shaped, made up of silt deposits. Because the Nile is so long and carries so much silt, its delta is one of the largest in the world.

The dark color of the Nile river silt gave rise to the Egyptians' name for their country—the Black Land. In contrast, they called the surrounding desert the Red Land. Although the desert was mostly unlivable wasteland, its presence was something of a comfort to the Egyptians. The Sahara was so difficult to cross that it discouraged peoples from invading.

The Nile itself also helped prevent invasions. South of Egypt, the Nile flowed through a series of **cataracts**, rocky stretches marked by swift currents and rapids. Because of these dangerous currents and falls, boats could not sail through the Nile's cataracts. As a result, people from the areas south of Egypt could not use the Nile as an easy invasion route.

Two Kingdoms The first farming villages along the Nile appeared as early as 5000 BC. Over time, these villages consolidated into two kingdoms. The people of these kingdoms spoke different dialects, or versions of the same language, and had different customs.

The northern kingdom, Lower Egypt, was located downriver at the lower end of the Nile. It occupied most of the Nile Delta, where the climate was milder than it was in the south. The people of Lower Egypt worshipped a cobra goddess, and as a result that snake was a symbol of their kingdom.

South of Lower Egypt was Upper Egypt, which lay along the river's upper stretches. It stretched from south of the delta to about the first cataract. Upper Egyptians prayed to a vulture goddess, so a vulture was their symbol.

Unification The two kingdoms of Egypt were first unified around 3100 BC. Historians are not sure exactly how the unification came about, but ancient Egyptian legends say that a ruler named **Menes** (MEE-nee-z) from Upper Egypt conquered the north. Menes is also said to have founded the city of Memphis, the capital of unified Egypt.

As the ruler of both kingdoms, Menes adopted the symbols of both Upper and Lower Egypt, the cobra and the vulture. He also wore a crown that combined the traditional red and white crowns of the two kingdoms. Later Egyptian rulers likewise used both sets of symbols to show their power over all Egypt.

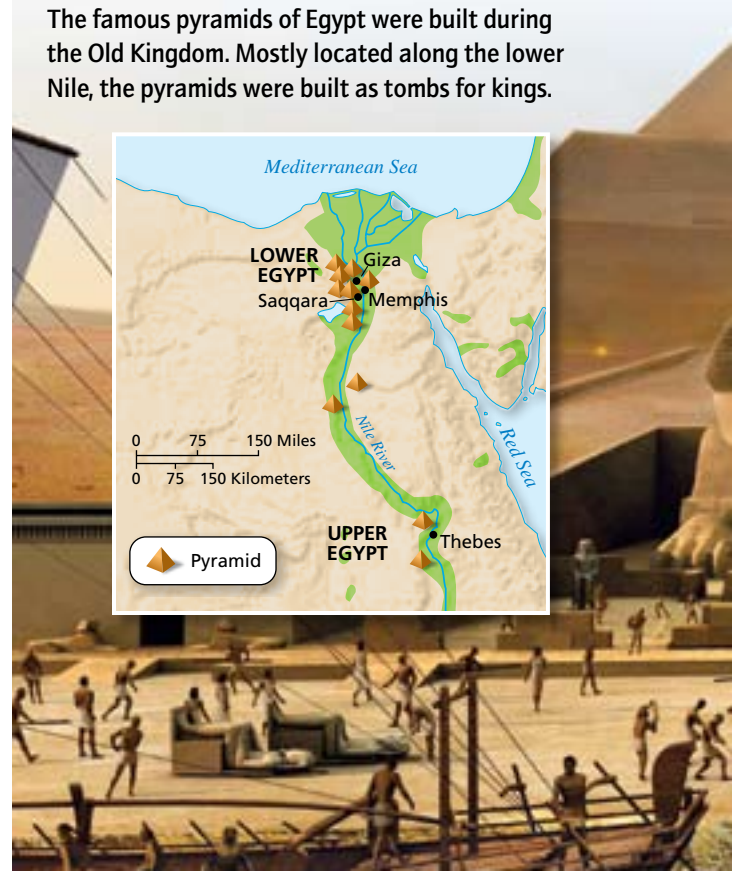
Menes founded Egypt's first dynasty, or series of rulers from the same family. Through its long history, Egypt was ruled by a string of dynasties. Historians use these dynasties as a tool for organizing their studies of Egyptian history. For example, they may refer to rulers of the Seventh dynasty or events that occurred during the Twenty-second dynasty. In total, 31 dynasties held power in Egypt.

READING CHECK

Draw Conclusions How did geography affect where the early Egyptians lived?

Old Kingdom Pyramids

The famous pyramids of Egypt were built during the Old Kingdom. Mostly located along the lower Nile, the pyramids were built as tombs for kings.



THE IMPACT TODAY

Since the building of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, the cataracts no longer prevent travel on the Nile.

The Old Kingdom

The rise of the Third dynasty in about 2650 BC marked the beginning of a long period of stable rule in Egypt. This period, known as the Old Kingdom, lasted about 500 years. Egyptians of the Old Kingdom created many of the institutions for which the civilization is best known.

The Pyramids The most famous symbols of ancient Egypt are the pyramids. Most of these huge structures were built during the Old Kingdom. The largest and most famous of the Old Kingdom pyramids are located near the town of Giza.

The pyramids were built as tombs for Egypt's rulers. Inside or below each pyramid was a hollow chamber in which a dead king was buried. To protect the bodies of their kings and the treasures that were buried with them, the Egyptians sometimes placed deadly traps within a pyramid.

Pyramid design changed greatly over time. The earliest pyramids did not have smooth sides. Instead, their sides looked like a series of steps. The smooth-sided pyramids with which we are familiar were built later.

However they changed, building pyramids took a great deal of planning and skill—and time. In fact, pyramids took so long to construct that kings usually ordered their pyramids begun soon after they took the throne. Workers built the pyramids from the inside out, carefully placing limestone blocks cut from nearby quarries. These blocks had to be dragged overland to the building site on rollers. Historians are not certain how workers hauled the heavy stone blocks up the sides of the pyramid, but some think that workers dragged the blocks up specially built ramps with ropes.

Despite what many people believe, the pyramids were not built by slaves. Most of the workers were peasants who were required to work for the government for one month out of the year. While they worked on a pyramid, the peasants received food and clothing and were sheltered in nearby villages.

Not all of the workers on a pyramid were peasants, though. Professional craftspeople were also hired to work on the tombs. Among them were the architects who actually designed the pyramid and surrounding buildings and the artists hired to decorate the interior of the finished tomb.



Tunnels through the Great Pyramid led to the inner chamber where the king's body was placed.

Rotating groups of laborers, mostly peasants, built the pyramids. Each group worked for one month of the year.

**Skills
FOCUS**

INTERPRETING VISUALS

Draw Conclusions Why do you think the Egyptians wanted to build such huge, permanent tombs for their kings?

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**COULD YOU
HAVE SURVIVED?**

Go online for a closer look at survival and this event.

Keyword: SHL NIC

The Rulers of Egypt

c. 3100 BC

Menes unifies Upper and Lower Egypt.

◀ This plaque is thought to show the fight to unify Egypt.



c. 2680 BC The oldest known pyramid is built at Saqqara for the Old Kingdom pharaoh Djoser.

c. 1900 BC

Middle Kingdom pharaohs encourage merchants and sailors to trade with Nubia, Phoenicia, and Greece.



The Pharaohs Egypt's government also took shape during the Old Kingdom. At the head of the government was the king, who eventually became known as the **pharaoh** (FER-oh). The term *pharaoh* literally means “great house.” Pharaohs had absolute power in Egypt. They owned all the land in the country, and their word was law. In addition, pharaohs acted as judges and as the leaders of Egypt's army.

One reason for the pharaoh's great power was the belief that he was a god. The ancient Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was really a god in human form. As such, people thought that the pharaoh was responsible for Egypt's prosperity. He and his priests had to perform elaborate rituals every day to ensure that the sun would rise, the Nile would flood, and crops would grow. For his role in keeping Egypt safe and secure, people honored the pharaoh:

HISTORY'S VOICES

“Adore the king . . . living forever, in your innermost parts. Place His Majesty in friendly fashion in your thoughts . . . He is Re [the sun], by whose rays one sees, for he is one who illumines the Two Lands [Upper and Lower Egypt] more than the sun disk. He is one who makes [the land] green.”

—Loyalty instructions from the Sehetepibre Stela

Because the pharaoh was thought to be a god, religion and government were closely intertwined in the Old Kingdom. Egypt was a **theocracy**, a state ruled by religious figures.

Egyptian Bureaucracy Powerful as the pharaoh was, he could not rule Egypt alone. The kingdom was simply too big and too complex for one person to govern. To aid him in ruling, the pharaoh was surrounded by a well-established **bureaucracy**, a highly structured organization managed by officials. In Egypt, many of these officials were the pharaoh's relatives.

Officially, members of the Egyptian bureaucracy had no power of their own. They simply acted upon the wishes of the pharaoh. In fact, however, many government officials were quite powerful. The most powerful official in Egypt was the vizier (VUH-zir), sometimes chosen for his ability but usually a relative of the pharaoh. He was responsible for advising the pharaoh, carrying out his orders, and trying court cases. The position of the vizier was hereditary. When a vizier died, his son took over his duties.

Serving below the vizier were hundreds of lesser officials. Their duties—and by extension, their influence—varied widely. Some officials served as governors of small territories within Egypt. Others were irrigation supervisors or crop inspectors. Census takers kept track of the kingdom's population, while tax collectors gathered the grain and goods that supplied the kingdom. All together, these officials kept Egypt running smoothly and efficiently.

READING CHECK

Summarize What Egyptian institutions were developed during the Old Kingdom?



c. 1500 BC

Hatshepsut increases trade between New Kingdom Egypt and other lands.



c. 1250 BC

Ramses the Great rules over the last period of Egyptian glory.

c. 1350 BC Akhenaten introduces monotheism to Egypt by banning the worship of traditional gods.

◀ **Workers load grain onto a boat in this New Kingdom painting.**

**Skills
FOCUS**

INTERPRETING TIME LINES

Approximately how much time passed between the reigns of Menes and Ramses the Great?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H14

The Middle Kingdom

Although the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom had tremendous authority, they eventually lost power. Powerful local nobles began to assert their own authority as rivals of the pharaoh. As a result, Egypt's internal order and stability gradually disappeared.

The government of the Old Kingdom collapsed around 2100 BC. For almost 200 years, economic problems, invasions, and civil wars racked Egypt. Famine and widespread disease added to the chaos. Finally, in about 2055 BC, a new dynasty rose to power and began the Middle Kingdom.

The strong leadership of this dynasty brought stability to Egypt. Along with this stability came economic prosperity. From their capital at Thebes, Middle Kingdom pharaohs encouraged sailors and merchants to import goods from surrounding lands. Historians have found evidence that Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom traded with the Nubians, who lived south of Egypt, the Phoenicians, the Minoans of Greece, and other peoples.

Trade routes into Egypt were not always safe, and bandits and hostile tribes sometimes attacked merchants. To protect their people, pharaohs sent armies to secure these routes. As part of this protection, the Egyptians built fortresses all along the Nile. They also took over Nubia as far south as the second cataract.

Despite these improved defenses, the Middle Kingdom fell to invaders around 1650 BC. Raiders from Syria whom the Egyptians called the Hyksos (HIK-sohs) invaded the Nile Delta and conquered Lower Egypt. The Hyksos had military technologies unknown in Egypt, including the horse-drawn chariot, armor, and a strong bow. Armed with these technologies, the Hyksos easily defeated the Egyptians.

READING CHECK

Summarize How did the Middle Kingdom rise and fall?

READING SKILLS

Summarizing
After you read this paragraph, summarize it in one sentence using your own words.

The New Kingdom

The Hyksos ruled Egypt for almost 100 years. They were not harsh rulers, but the Egyptians resented being ruled by foreigners. Eventually, they rose up and drove the Hyksos out of their kingdom.

The army that defeated the Hyksos was led by nobles from Thebes, who declared themselves the new rulers of Egypt. Their reign marked the beginning of the New Kingdom.

Securing Egypt Years of Hyksos rule had taught the Egyptians a hard lesson: they could not depend solely on geographic barriers to protect them. The desert and the sea would no longer keep invaders out of Egypt. As a result, pharaohs had to find a new way to secure Egypt's borders and keep the kingdom safe.



Even as their armies were invading Nubia, the pharaohs led campaigns east into Asia. They attacked and took over almost the entire Sinai Peninsula and parts of Phoenicia and Syria. As the map to the left shows, the Egyptians formed an empire that reached from southern Nubia all the way to the Euphrates.

The Reign of Hatshepsut While Egypt's territory was expanding, pharaohs were also increasing trade. As you can see on the map, goods poured into Egypt from as far away as Greece, Babylonia, and Africa south of Kush.

One of the pharaohs best known for encouraging trade was **Hatshepsut**, one of the few women to rule Egypt. She took power around 1500 BC when her husband, the pharaoh, died. Officially, Hatshepsut was only the regent, ruling in the name of her young son. Before long, however, she proclaimed herself to be Egypt's pharaoh, the only woman ever to do so.

Hatshepsut wanted to be treated like any other pharaoh, so she acted the part. She dressed like a man, even wearing the false beard that male pharaohs wore. She referred to herself as the son—not the daughter—of the sun god and had statues made in which she appeared to be a man.

The reign of Hatshepsut is best known for a huge trading expedition she sent to Punt, a kingdom on the Red Sea. This expedition returned to Egypt with such products as gold, apes and other wild animals, and myrrh, a valuable perfume. Hatshepsut had images of this magnificent journey carved on the walls of the temple in which she was buried.

When Hatshepsut died, her nephew took over as pharaoh. One of his first acts as ruler was to destroy nearly everything his aunt had created. He destroyed statues, removed her name from monuments, and tried to remove all record of her reign. Historians still do not know why he did this.

Monotheism in Egypt Around 1353 BC a new pharaoh took power in Egypt. His name was Amenhotep IV, but he is more commonly known by another name: Akhenaten, which means beloved of Aten. Egyptians had been worshipping many gods for centuries, but Akhenaten changed that. He worshipped only one god, Aten the sun god, and thought everyone should do the same.

New Kingdom pharaohs decided that the best way to protect Egypt from further invasions was to build a powerful military. To this end, they created Egypt's first permanent army. In addition to traditional foot soldiers, the Egyptian army included archers and charioteers equipped with weapons adopted from the Hyksos.

To prevent a foreign people from taking over Egypt again, pharaohs decided to create an empire of their own. If Egypt ruled lands beyond the Nile Valley, they thought, then these lands would serve as a buffer between their kingdom and others. As part of their empire building, the pharaohs headed south into Nubia, which they had lost during the period of Hyksos rule. In Nubia, they conquered the kingdom of Kush and forced its rulers to pay tribute to Egypt.

As part of the changes he introduced in Egypt, Akhenaten banned the worship of any gods but Aten. He stripped power from the priests of other gods and ordered the gods' images destroyed. Out of respect for his god, he built a new capital called Akhetaten. He built a temple there to Aten and is thought to have written beautiful hymns to the god.

The worship of Aten did not survive Akhenaten's death. The very next pharaoh, Tutankhamon, or Tut, restored the worship of Egypt's traditional gods and moved the kingdom's capital back to Thebes.

Ramses the Great For most of the New Kingdom, the Egyptians continued to expand their empire, fighting campaigns in Nubia and Syria. By about 1250 BC, however, a new foe had appeared to threaten the empire. The Hittites from Mesopotamia invaded Egyptian-held Syria and began to take territory.

Pharaoh Ramses II (RAM-seez), also called **Ramses the Great**, led his army out to confront the Hittites. Accounts of the battle vary widely. According to Hittite records, the Egyptians lost the battle. Egyptian records, however, claimed a great victory for Ramses.

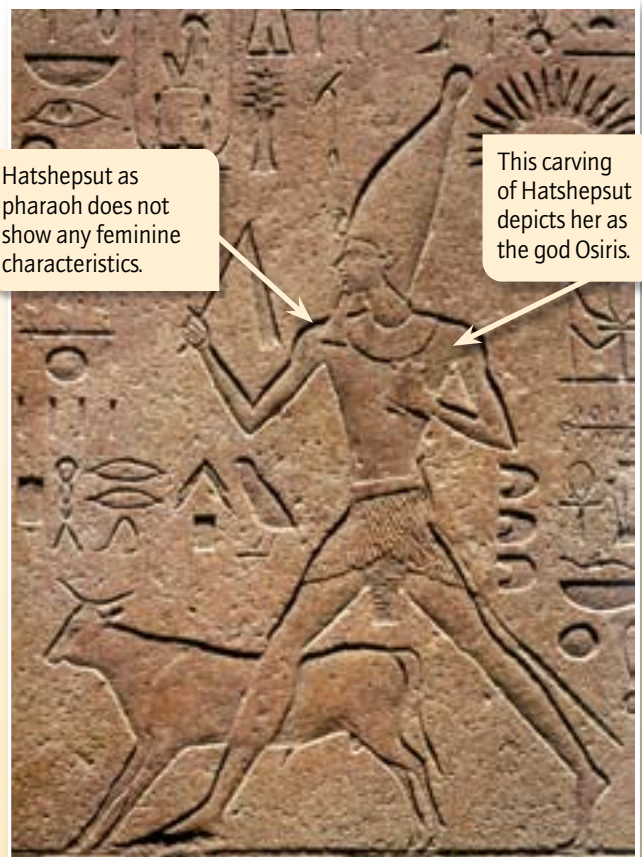
FACES OF HISTORY

Hatshepsut, reigned c. 1503–1482 BC



Hatshepsut's face was used as the model for this statue of a sphinx, a creature that was part human and part lion.

The facial features of the sphinx are obviously feminine.



Hatshepsut as pharaoh does not show any feminine characteristics.

This carving of Hatshepsut depicts her as the god Osiris.

Hatshepsut is renowned as the only woman ever to rule Egypt as pharaoh. During her lifetime, she wanted to be portrayed as any other pharaoh would be. She frequently even had herself portrayed as male in statues.

As a result of the dual nature of Hatshepsut as a woman and as a pharaoh, images of her differ greatly. Compare the two representations of her above, and consider how each represents one aspect of her identity.

Skills Focus

READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

- 1. Identify** Which of these representations probably looks more like Hatshepsut really did?
- 2. Explain** Why do you think Hatshepsut insisted that she be depicted as a man in many of her images?
- 3. Analyze Visuals** How do these two representations portray different aspects of Hatshepsut's identity?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H26

However the battle turned out, the two armies agreed to a truce. As a sign of the peace, Ramses married a Hittite princess. With this marriage, the conflict with the Hittites ended.

Ramses ruled Egypt for more than 60 years. His reign was marked by extravagant splendor. With his great wealth, Ramses built more temples and monuments than any other pharaoh, including two huge temples at Abu Simbel in Nubia and another at Karnak in Egypt. Due to his political achievements and artistic legacy, no other pharaoh is as remembered or admired as Ramses.

Egypt's Decline The reign of Ramses II marked the last period of Egypt's greatness. His successors faced many challenges to their authority. Most of these challenges came in the form of invasions by foreign powers.

The first of the major invasions of Egypt was by a group that the Egyptians called the Sea Peoples. Today, no one is sure who the Sea Peoples were, where they came from, or even if they were a single people. All we know is that their invasions were devastating to empires in the area. Their invasions helped bring an end to the Hittite Empire and weakened Egypt's control of Syria.

As the empire declined, priests and nobles struggled for power, and Egypt broke into small states. This breakup made the kingdom an easy target for foreign invasions. Over the next 700 years, many foreign rulers controlled Egypt. The Libyans from west of Egypt conquered Egypt and established themselves as a ruling dynasty, as did the Kushites from Nubia. Later, the Assyrians from Mesopotamia swept in and took over Egypt. In the late-500s BC, the Persians added Egypt to their huge empire.

After about 120 years of Persian rule, the Egyptians managed to drive the Persians out and once more rule Egypt themselves. Before long, however, the Persians returned. In 343 BC, they took over again and deposed the last Egyptian-born pharaoh. Never again would an Egyptian rule in ancient Egypt.

The second Persian conquest of Egypt did not last long, though. In 332 BC, a Greek army under Alexander the Great marched in and took over. The Greeks would rule Egypt for about 300 years before it fell to another power, perhaps the greatest power of the ancient world—Rome.

READING CHECK Sequence How did Egypt grow and change during the New Kingdom?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

successors the people who follow others in an office or position

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

Keyword: SHL NIC HP

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Define** What were the **delta** and the **cataracts**? How did these features affect life in Egypt?
- b. Explain** Why was the Nile so important to Egypt?
- c. Elaborate** Why do you think many historians consider the unification of Egypt under **Menes** the beginning of Egyptian civilization?
2. **a. Identify** What was the purpose of Old Kingdom pyramids?
- b. Analyze** How did the perception of **pharaohs** as gods add to their power?
- c. Elaborate** How could a **bureaucracy** increase the speed and efficiency with which a government operates?
3. **a. Recall** What led to the end of the Middle Kingdom?
- b. Draw Conclusions** Why were pharaohs able to increase trade during the Middle Kingdom?
4. **a. Identify Main Ideas** For what deeds are **Hatshepsut** and **Akhenaten** best known?
- b. Explain** Why did some New Kingdom pharaohs want to build an empire?
- c. Evaluate** Do you think Ramses II deserves to be known as **Ramses the Great**? Why or why not?

Critical Thinking

5. **Make Judgments** Draw a chart like the one below. For each period of Egyptian history listed in the first column, choose the event from your notes you think is most important. List that achievement in the second column, and tell why you think it is so important in the third.

Period	Achievement	Why Important
Early Egypt		
Old Kingdom		
Middle Kingdom		
New Kingdom		

FOCUS ON WRITING

6. **Description** Write a description of an Egyptian burial chamber as though you were part of the expedition that discovered it. Remember to use vivid details in your description.

Focus on Themes

Belief Systems

Religion and government are two of the most influential factors in people's lives. Between them, religion and government shape how people act, live, and even think. In Egypt, as in most ancient societies, government and religion were closely intertwined. As you read in the previous chapter, priests in Mesopotamia held great political authority. In Egypt, the link between religion and government was even stronger—the pharaoh, the head of the government, was himself seen as a god.

GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION THEN As both the ruler and a god, the pharaoh was the central figure in both government and religion. In addition to his roles as the maker of laws and the leader of armies, the pharaoh also led the people of Egypt in their worship of the gods, including himself and his ancestors.

The pharaoh's divinity was the source of his political power, which was absolute. He was a necessary participant in the rituals that people believed would keep the sun rising, the crops growing, and the river flooding. In other words, the pharaoh was important not only for leadership but for ensuring the very survival of Egypt itself. To honor their leader, the Egyptians wrote hymns of praise to the pharaoh, built temples and statues to him, and held huge festivals in his honor. Nothing was considered too extravagant to honor a man who was both king and god.



▲ **NOW** The U.S. Constitution forbids the establishment of an official government religion.

GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION NOW Only a few countries in the world today have governments that are closely linked to religion. The Holy See, also known as Vatican City, is ruled by the pope, who is also the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Iran's government is strongly influenced by Muslim leaders called ayatollahs.

In most other countries, government and religion are kept at least somewhat separate. In the United States, for example, the government is forbidden by the Constitution from establishing an official religion or from restricting people's worship. At the same time, however, people's religious beliefs can influence government policies and decisions. Some of this influence stems from lawmakers' own beliefs, and some from the beliefs of the voters. The relationship between church and state is the subject of much debate in this country—debate that will continue for years to come.



◀ **THEN** In this statue, the god Horus in falcon shape watches over a pharaoh, symbolizing the union of government and religion.

Skills Focus

UNDERSTANDING THEMES

- 1. Describe** How were government and religion related in Egypt? How are they related in most countries today?
- 2. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think people's religious beliefs can influence government decisions?
- 3. Elaborate** Why do you think the relationship of government and religion is so debated today?

Egyptian Culture

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

The ancient Egyptians are famous for their religion, their burial practices, and their advances in art, writing, and science.

READING FOCUS

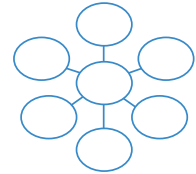
1. What were the main principles of Egyptian religion?
2. Why did Egyptians practice mummification and burial?
3. What was daily life like in ancient Egypt?
4. What advances did Egyptians make in art, writing, and science?

KEY TERMS

obelisks
mummification
hieroglyphics
papyrus
Rosetta Stone

TAKING NOTES

In each oval, take notes about one aspect of ancient Egyptian culture.



FROM ARCHITECT TO GOD

◀ Imhotep, a great architect and physician, was later revered as a god.

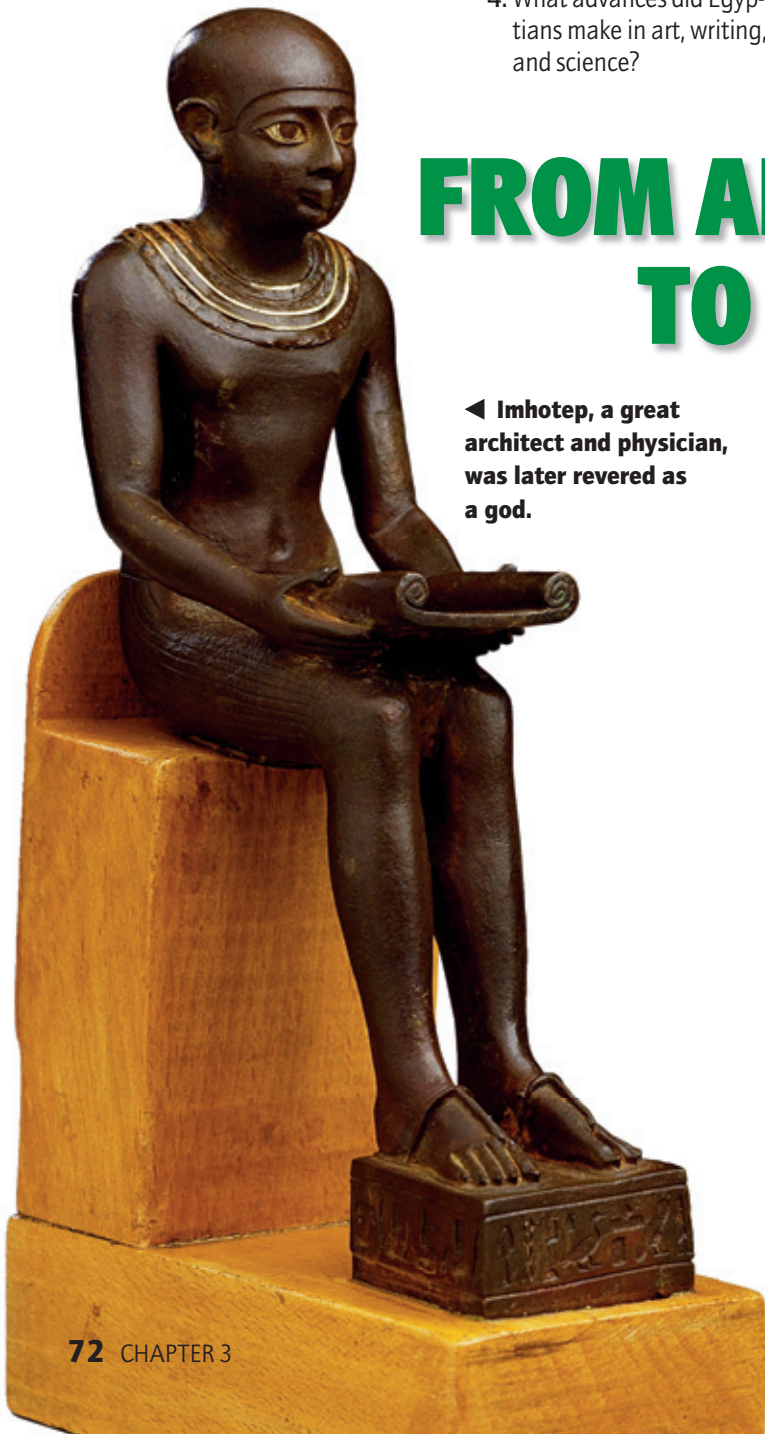
THE INSIDE STORY

How did a doctor and builder become a god?

In the case of Imhotep, the most famous architect in Egyptian history, it was by helping shape Egyptian culture. Imhotep, who lived in the 2600s BC—early in the Old Kingdom—designed the first pyramid ever built in Egypt. Located at Saqqara, the step-sided pyramid was the tomb of Imhotep's lord, the pharaoh Djoser.

Imhotep's contributions to Egyptian culture go far beyond pyramids, though. As an architect, he may have been the first person in the world to use columns in his designs, a style for which Egyptian architecture is famous. As a skilled physician, he is considered the founder of Egyptian medicine. He was believed to have written descriptions of cures for several diseases and instructions on how to perform surgery. Imhotep also acted as vizier to Djoser and as the high priest of the sun god Re. In these positions, he had great authority and considerable personal influence.

During Imhotep's lifetime, stories began to circulate in Egypt that he was the son of the god Ptah, the god of crafts and creation. Legends of Imhotep's brilliance continued to spread after he died, and over time people even began to worship him as a god. By about 2,000 years after his death, Imhotep had entered Egyptian religion as the god of medicine and healing. ■



Egyptian Religion

Like the people of Mesopotamia, the Egyptians worshipped many gods. Some of the gods were ancient, worshipped from the earliest days of the Old Kingdom. Others, such as Imhotep, were added to the religion later. Egyptian religious beliefs were constantly evolving.

The Egyptians believed that gods controlled all natural events. As a result, a people dependent on the Nile's natural cycle of flooding for food and survival both feared and respected the awesome powers of the gods.

Chief Gods and Goddesses Although the Egyptians worshipped hundreds of gods and goddesses, a few were central to their religion. However, the gods that were central changed several times over the kingdom's long history.

The god of the sun was almost always a key figure in Egyptian religion. In the Old Kingdom, this god was called Re (RAY). Later, he became linked to a sky god called Amon and was known as Amon-Re. Amon-Re, the King of the Gods, was also thought to be the father of the pharaohs. The temple to him at Karnak was the largest ever built in Egypt.

Anubis, the protector of the dead, was also widely worshipped in Egypt. The Egyptians believed that he weighed the souls of the dead to decide their fate. Those who had light souls had been good in life and were rewarded after death, while those who were unworthy were fed to a terrible monster.

Also central were the trio of Osiris, Isis, and Horus. According to legend, the god Osiris introduced civilization into Egypt. Shortly afterward, however, Osiris was killed by his brother Seth, who cut the god's body into pieces that he scattered around Egypt. Isis, the wife and sister of Osiris, sought out the pieces of his body, reassembled them, and brought Osiris back to life. Afterward, they had a child, Horus, who grew up and sought revenge on his uncle Seth. Later, Osiris became the new judge of the dead, replacing Anubis, Isis became known as a goddess of nature and renewal, and Horus became the first king of Egypt.

Other important Egyptian gods included Hathor, the cow-headed goddess of love, and Thoth, the god of wisdom. In addition, the Egyptians worshipped local gods who had power over small areas or single households.

Temples and Religious Practices The Egyptians built temples to honor their gods and also to provide homes for them. The ruins of many such temples can still be seen around Egypt. Many of them were huge, decorated with massive statues, elaborate paintings, and detailed carvings. Many temples also featured **obelisks**, tall, thin pillars with pyramid-shaped tops. An obelisk was made from a single piece of stone and carved with intricate designs.

Egyptian Gods

The ancient Egyptians worshipped hundreds of gods. Most gods were worshipped only in small areas within Egypt, but a few were honored throughout the kingdom. A few major gods are listed below.



◀ **Osiris** became the king and judge of the dead after he had been killed by Seth and restored to life by Isis. In art, he was portrayed as a green-skinned mummy.

▶ **Isis** was the sister and wife of Osiris. She was worshipped as a goddess of nature and the protector of women. She was usually drawn with a throne on her head.



◀ **Horus**, the son of Osiris and Isis, was the god of the sky. Pharaohs were thought to be human forms of Horus, who was usually depicted with a falcon's head.

▶ Like Osiris, **Anubis** was a judge of the dead and the protector of cemeteries and of mummy-makers. Images of Anubis had the head of a jackal.



In Egyptian temples, priests performed rituals to fulfill the gods' needs. For example, each morning the priests placed a statue of their god on an altar, removed its clothing, and cleaned it by burning incense. They then dressed the statue in clean clothes, applied ointment to its face, and presented it with food. The Egyptians believed that such rituals refreshed the gods and kept them alive. In return for these rituals, the Egyptians believed that the gods would grant the pharaohs immortality and bring prosperity to all of Egypt.

Caring for the gods was the responsibility of the priests. Common people had no part in these religious rituals, and ordinary Egyptians never even entered temples. However, people did worship the gods during annual festivals. During these festivals, people sang hymns and songs, danced, and paraded statues of the gods through the streets.

READING CHECK **Analyze** What religious practices did the Egyptians follow to honor their gods?

Mummification and Burial

Central to Egyptian religion was the belief in an afterlife. The Egyptians believed that, after a person died, his or her soul would go to live in the land of the dead. Because of this belief in continued life after death, the Egyptians developed elaborate rituals regarding death and burial.

Teachings on the Afterlife The Egyptians believed that when the physical body died, a force called the *ka* escaped. The *ka* was essentially an individual's personality separated from the body. It was the *ka*, not the body, that would journey on to the land of the dead.

Although the *ka* had no physical presence, the Egyptians believed that it needed food and drink to survive. In addition, they believed that the *ka* might shrivel and vanish if the body decomposed. To keep this from happening, the Egyptians sought a way to prevent dead bodies from breaking down over time.

Egyptian Burial Practices

The tomb of pharaoh Tutankhamon, or King Tut, was one of the richest archaeological discoveries ever made. The tomb contained a wealth of treasures, including a magnificent golden coffin that held Tut's mummy. The tomb also held hundreds of items for the pharaoh to enjoy in the afterlife. **Why were such riches buried with the pharaoh?**

▼ King Tut's mummy (below) was buried in the magnificent coffin shown at right.



◀ Jars like these held the pharaoh's organs.



Mummification The process that the Egyptians developed to prevent the breakdown of a dead body was **mummification**, or the making of mummies. Early in Egypt's history, only kings and members of the royal family could be mummified. Later, though, the process was made available to anyone whose family could afford it.

Mummification was a complex process that historians still do not fully understand. From what they have been able to discover, the first step in mummifying a body was to remove its internal organs. Most of the organs were taken out through an incision in the body's side, but the brain may have been liquefied and drawn out through the nose. The heart, which the Egyptians thought controlled a person's intellect and emotions, was left in the body. After removal, the organs were placed in jars to be buried with the mummy.

Next, the body was packed with various materials to help it keep its shape. Special salts were then used to dry out the body before it was wrapped in thin strips of linen. Once the mummy was wrapped, artists painted the dead person's features on the outside of the mummy itself or on a mask to ensure that the *ka* would be able to recognize its body.

Burial Mummification was only the first step in preparing the dead for the afterlife. Once a body was prepared, it still had to be buried.

Dead Egyptians were buried with all the possessions people thought they would need in the afterlife. For common people, this might include only some food and drink for the *ka*. The needs of pharaohs and nobles, however, were much greater. In addition to food, their bodies were surrounded with great treasures, riches to accompany them to the afterlife. Their tombs often sparkled with gold and gems.

THE IMPACT TODAY

Stories inspired by ancient Egyptian mummies are common in modern popular culture.

FORENSICS in History



What Can We Learn from Mummies?

People have been fascinated by mummies for centuries. Since the first mummies were uncovered in tombs and placed in museums, they have been among the most popular images of ancient Egypt. Recently, however, scientists have begun to ask whether mummies can be used as more than museum exhibits. Can we learn from them? The answer, they have discovered, is yes.

What facts do we have? By running tests such as CT scans on a body, forensic scientists can learn a great deal about a person's life. By running these same tests on a 3,000-year-old mummy, they can put together a clear image of Egyptian life.

For example, forensic scientists have learned about many diseases that were common in ancient Egypt. These diseases range from deadly conditions, such as smallpox and tuberculosis, to nonfatal ones like arthritis. Neither heart disease nor cancer appears to have been common in ancient Egypt.

► A scientist performs a CT scan on the mummy of Tutankhamon.



Studies of teeth from mummies have shed light on the Egyptians' diet. The teeth studied were greatly worn down, suggesting that the Egyptians ate coarse flour that had not been well ground. Scientists have also concluded that bread in Egypt included large amounts of sand that had gotten mixed in with the flour. Similar wear can be seen in teeth from members of all classes, from peasants to pharaohs, which suggests that everyone had a similar diet.

Forensics has even helped scientists learn about people's postures. By studying how people's bones grew, they can tell that scribes spent much of their time sitting with their legs crossed and that farmers were often hunched over. All of these discoveries have generated great interest and excitement among historians who study Egypt.

Draw Conclusions Why might historians be excited about the findings of forensic scientists?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

maximize to increase to the greatest possible level

Besides treasures, dead pharaohs needed people to serve them. Royal tombs were filled with statues of servants that the Egyptians thought would come to life to serve the pharaoh's *ka*. Some tombs also contained models of animals, chariots, and boats to serve as transportation for the dead pharaoh.

The walls of Egyptian tombs were often painted with colorful scenes from the person's life or from stories about the gods. Egyptians believed the figures from these paintings would come to life to serve the *ka* and maximize its happiness in the afterlife.

READING CHECK Summarize How did beliefs about the afterlife shape Egyptian burial practices?

Daily Life

The burial practices of ancient Egypt have taught us a great deal about people's daily lives. Archaeologists have uncovered thousands of items that had been buried in tombs to keep the *ka* happy, from furniture and tools to clothing and cosmetics. The images of daily life painted on tomb walls have also answered many questions about how the Egyptians lived. Coupled with the wealth of writings produced by the ancient Egyptians, these burial finds have given historians a fairly clear picture of Egyptian society and culture.

Social Structure Egyptian society was highly stratified, or layered. At the very top of society, of course, was the pharaoh and the royal family. Also prominent and influential in Egypt were key government officials, priests and priestesses, scribes, military leaders, landowners, and doctors. These people were all among the wealthiest in Egypt.

The next level of society included artisans, craftspeople, and merchants. These were the people who made and sold the goods, such as jewelry and clothing, used by others both in Egypt and in other lands.

The largest part of Egyptian society, about 90 percent of the population, was made up of peasant farmers. Although they spent most of their time in the fields, these farmers could also be recruited to build large public works, such as the pyramids, during the flood season. Farmers were also sometimes asked to work in quarries or mines or to serve in the army.

The Egyptians kept slaves, but slaves never made up a large part of the kingdom's population. Most slaves were convicted criminals or prisoners of war. They worked on public projects, in private households, or in temples. The number of slaves in Egypt increased during the later New Kingdom.

In some ways, Egyptian society was less rigid than other ancient civilizations. Although sons usually learned the same jobs their fathers had, it was possible—though rare—for people to become educated, to find better jobs, and to gain social status. Perhaps the fastest way to gain status was to become a scribe. Scribes' ability to write made them highly sought after. Scribes composed and copied religious texts, collected taxes, and kept public records.

Home and Family Life Egyptian family life varied widely from class to class. For example, marriage practices varied from one class to another. Pharaohs often married their sisters, a practice intended to keep the royal blood pure. In addition, while royalty often had more than one wife, most Egyptian men had only one wife.

Most Egyptians lived as family units. The father usually served as the head of the household, which included children and possibly unmarried relatives. Again, the houses in which families lived varied. Poor families might live in tiny huts, while slightly wealthier families had brick homes with a few rooms. Noble families often lived in huge palaces.

Women and Children As in most ancient societies, the primary duty of an Egyptian woman was to take care of the home and children. However, Egyptian women had more rights than women in most ancient civilizations. Women could be priestesses, own and inherit property, create wills, and divorce their husbands. Though many jobs were barred to them, women did often work outside the home. They worked as hairdressers, wigmakers, singers, and in other similar jobs.

Few children in Egypt received any kind of education, and most of those who were educated were boys learning trades. Girls, meanwhile, learned from their mothers how to raise children and run a household. When not in school, Egyptian children played with wooden toys and kept pets such as dogs, cats, monkeys, and ducks.

Daily Life in Ancient Egypt



Many Egyptian women worked outside of the home. Women in Egypt had more rights than women in some other societies.

Egyptian society was divided into social classes. About 80 percent of Egypt's people were peasant farmers. **How did the lives of rich Egyptians differ from the lives of the people seen here?**

Men did most of the manual labor in Egypt. They also served as the heads of households.

Appearance and Customs Most Egyptians paid close attention to their appearance. Many people of the upper class, both men and women, shaved their heads and wore wigs, both for fashion and to protect their heads and faces from the sun. Both men and women also wore perfume and makeup, including dark eyeliner that could double as sun protection. Women sometimes added lipstick and rouge.

Egyptian clothing was usually made from linen and wool. Peasant men wore short loin-cloths wrapped around their waists, while wealthy men wore longer skirts or robes. Women of all social classes wore long dresses that reached down to the floor. Wealthy men and women often decked themselves out in gold jewelry as well. Children, regardless of gender or social class, generally wore no clothes until they reached adolescence.

In their free time, the Egyptians enjoyed sports such as wrestling, javelin throwing, dancing, boating, and hunting. They also swam, fished, and sailed. Board games were also a popular form of entertainment in Egypt. Archaeologists have found many game boards and playing pieces, though they have not yet figured out the games' rules.

READING CHECK

Contrast How did life differ for rich and poor Egyptians?

Art, Writing, and Science

Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted more than 2,000 years. During that time, the Egyptians made tremendous advances in many fields. Among the achievements for which the Egyptians are best remembered are those in art, literature, and science.

Egyptian Art Egyptian art is very distinctive. Both paintings and sculptures from Egypt are easily recognizable and quite distinct from the art of other ancient civilizations.

Egyptian paintings tend to be both detailed and colorful. The subjects of these paintings range widely, from illustrations of stories of the gods to pictures of daily life such as the painting shown on this page. Many of the paintings from ancient Egypt that have survived to today are found on the walls of tombs and temples, but illustrations in written manuscripts are also fairly common.

As you look through the Egyptian paintings shown in this chapter, you may notice some unusual characteristics. In many Egyptian paintings, people's torsos are seen straight on, but their heads, arms, and legs are seen from the side. In addition, major figures like gods and pharaohs are drawn much larger than other people. Together, these characteristics give Egyptian art a unique style.

Unlike the paintings, which often include tiny details, Egyptian statues are often large and imposing. Most large statues from ancient Egypt show gods or pharaohs and once stood in temples. These statues were designed to show the power and majesty of their subjects.

One of the most famous statues from Egypt is also the largest. The Great Sphinx is a huge stone statue of a creature with the body of a lion and the head of a person, 65 feet high and 260 feet long. It stands at Giza near the Great Pyramid of the pharaoh Khufu.

Egyptian Writing The Egyptians were prolific writers. They recorded the events of their society in great detail and composed beautiful songs and stories. Before they could create even the simplest tale, however, the Egyptians needed a system of writing.

The main Egyptian writing system was **hieroglyphics** (hy-ruh-GLIF-iks). This system, which uses picture symbols to represent objects, sounds, and ideas, was one of the world's first writing systems. Archaeologists have found examples of Egyptian hieroglyphics that date back to about 3200 BC. Only Sumerian cuneiform is thought to be older.

The Egyptians most often used hieroglyphics for formal writing, such as you might find on stone monuments, and for religious texts. Hieroglyphics were difficult to learn and took time to compose. Once written, however, they were appreciated for their beauty. Written words were appreciated as an art form.

For texts that needed to be written more quickly, the Egyptians had two other writing systems. The first was called hieratic (hy-RA-tik), and it was used mostly for religious texts. The other system, demotic (di-MAH-tik), was used mainly for legal and literary writings after about 500 BC.

Both simpler and less attractive than hieroglyphics, hieratic and demotic writings were seldom carved into stone. Instead, writings were made on wood, leather, pottery, and papyrus (puh-PY-ruhs) sheets.

Papyrus is a reedy plant that grew along the Nile. The Egyptians used the pulp of the papyrus to make paperlike sheets. Once dried, these sheets provided an excellent writing surface. Because Egypt's climate is so dry, papyrus did not decompose quickly. Many papyrus scrolls are still readable after thousands of years.

Egyptian Writing

The ancient Egyptians used three distinct forms of writing. The passage to the right from the sacred *Book of the Dead* is in hieroglyphics. The passage below is written in demotic.



For centuries after the decline of Egypt, no one could read Egyptian writing. Historians knew that the hieroglyphs they found in tombs were a form of writing, but they had no idea how to decipher it.

In 1799 a French soldier discovered a broken granite slab near the Nile Delta village of Rosetta. On this **Rosetta Stone**, as it came to be called, were long passages of ancient writing. In fact, the writing turned out to be the same text written in three different scripts: hieroglyphic, demotic, and ancient Greek. Using the Greek text as a guide, a French scholar managed to figure out the meaning of the hieroglyphs and of the demotic characters. This discovery unlocked the mystery of Egyptian writing, giving historians the key they needed to translate ancient texts.

Egyptian Math and Science The Egyptians were interested in math and science mainly for their practical applications. Rather than trying to understand how the world worked, they used science and math as tools to improve their lives. In doing so, however, they made many key discoveries.

In math, the Egyptians had a thorough understanding of basic arithmetic. They knew how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Also, the Egyptians obviously understood the basic

READING SKILLS

Summarizing

After you read this paragraph, summarize it in a sentence using your own words.



**Skills
FOCUS**

INTERPRETING VISUALS

Drawing Conclusions Why do you think hieroglyphics were used only for sacred texts like the *Book of the Dead*?

principles of geometry. Without such an understanding, there is no way that they could have built the pyramids so precisely.

Building the pyramids also required a firm grasp of engineering. Engineers and architects had to understand how well buildings would stand and how much weight a column or wall could support. The fact that some of their buildings have stood for thousands of years is a testimony to their great building skills.

Perhaps the greatest Egyptian scientific advances, though, were in medicine. The Egyptians were masters of human anatomy. Doctors used this anatomical knowledge to treat patients, both at home and at certain temples regarded as healing centers. These doctors set broken bones, treated wounds, and performed simple surgical procedures, such as removing certain types of tumors. To cure simpler illnesses, they used medicines made from plants and animals. Doctors also prescribed regimens of basic hygiene, including regular bathing, in order to prevent people from getting sick. Written compilations of the Egyptians' medical knowledge were studied by doctors for many centuries after Egypt's decline.

READING CHECK

Find the Main Idea What advances did the ancient Egyptians make in art, writing, and science?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

go.hrw.com

Online Quiz

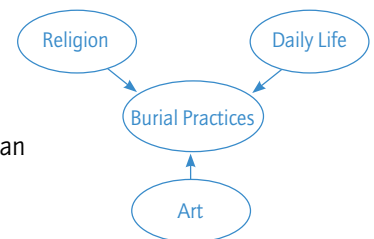
Keyword: SHL NIC HP

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Describe** What were Egyptian temples like?
b. Draw Conclusions Why were the Egyptians careful not to offend any of their gods?
2. **a. Identify Main Ideas** What were the Egyptians' burial practices?
b. Explain How did the Egyptian idea of the afterlife lead to the beginning of mummification?
3. **a. Describe** What were the main social classes in ancient Egypt?
b. Contrast How did the lives of women in ancient Egypt differ from the lives of women in other ancient societies?
4. **a. Define** What was the **Rosetta Stone**, and why was it important in translating hieroglyphics?
b. Explain How did mummy-making advance Egyptian science?
c. Elaborate What makes Egyptian painting and sculpture distinctive?

Critical Thinking

5. **Develop** Draw a graphic organizer like this one. In the outer circles, list one way in which each aspect of Egyptian culture was linked to Egyptian burial practices.



FOCUS ON WRITING

6. **Exposition** Write a report describing the three systems of writing used by the ancient Egyptians and how they differed. Note in your report what each writing system was used for.

Architecture

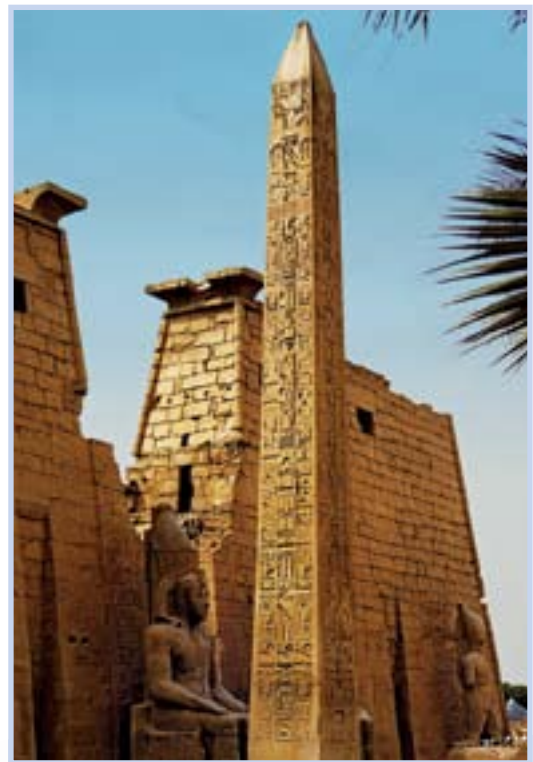
Egyptian Temples

What are they like? While pyramids are the most dramatic achievements of the Old Kingdom, temples are the greatest monuments of the New Kingdom. Some were built to honor gods and others to glorify the pharaohs who paid for them.

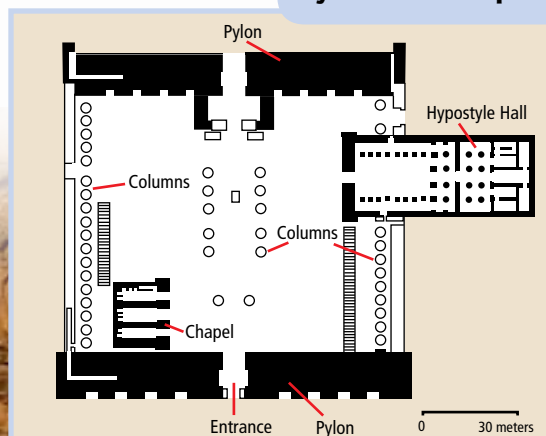
Some of the most magnificent temples still standing are at Karnak and Luxor—the northern and southern edges of the ancient capital of Thebes. The temples there are made up of courtyards and halls set behind tall, massive gateways called pylons. Within one of the halls, huge stone columns covered with intricate carvings stand close together. They once supported a stone ceiling, most of which is now gone. Although today bright sunlight pours in, the hall was dimly lit when the temple was built. The room may have seemed like a mysterious forest of stone.

Why are they important?

- The Egyptians built their huge temples without iron tools.
- Many of the temples' walls are covered with art that reveals much about Egyptian culture.
- Hieroglyphic texts on the walls tell the history of New Kingdom events and rulers.
- The New Kingdom temples rival the Old Kingdom pyramids as great monuments to Egyptian skill and power.



A granite obelisk and a statue of Ramses the Great stand near the First Pylon at the Temple of Luxor.



This architectural diagram shows the layout of a typical Egyptian temple. Note the pylons located at each entrance and the columns that fill the hypostyle hall.

The carved columns of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak are more than 80 feet high and 33 feet around.

Skills Focus

INTERPRETING VISUALS

- 1. Explain** What can historians learn from Egyptian temples?
- 2. Elaborate** How could a temple glorify both the gods and the pharaoh who built it?

The Nubian Kingdoms

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

One of ancient Africa's most advanced civilizations, Kush developed along the Nile south of Egypt in a region called Nubia.

READING FOCUS

1. What were the land and people of Nubia like?
2. How did Kush grow into a major civilization?
3. How did Kushite society change in its later period?

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

Piankhi
smelt

TAKING NOTES

Use a graphic organizer like this one to take notes on Kushite society.

Lands
Kingdoms
Culture

THE INSIDE STORY

How could a man from outside of Egypt become pharaoh? In about

750 BC, a new king rose to power in

Kush, a kingdom in the region of Nubia south of Egypt. His name was Piankhi. For centuries, the Nubians had lived in the shadow of their more powerful northern neighbors, and for much of that time had been ruled by them.

By Piankhi's time, however, Egypt was no longer so mighty. The powerful pharaohs of the New Kingdom had died, and there was no strong leader to keep order. Various nobles claimed to be the pharaoh and were tearing Egypt apart in their struggles for power.

Sensing an opportunity in this confusion, Piankhi sent a Kushite army north into Egypt. Steadily, this army marched northward, defeating army after army of Egyptians. Piankhi was not content to simply beat the Egyptians, though. He wanted them to know that they had been crushed. As he told his troops: "It is a year for making an end, for putting the fear of me in Lower Egypt, and inflicting on them a great and severe beating!"

Within a few years, Piankhi's army had reached the Nile Delta. From his capital deep within Kush, he now ruled all of Egypt. A foreigner had become Egypt's pharaoh. ■

THE FOREIGN PHARAOH

► This model of Nubian soldiers was found in the tomb of an early pharaoh.



The Region of Nubia

Nubia was located south of Egypt along the Nile. If you look at a map, you will see that two rivers, the Blue Nile and the White Nile, flow together to form the Nile. The point at which these rivers meet—near modern Khartoum, Sudan—may have been the southern boundary of Nubia. The region stretched north to the first cataract, Egypt's southern boundary.

Like the Egyptians, Nubians depended upon the Nile for its life-giving waters. However, Nubia's landscape made farming difficult. Unlike the flat riverbanks of Egypt, in Nubia the Nile flows through rocky mountains, making farming almost impossible.

A Wealth of Resources Although Nubia was not blessed with Egypt's rich farmland, it did have great mineral wealth. Mines in Nubia produced gold, granite, and precious stones that could be exported and sold.

Nubia's location was also a valuable resource. Goods from central Africa flowed into Nubia to be sent to Egypt, lands on the Red Sea, and elsewhere. Among the goods traded through Nubia were ostrich eggs and feathers, animal skins, ivory, ebony, and slaves.

Nubia's People Most of what we know about the people of Nubia is from Egyptian writings. The Nubians were expert traders and skilled makers of pottery. They were also regarded as expert archers. In fact, the Egyptians called Nubia the Land of the Nine Bows. They were so impressed by Nubian archers that some Egyptian rulers hired them as police and soldiers.

Early History The history of Egypt is so vast and so well documented that it often overshadows the history of its southern neighbor, Nubia. However, recent research into Nubian history has led to interesting findings. About the same time the Old Kingdom began in Egypt, the Nubians formed a kingdom of their own.

Reading like a Historian

A Description of Nubia

Analyzing Points of View Writers from one culture describing another often reveal their opinions of those other cultures in their works. For example, they may consider other cultures to be inferior to their own or their customs to be foolish. When reading such descriptions, it is important to take a writer's point of view into account. The description of Nubia on this page was written by the Greek geographer Strabo in the first century AD.

To recognize an author's point of view in this description or in another primary source, think about

- the author's opinions about the subject
- the author's background
- the author's goals in writing the work.

**Skills
FOCUS**

READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

- 1. Author's Opinion** Based on this passage, did Strabo consider the culture of Nubia equal to or inferior to his own culture? How can you tell?
- 2. Author's Background** How was Strabo's opinion shaped by his own background and experiences?
- 3. Author's Goals** What do you think Strabo hoped to achieve by describing Nubia as he did?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H33

The word *inferior* shows an opinion.

In general, the extremities of the inhabited world, which lies alongside the part of the earth that is not temperate and habitable, because of heat or cold, must needs be defective and inferior to the temperate part; and this is clear from the modes of life of the inhabitants and from their lack of human necessities. They indeed live a hard life, go almost naked, and are nomads: and their domestic animals—sheep, goats, and cattle—are small; and their dogs are small though rough and pugnacious . . . The [Nubians] live on millet and barley, from which they also make a drink; but instead of olive oil they have butter and tallow.

—Strabo, *Geography*

The author sees any differences from his own life as weaknesses.

With its rich mineral resources, this early Nubian kingdom possessed great wealth and traded with Egypt and other lands. Before long, Nubia and Egypt became rivals, vying for control of land and resources. During Egypt's Middle Kingdom, the rivalry led to war as Egypt invaded and conquered much of Nubia. While under Egyptian rule, the Nubians adopted some elements of the Egyptians' culture, including their religion and building style.

READING CHECK

Compare and Contrast

How was Nubia similar to and different from Egypt?

The Growth of Kush

Although northern Nubia was controlled by Egypt during the Middle Kingdom, a powerful Nubian state began to develop at the same time. This state was called Kush, and it was based around the city of Kerma in southern Nubia, in what is now Sudan.

The Beginnings of Kushite Power

When the Middle Kingdom collapsed around 1700 BC, Kush seized the opportunity to grow. During this time, Kush expanded to rule all of Nubia, not just the southern part.

The rulers of Kush made an alliance with the Hyksos, the invaders who had ended the Middle Kingdom and now controlled Egypt. Under the Hyksos, Egyptian trade with Kush increased dramatically, and riches flowed into Kush. The Kushites used their wealth to build magnificent royal tombs in Kerma.

After Egyptian nobles drove the Hyksos out, in about 1550 BC, and began the New Kingdom, they also sought revenge on the Hyksos' allies. The Egyptians invaded Kush, destroyed Kerma, and added the land to their empire. As the top map on this page shows, Egypt ruled all of Kush by 1500 BC. Egyptian rulers, including Ramses the Great, built temples and other monuments throughout Kush.

The Kushites in Egypt Egypt ruled Kush for more than 400 years, but eventually Kush regained its strength and power. This shift in power began as the New Kingdom weakened after the reign of Ramses the Great. By about 1100 BC, Kush was free from Egyptian control. Years of Egyptian control, however, had left the Kushites weak and disorganized.



- 1. Locate** What distance separated the Kushite capital, Napata, from the Egyptian capital, Memphis?
- 2. Regions** How did the political relationship between Kush and Egypt change between 1500 and 700 BC?

Several centuries later, around 750 BC, a new Kushite kingdom began to grow and develop strength. The capital of this new kingdom was Napata, south of Kerma. Seeing the weakness that had beset Egypt after the fall of the New Kingdom, Kush's rulers decided to expand their power to the north.

The ruler who led the Kushites north into Egypt was named **Piankhi** (PYANG-kee), also known as Piye (PEE-yeh). Monument inscriptions from this period describe Piankhi as a compassionate ruler who granted pardons in exchange for loyalty. However, he could also be ruthless, as when he chased down fleeing soldiers after a battle to keep any from escaping.

Egyptian Culture in Nubia

Inspired by Egyptian burial practices, the rulers of Kush built pyramids of their own at Meroë.

EGYPTIAN INFLUENCES ON KUSHITE CULTURE

QUICK FACTS

- The Kushite kings who conquered Egypt took the title pharaoh.
- Kushite rulers built pyramids and had their bodies mummified for burial.
- Early Kushite art was inspired by and modeled after Egyptian art.
- The Kushites adopted elements of Egyptian religion and worshipped Egyptian gods.
- The Kushites adopted Egyptian hieroglyphics as their writing system.

In the end, Piankhi conquered all of Egypt. However, Kushite rulers only held power in Egypt for about a century. In the mid-600s BC, the Assyrians from Mesopotamia swept into Egypt. Unable to stand up to the Assyrians, the Kushite pharaohs fled back into Nubia, to their old capital at Napata.

Kushite Culture Although they were not Egyptian, the Kushite pharaohs saw themselves as guardians of Egyptian tradition, and they tried to preserve Egyptian traditions. For example, they had their bodies mummified and buried in pyramids like Old Kingdom pharaohs, even though New Kingdom rulers had usually been buried in temples. (Kushite pyramids were smaller than Egyptian ones, though.) In addition, the Kushites adopted Egyptian hieroglyphics as their own writing system.

The Kushites did not abandon all their own customs when they ruled Egypt, however. For example, they did not adopt the Egyptian style of dressing to try to make themselves look Egyptian. Statues of Kushite pharaohs show distinctly Nubian features and clothing. These statues also show the pharaohs wearing a crown with two cobras, symbolizing the union of Egypt and Kush.

READING CHECK Summarize How did the relationship between Kush and Egypt change?

Later Kush

The period immediately following the Kushite expulsion from Egypt by the Assyrians is a mystery to historians. There are few records from this period.

Our knowledge of Kushite history resumes in the mid-200s BC. At that time, the Kushites moved their capital to Meroë (MER-oh-wee), a city farther south along the Nile from Napata. No one is certain what led to the move, or even exactly when the move took place. However, it appears that Kushite culture changed substantially after the capital's move. In fact, the scope of the change was so great that some people refer to later Kush as a separate culture entirely from the earlier period.

The City of Meroë The new capital of Kush was located near the junction of two rivers. Because the city was near so much water, ancient writers often referred to the area as the island of Meroë, though the city did not actually lie on an island.

The area in which Meroë was built was not as dry as some parts of Nubia. The city's inhabitants used wood from nearby forests to build their homes and to obtain valuable trade goods such as ebony. In addition, the area was home to many species of wild animals:

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

scope extent or degree

HISTORY'S VOICES

“In the cities the dwellings are made of split pieces of palm-wood woven together, or of brick. And they have quarried salt, as do the Arabians. And, among the plants, the palm, the persea, the ebony, and the ceratia are found in abundance. And they have, not only elephants to hunt, but also lions and leopards.”

—Strabo, *Geography*

Iron Industry One advantage to Meroë's location was the abundant mineral resources found nearby. In addition to copper, gold, and precious stones, iron was plentiful. The Kushites used the iron ore they found near Meroë to build a large and profitable iron industry.

Iron quickly became Kush's most valuable product. Archaeological evidence suggests that iron goods from Meroë were shipped throughout the Nile Valley. Rulers used the wealth they made from this trade to support building programs and the expansion of their kingdom.

Later Kushite Culture With the move to Meroë, Kush's rulers abandoned many of the elements of Egyptian culture they had adopted. They continued to build pyramids, but they no longer used hieroglyphics for writing. Instead, they created their own alphabet and writing system. Unfortunately, historians have not yet managed to translate their language, so many mysteries remain about later Kush's culture.

One of these mysteries is the role that women played in Kushite society. Based on carvings found on tombs, women appear to have enjoyed a fairly high status in Kush. In addition, the fact that many pyramids were built for women suggests that female rulers may not have been uncommon. However, historians have not yet been able to learn anything about the lives of these women. For example, they do not know whether they ruled Kush in their own right or as regents in the name of their children.

The Decline of Meroë As long as trade thrived and its economy stayed strong, Meroë prospered. However, a decline in trade in the AD 200s contributed to the kingdom's downfall. The decline in trade was caused by several factors. Increased competition for goods reduced the demand for Kushite exports. In addition, hostile peoples continually raided the

Nile Valley, disturbing the trade routes that linked Meroë to the outside world. Environmental issues were also a factor. The Kushites needed wood for their forges in order to **smelt**, or refine, iron from its ore. Centuries of iron-making had taken a toll on Nubia's forests, and eventually the Kushites could no longer work iron to make the tools they needed to survive as a kingdom.

As Meroë's economy declined, so did the kingdom. The weakened Kush was an attractive target for invaders. Finally, in about AD 350, the kingdom of Aksum, located in present-day northern Ethiopia, invaded and destroyed Meroë. With the collapse of the capital and nearby towns, Kushite civilization faded.

READING CHECK Analyze How did Kushite civilization change after the capital moved to Meroë?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

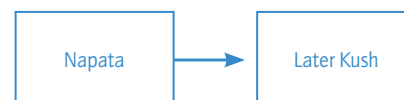
Keyword: SHL NIC HP

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Describe** Where was the region of Nubia? What were the land and resources there like?
b. Explain Why and how did the early Nubians come into contact with the Egyptians?
c. Elaborate How did Nubia's location eventually lead to the growth of a wealthy civilization?
- a. Recall** What was Piankhi's major accomplishment?
b. Make Generalizations How did Egypt influence Kushite culture after the Kushites conquered Egypt?
- a. Identify Main Ideas** What were two ways in which Meroë's location was beneficial to Kush?
b. Contrast How was Kushite writing during the later Kushite kingdom different from what it had been in earlier Kush?
c. Support a Position In the long run, do you think the mass production of iron was good or bad for Kush? Explain your answer.

Critical Thinking

- Analyze** Draw a graphic organizer like the one below. In the left box, list facts about the culture of Kush during the Napata period. In the right box, describe how Kush's culture changed during its later history.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Exposition** Write a short paragraph explaining how Kush's location and physical setting were beneficial to the kingdom's economy. Use specific examples to support your main idea.

The Gift of the Nile

Historical Context The four documents below illustrate the importance of the Nile in various aspects of Egyptian culture.

Task Study the selections and answer the questions that follow. After you have studied all the documents, you will be asked to write an essay explaining the significance of the Nile to Egyptians. You will need to use evidence from these selections and from Chapter 3 to support the position you take in your essay.

DOCUMENT 1

The Nile and Egypt

The Greek historian Herodotus was intrigued by the importance of the Nile to Egypt. In his travels, he asked people about this subject. As an answer, a group of priests told him this story, which illustrated to Herodotus the idea that the Nile was the very definition of Egypt.

It happened that the people of the cities Marea and Apis, who live in the part of Egypt that borders on Libya, took a dislike to the religious usages of the country concerning

sacrificial animals, and wished no longer to be restricted from eating the flesh of cows. So, as they believed themselves to be Libyans and not Egyptians, they sent to the shrine to say that, having nothing in common with the Egyptians, neither inhabiting the Delta nor using the Egyptian tongue, they claimed to be allowed to eat whatever they pleased. Their request, however, was refused by the god, who declared in reply that Egypt was the entire tract of country which the Nile overspreads and irrigates, and the Egyptians were the people who lived below Elephantine, and drank the waters of that river.

DOCUMENT 2

The Nile in Art

As the heart of Egyptian culture, the Nile was a common subject in the kingdom's art. This painting shows Egyptians in a boat sailing on the Nile, the gifts of which can be seen in the water and on the land around it.



DOCUMENT 3

Hymn to the Nile

The Egyptians worshipped the Nile as a god, the bringer of life to their land. The following hymn, which dates back to the Old Kingdom, expresses the speaker's gratitude to the river.

Hail to thee, O Nile! Who manifests thyself over this land, and comes to give life to Egypt! Mysterious is thy issuing forth from the darkness, on this day whereon it is celebrated! Watering the orchards created by Re [the sun god], to cause all the cattle to live, you give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one! Path that descends from the sky, loving the bread of Seb [the Earth] and the first-fruits of Nepera, You cause the workshops of Ptah [the god of crafts] to prosper!

Lord of the fish, during the inundation [flood], no bird alights on the crops. You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, assuring perpetuity to the temples. If you cease your toil and your work, then all that exists is in anguish. If the gods suffer in heaven, then the faces of men waste away.

DOCUMENT 4

The Hymn to Aten

The Hymn to Aten was written by the pharaoh Akhenaten in praise of his god, Aten. The pharaoh believed in only one god, whom he believed had created everything in the world. Among the gifts for which Aten was most grateful was the Nile.

Each one has his food, and his lifetime is reckoned. Their tongues are diverse in speech and their natures likewise; Their skins are varied, for thou dost vary the foreigners. Thou dost make the Nile in the underworld, And bringest it forth as thou desirest to sustain the people . . .

For thou hast set a Nile in the sky, That it may descend for them, That it may make waves on the mountains like the sea, To water their fields amongst their towns. How excellent are thy plans, thou lord of eternity!

The Nile in the sky is for the foreign peoples, For the flocks of every foreign land that walk with (their) feet, While the (true) Nile comes forth from the underworld for Egypt. Thy rays suckle every field; When thou dost rise, they live and thrive for thee.

Skills FOCUS

READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

DOCUMENT 1

- a. Identify** According to Herodotus, what defined Egypt?
- b. Interpret** Does this passage support Herodotus's belief that Egypt was the gift of the Nile? Why or why not?

DOCUMENT 2

- a. Describe** What kinds of plants and animals does this image suggest could be found in or near the Nile?
- b. Draw Conclusions** Based on this image, how did the Nile affect the daily lives of the ancient Egyptians?

DOCUMENT 3

- a. Analyze** What gifts does this hymn say the Nile brought to Egypt?
- b. Elaborate** Why do you think the ancient Egyptians saw the Nile as a god?

DOCUMENT 4

- a. Explain** Why does Akhenaten say Aten made the Nile?
- b. Interpret** What do you think Akhenaten meant by the phrase "Nile in the sky"? What does his use of this phrase suggest about the role of the Nile in Egyptian thought?

DOCUMENT-BASED ESSAY QUESTION

In a famous passage from his description of Egypt, Herodotus referred to Egypt as the "gift of the Nile." What did he mean by that phrase? Using the documents above and information from the chapter, form a thesis that might explain why Herodotus described Egypt the way he did. Then write a short essay to support your position.

See **Skills Handbook**, pp. H25–26

VISUAL STUDY GUIDE

EGYPT**Location**

- Along the lower stretches of the Nile and in the Nile delta

Government

- Ruled by pharaohs aided by a bureaucracy

Culture

- Polytheistic religion with emphasis on the afterlife
- Mummification and extravagant burials
- Hieroglyphic writing system
- Distinctive forms of art and sculpture
- Major advances in science and medicine

Nile Civilizations**KUSH****Location**

- South of Egypt along the Nile

Government

- Ruled by kings who adopted Egyptian customs

Culture

- Religion borrowed from Egypt
- Pyramids built in Egyptian style
- As yet untranslated writing system
- Egyptian-influenced art and sculpture
- Powerful trading culture

Major Periods in Egyptian and Kushite History**Early Egypt**

- Upper and Lower Egypt develop.
- Menes unifies all of Egypt.

Old Kingdom

- The first pyramids are built.
- Pharaohs take charge of Egypt.
- Egyptian bureaucracy forms.

Middle Kingdom

- Egypt conquers Kush.
- Trade increases.
- The Hyksos conquer Egypt.

New Kingdom

- Egypt builds an empire.
- Hatshepsut promotes trade.
- Akhenaten introduces monotheism.
- Ramses the Great builds monuments.

Early Kush

- Kush conquers Egypt.
- Kushites adopt Egyptian customs.

Later Kush

- The capital of Kush moves.
- Kush develops an iron industry.
- A new Kushite culture forms.

Review Key Terms and People

Identify the correct term or person from the chapter that best fits each of the following descriptions.

1. a group of rulers from the same family
2. Kushite ruler who conquered Egypt
3. a person who follows another in a position
4. female ruler of Egypt who encouraged the expansion of trade
5. the process of making mummies
6. expanse or degree
7. ruler who united Upper and Lower Egypt
8. highly structured organization run by officials
9. title given to the rulers of Egypt
10. to refine metal so it can be worked
11. Egyptian ruler who built great monuments in both Egypt and Kush



Comprehension and Critical Thinking

SECTION 1 (pp. 63–70)

- 12. a. Recall** What views did Egyptians hold about their pharaohs?
- b. Interpret** Why has Egypt been called the “gift of the Nile?”
- c. Rank** During which period of Egyptian history do you think the greatest achievements were made? Support your answer.

SECTION 2 (pp. 72–79)

- 13. a. Describe** What systems of writing did the Egyptians invent? What was each used for?
- b. Explain** Why did the Egyptians make mummies and bury them with treasures?
- c. Support a Position** Do you agree or disagree with this statement? “Egyptian belief in the after-life affected every aspect of people’s lives.” Why?

SECTION 3 (pp. 81–85)

- 14. a. Identify** What were two elements of Egyptian culture adopted by the Kushites?
- b. Sequence** How did Egypt come to rule Kush, and how did Kush later come to rule Egypt?
- c. Elaborate** Why do historians know less about Kush than they do about Egypt?

Reading Skills

Summarizing Reread the passage in Section 1 of this chapter titled *Unification*. Then answer the questions below.

- 15.** What is the main idea of this passage?
- 16.** What details included in this passage could you leave out of a summary?
- 17.** Write a two or three-sentence summary of the passage that you just reread.

Using the Internet

- 18.** Of all the achievements made by the ancient Egyptians, none is so well known as the building of the pyramids. Considered a symbol of Egyptian civilization, the pyramids are a major tourist destination today. Enter the activity keyword and research the pyramids. Then create an illustrated brochure that could be used to inform tourists about the pyramids’ history.

go.hrw.com

Practice Online

Keyword: SHL NIC

Analyzing Points of View

Reading Like a Historian The selection below was copied on the wall of a temple built by Ramses the Great. It was written by a scribe named Pen-ta-ur and carved on the wall on the pharaoh’s own orders. The passage describes a battle between Ramses and the Hittites. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

“Gracious lord and bravest king, savior-guard
Of Egypt in the battle, be our ward;
Behold we stand alone, in the hostile Hittite ring,
Save for us the breath of life,
Give deliverance from the strife,
Oh! protect us, Ramses Miamun!
Oh! save us, mighty King!”

- 19. Identify** What was the author’s inspiration in writing this passage?
- 20. Analyze** What was the author’s purpose in writing this poem? How did that affect his point of view?
- 21. Elaborate** According to most accounts, the battle between Ramses and the Hittites ended in a draw. Is that fact evident in this passage? Explain your answer.

WRITING FOR THE SAT



Think about the following issue:

In the 1960s the Egyptian government built a new dam on the Nile. The construction of this dam caused a huge uproar around the world because the lake it created would have flooded the temple built by Ramses the Great at Abu Simbel. Faced with protests from historians, archaeologists, and tourists, the government physically moved the entire temple before building the dam.

- 22. Assignment:** Should modern governments work to preserve historic monuments, even if it means passing up a chance for economic development? Write a short essay in which you develop your position on this issue. Support your point of view with reasoning and examples from your reading and studies.