

**Building on Knowledge and Skills**

In Year 3 you studied about an ancient civilisation, the Ancient Greeks, we will be learning about another ancient culture this year, the Ancient Egyptians. Just like the Greeks, the Egyptians achieved many important things that influenced the world around them. Similar to the Greeks, the Egyptians worshipped many gods, in fact over 2,000 gods and goddesses were worshipped. Just like our pre-historic and Ancient Greek ancestors, the Ancient Egyptians used technology to create incredible structures, such as the pyramids. They invented many things, such as papyrus paper (the word for paper comes from the Greek word for papyrus, a plant the Egyptians used to make it). The Egyptians learned how to make durable sheets of parchment from the papyrus plant. It was used for important documents and religious texts. The Egyptians kept the process to make the sheets a secret so they could sell the parchment to other civilizations such as Ancient Greece. As the Egyptians could write we have many records of their history, unlike in prehistory when there were no records. You will learn about the Roman Empire in Year 4 too; it was when the Romans invaded that the Ancient Egyptian civilisation fell.

**Books, texts, primary and secondary sources you may use:**

- Egyptian Cinderella – Shirley Climo
- The Story of Tutankhamun - Patricia Cleveland-Peck & Isabel Greenberg
- Ancient Egypt: Tales of Gods and Pharaohs - Marcia Williams
- Meet the Ancient Egyptians - James Davies
- Pharaoh's Fate - Camille Gautier & Stephanie Vernet
- An Egyptian Adventure (The Histonauts) - Frances Durkin & Grace Cooke

**Suggested family experience:**

- Visit the Ancient Egyptian gallery at Birmingham Museum. Click [here](#) to find out more.

**National Curriculum:**

- The achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and a depth study of Ancient Egypt.

**Local History Links:**

When Donald Gibson redesigned Coventry city centre in the 1940s, he was inspired by the Egyptian city of Tel-at-Amarna. A Pharaoh called Akhenaten had designed the city based on his love for the sun God Aten. An engraving of his favourite god deity can be found on a pillar on the local council's Broadgate House in Broadgate.

**Vocabulary you will use:**

Word	Definition
afterlife	A life some people believe begins when you die
archaeologist	People who study the past by examining remains and objects
canopic jars	Containers holding organs from the body
decipher	Work out what something says
embalmed	Preserved with special substances
eternity	Time without end
immortality	The ability to live forever
mummy	Preserved body
River Nile	The longest river in the world. Located in East Africa
pharaoh	King or Queen
preserve	Protect from decay or damage
rituals	Religious service which follows a set pattern
sarcophagus	Decorative container for body
tomb	A large vault, usually underground for burying the dead

**Quick Summary**

For 3000 years, Ancient Egypt was home to some of the most influential inventions and discoveries in history. The Egyptians developed systems for writing (including hieroglyphics) and mathematics; they used paper (papyrus) and wrote texts on religion, astronomy and medicine. The Egyptians built magnificent buildings, temples and tombs, decorating them with pictures, paintings and carvings. This great civilisation continued until the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE when Egypt fell to the Roman Empire.

Click [here](#) for a summary of an introduction to Ancient Egypt, or scan the QR code.



**Main events**

- c.2560 BCE: Great Pyramid at Giza completed
- c.2200 BCE: end of the pyramid era
- 1799: Rosetta Stone discovered
- 1922: Tomb of Tutankhamun discovered
- 1925: Burial mask displayed in Cairo

Questions we'll ask you throughout the unit to check your knowledge and understanding.

Where did the Ancient Egyptian civilization appear?

When was the Ancient Egyptian civilization?

What were the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians?

What might a child in Ancient Egypt tell you about their life?

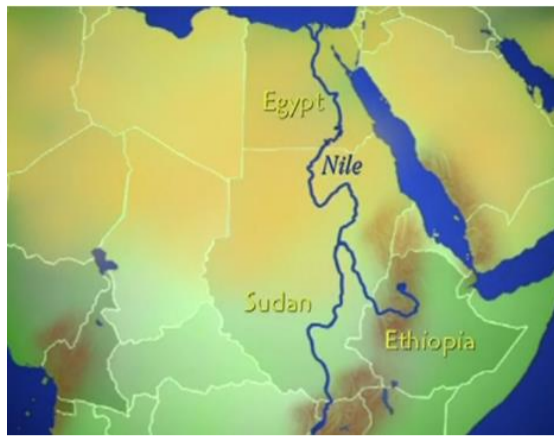
## Life in Ancient Egypt



Location of Egypt

A large river called the River Nile flows through the country into the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile enters Egypt from the Sudan and flows north for about 1545 km (about 960 m) to the sea.

Egypt is mainly made up of hot deserts and receives little rainfall. Without the River Nile, the area would be entirely desert.



The Ancient Egyptians lived along the banks of the River Nile in Egypt. Farmers first settled in Egypt along the River Nile around 5000 B.C. The river was an important source of water in a hot and dry desert landscape. The Egyptians were experts at farming. The Nile enabled the ancient Egyptians to grow lots of crops like wheat, barley, fruit and vegetables. They also grew flax to make clothes and papyrus.

About 95% of Egypt's population still live in the Nile valley.



Click [here](#) to find out more about life in Ancient Egypt or scan the QR code.



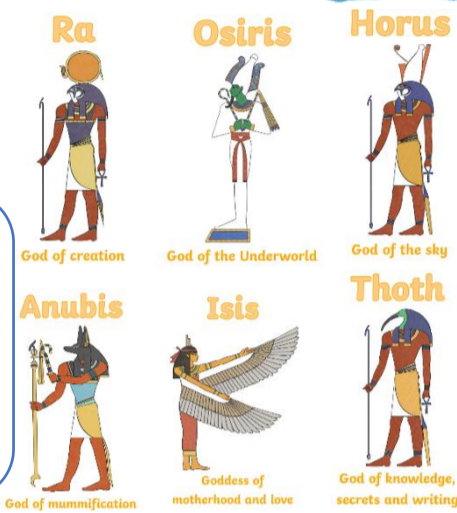
## Beliefs

Egyptians believed in immortality and developed complex burial rituals including mummification. The pyramids were built as tombs for their dead kings (pharaohs).

Click [here](#) to learn more about beliefs or scan the QR code. You could even download the lyrics to the song to learn about the gods.



The ancient Egyptians had many gods. Gods created the universe and maintained order, but they were also involved in everyday life.



Egyptians believed that the souls of the dead were ferried across a river into the afterlife, which they called the Land of Two Fields. There were several things you had to do before you were allowed to enter. Above all, you had to have a light heart, which was only made possible by completing lots of good deeds during your lifetime. It was also essential that your name was written down somewhere (usually in the 'Book of the Dead') and your body had to be preserved so that you could stay in the heavenly afterlife for eternity.

Beliefs



## Burials

Not every Ancient Egyptian was buried in a great pyramid or grand tomb but belief in the afterlife meant that even the poorest Egyptians were buried with items to take with them on their journey to the next life after death. Their bodies were also wrapped in cotton to help preserve them. Without this careful preparation of the body the Egyptians believed you would be unable to stay in the heavenly afterlife. They also thought that living a life full of good deeds was essential to gain entry to the afterlife. They also thought that their name had to be written down somewhere, otherwise they thought their soul would become lost and they would disappear forever.



Canopic jars

When a person of wealth or importance, like a pharaoh or nobleman, died, their body was embalmed to prevent it from decaying. First of all, the brain and internal organs were removed and placed in special canopic jars. The body was then treated with a mineral called natron to help preserve it. The preserved body was then wrapped in layers of bandage made from linen. The final stage was to put a funeral mask over the face. Embalming was a lengthy process that could take up to 70 days. Once it was complete, the funeral could take place, and the body would be left in the tomb with all the objects and treasures needed in the afterlife.



Ancient Egyptians were very skilled builders, and there are more than 100 pyramids in Egypt. The most famous of all can be seen at Giza, near Cairo, and is called the Great Pyramid. It is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



Often taking decades to build, the pyramids were not, as many people used to believe, built by slaves. They were made by peasant farmers who provided labour for the king in return for food, oil and cloth. The building work, which usually took place when farmland was flooded, was overseen by architects and the Vizier (the king's chief minister). One of the most famous discoveries was the burial tomb of Tutankhamun, in the Valley of the Kings by Howard Carter.

The pyramids were built to bury Ancient Egyptian kings and queens. They were designed to be a comfortable place to enjoy the afterlife, and also acted as a display of power and wealth. Only pharaohs were buried in pyramids and magnificent tombs. Very wealthy people could afford to be buried in mastabas, which are underground tombs with a flat-roof structure made of mud bricks. Poorer people were also able to go to the next world, after death, but they were buried in the sand.



Click [here](#) to learn more about Tutankhamun, or scan the QR code.



## Pyramids



One of the most important inventions of the Ancient Egyptians was writing, they wrote in hieroglyphics. They also learnt how to make paper out of a plant called papyrus. Writing allowed the Egyptians to keep accurate records and maintain control of their large empire.



Hieroglyphics

The Ancient Egyptians had a wide variety of medicines and cures. Some of their medicines were quite strange, for example, they used honey and human brains to cure eye infections.

As the river Nile was important, building ships was a big part of Egyptian technology. They originally built small boats from papyrus reeds, but later began to build large ships.

## Achievements



The Rosetta Stone, which was found in 1799, is one of the most significant artefacts from Ancient Egypt. The same text appears on it in three different types of writing, which has helped historians to decipher hieroglyphics and to understand Ancient Egyptian diaries and accounts.



Rosetta Stone

The Egyptians needed a good understanding of mathematics and geometry to build the pyramids. They also used maths and numbers to keep track of business transactions. For numbers they used a decimal system. They didn't have numerals for 2 - 9 or zero. They just had numbers for factors of 10 such as 1, 10, 100, etc.

Male and female Egyptians wore makeup. They made a dark eye makeup called kohl from soot and other minerals. The makeup was a fashion statement, but it also protected their skin from the hot desert sun. They also invented the toothbrush and toothpaste, as they had lots of problems with their teeth, because much of their food had grit in it.