

# Egypt

3100 B.C.–671 B.C.

Tutankhamen's  
gold mask ►



▲ Wooden Egyptian sandals

2600 B.C.  
Old Kingdom  
established

2300 B.C.  
Middle Kingdom  
begins

1786 B.C.  
Hyksos invade  
Egypt

1550 B.C.  
Ahmose founds  
the New  
Kingdom

671 B.C.  
Assyrians take  
over Egypt

# Chapter Focus



## Read to Discover

- Why the Nile River was so important to the growth of Egyptian civilization.
- How Egyptian religious beliefs influenced the Old Kingdom.
- What happened during Egypt's Middle Kingdom.
- Why Egyptian civilization grew and then declined during the New Kingdom.
- What the Egyptians contributed to other civilizations.



## Terms to Learn

shadoof  
pharaoh  
pyramids  
embalming  
mummy  
legend  
hieroglyphic  
papyrus



## People to Know

Narmer  
Ahmose  
Thutmose III  
Hatshepsut  
Amenhotep IV



## Places to Locate

Nile River  
Punt  
Thebes



## Chapter Overview

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**Why It's Important** The Egyptians settled in the Nile River valley of northeast Africa. They most likely borrowed ideas such as writing from the Sumerians. However, the Egyptian civilization lasted far longer than the city-states and empires of Mesopotamia. While the people of Mesopotamia fought among themselves, Egypt grew into a rich, powerful, and unified kingdom. The Egyptians built a civilization that lasted for more than 2,000 years and left a lasting influence on the world.

## SECTION 1 The Nile

The Nile River flows north 4,145 miles, or 6,671 kilometers, from the mountains of central Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. The last 600 miles, or 960 kilometers, is in Egypt. There, the river cuts a narrow, green valley through the desert. Shortly before the Nile reaches the sea, it branches to form a fan-shaped area of fertile land called a *delta*. Most ancient Egyptians lived in this area. For a long time, they were protected from foreign invasions by the desert, the sea, and waterfalls called *cataracts* (kat' uh rakts).







**NILE RIVER** Over thousands of years, the flooding of the Nile River has left rich soil all along its banks. The Nile River valley is only 3 percent of Egypt's land, yet most Egyptians live and work in this area. **What geographical features protected the Egyptians in the Nile River delta?**

The Egyptians had an advantage over the people of the other river valley civilizations. Every year, about the middle of July, the Nile overflowed its banks. The flood waters went down but left behind large amounts of rich soil good for growing crops.

Egyptian farmers planted their fields while the soil was still wet. To water their crops during the dry season, the Egyptians dug out *basins*, or bowl-shaped holes. They used a machine called a **shadoof** (shuh dūf') to lift water from the Nile to the basins. The Egyptians raised flax, wheat, barley, and grapes.

 **Reading Check**  
How was a shadoof used?

## Section 1 Assessment

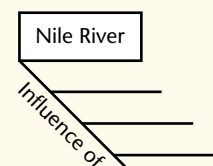
1. **Define:** shadoof.
2. Where did most Egyptians live?
3. How did the Egyptians control the Nile?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Making Comparisons** How did the Egyptians' use of the Nile River compare with the Sumerians' use of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers?

## Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to show how the Nile River influenced Egyptian civilization. (Add more lines as needed.)



## SECTION 2 The Old Kingdom

At first, Egypt was made up of two kingdoms. One was Upper Egypt, which lay in the southern part of the Nile River valley. The other was Lower Egypt, which lay in the north delta.

Narmer, also known as Menes (mē' nēz), was a king of Upper Egypt. About 3100 B.C., he led his armies from the valley north into the delta. He conquered Lower Egypt and married one of its princesses, uniting the two kingdoms. He wore a double crown, the high white one of the south and the shallow red one of the north. Narmer had many titles. He was called "Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt," "Wearer of Both Crowns," and "Lord of the Two Lands." He set up a new capital at Memphis, a city on the border between Upper and Lower Egypt.

About 2600 B.C., the Old Kingdom started in Egypt. It lasted for nearly 500 years. During the period of the Old Kingdom, Egyptian cities became centers of religion and government. Kings, priests, government officials, and artisans lived there.

Most Egyptians, however, did not live in cities. They lived on large estates along the banks of the Nile. The rich Egyptians who owned these estates lived in wood and brick houses with beautiful gardens and pools. Walls were decorated with brightly

### Then... & Now

**Diets Change** The diet of poor laborers and farmers in ancient Egypt consisted largely of bread, made of wheat and a grain called emmer. Today most villagers and poor city dwellers in Egypt eat a simple diet based on bread and fool, or broad beans. For a typical evening meal, each person dips bread into a large communal bowl of vegetable stew.

**EGYPTIAN LIFE** Paintings from tombs offer much information about everyday life in ancient Egypt. Here, a wall painting shows a man and woman plowing and planting their fields. **How did the lives of the rich differ from those of the poor in Egypt?**






# Linking Across Time

**Harvesting Wheat** Both men and women harvested the wheat crops that helped fuel the growth of ancient Egypt (left). Today some Egyptian farmers still harvest this crop by hand with a sickle (right), much as their ancestors did more than 3,000 years ago. **What is the connection between the flooding of the Nile and the production of wheat?**



colored paintings that showed scenes of daily life. A household was made up of an owner's family, servants, and artisans. The artisans were hired to build boats, weave linen, and make tools and pottery.

Most Egyptians, however, were farmers who lived in villages on the estates. At first, their houses were made of reeds and mud. Later, they were made of sun-baked mud-brick. These houses generally had only one room with a roof made of palm leaves. They were built on high ground so that they would be safe from the yearly flood. Egyptian farmers worked in the fields and took care of the cattle. When they were not farming, they built monuments, dug ditches, and repaired roads.

 **Reading Check**  
How did the Egyptians view the pharaoh?

**The Pharaoh** The Egyptians believed that the strength and unity of their country came from having a strong ruler. At first, Egyptian rulers were called kings. Later, they were called **pharaoh** (fār' ō), meaning "great house." To Egyptians, the pharaoh was a ruler, a priest, and a god. He was the center of Egyptian life and ruled on Earth the way other gods ruled in heaven.

The pharaoh owned all the land in Egypt, but he gave gifts of land to rich Egyptians and priests. To make sure the land produced well, the pharaoh saw to it that dams and irrigation canals were built and repaired. The pharaoh also ordered the building of brick *granaries*, or buildings for storing grain. These were used to store grain from good harvests so people would not starve in times of bad harvests.

The pharaoh also chose all government officials. They made certain that taxes were gathered and building permits were given out. Trade with other lands was in the pharaoh's hands. The word of a pharaoh was law.

The Egyptians believed that what happened to Egypt depended on the pharaoh's actions. As chief priest, the pharaoh carried out certain rituals. For example, he made the first break in the irrigation dikes each year to open the land to the water. When the water went down, he drove a sacred bull around the capital city. The Egyptians believed this ritual would make the soil rich so they could grow good crops. The pharaoh was the first to cut the ripe grain. Egyptians believed this would bring a good harvest.

Pharaohs were treated with great respect. Whenever they appeared in public, people played music on flutes and cymbals. They also bowed and "smelled the earth," or touched their heads to the ground.

**The Pyramids** Another way the people of the Old Kingdom showed how they felt about the pharaohs was by building them great tombs called **pyramids** (pir' uh midz). Because the sun sank in the west, these "Houses of Eternity" were built on the west bank of the Nile. They were designed to protect the pharaohs' bodies from floods, wild animals, and robbers. The Egyptians believed the pharaohs would be happy after death if they had their personal belongings. Therefore, they placed a pharaoh's clothing, weapons, furniture, and jewelry in the pyramids.

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**PYRAMIDS AT GIZA** The pyramids were built at Giza on the Nile River. The largest pyramid once enshrined the body of King Khufu. **What items were probably buried with the King?**



## Fun Facts . . .

### A Big Pyramid

The Pyramid of Khufu (see photo) contains more than 2 million stone blocks that average 2 1/2 short tons, or 2.3 metric tons, each. The pyramid originally stood 481 feet, or 147 meters, high. Today its base covers about 13 acres, or 5 hectares.



### Reading Check

What was the purpose of the pyramids?

It took many people and much work to build the pyramids. Farmers worked on them during the three summer months that their fields were flooded. The workers used copper tools to cut huge granite and limestone blocks from quarries across the Nile valley or in Upper Egypt. The blocks of rock were tied with ropes onto wooden sleds, pulled to the Nile, placed on barges filled with sand, and floated across the river. Other workers then unloaded the blocks and pulled them to the place where the pyramids were being built. Huge mud and brick ramps were built beside each of the pyramids. The workers dragged the blocks up the ramps to each new layer of the pyramid.

## Then... & Now

**Mummies** Today scientists are able to perform CAT scans on mummy cases, allowing the scientists to see inside without opening the mummy case. Using computers, they turn the two-dimensional CAT-scan pictures into three-dimensional images of the mummies.

**Religious Beliefs** The Egyptians believed in many gods. Two of the most important gods were the river god Hapi (hop' ē) and the sun god Re (rā). The Egyptians depended on the river and the sun. The river brought them water and fertile soil, while the sun helped their crops to grow.

Another important god was Osiris (ō sī ris), god of the harvest and of eternal life. According to Egyptian legend, Osiris was an early pharaoh who gave his people laws and taught them farming. He and his wife Isis (ī'sis) ruled over the dead. The Egyptians believed that the souls of the dead went to the underworld. There, they were weighed on a scale. If a person had led a good life and knew certain magic spells, the scales balanced. Then, Osiris would grant the person life after death. To learn the correct magic spells, Egyptians studied a special book called the *Book of the Dead*.

**EGYPTIAN GODS** The god Osiris ruled over the Egyptian underworld. Here, he sits in judgment as other animal-headed gods weigh a dead man's soul and record the results. The scales have balanced, so the dead man may enter the underworld.  
**How did Egyptians prepare for life after death?**



The Egyptians also used a process called **embalming** (em balm' ēng) to preserve the bodies of the dead. At first, they used the process to preserve the body of the pharaoh because they believed the soul could not live without the body. It was important for a pharaoh's soul to live after death. In that way, the pharaoh would continue to take care of Egypt.

Later, embalming was used to preserve other people as well as the pharaoh. To embalm a body, the Egyptians placed it in a wooden box and covered it with a chemical called natron. Natron dried up the water in the body, causing it to shrink. After the shrunken body had dried, it was wrapped with long strips of linen. The wrapped body was known as a **mummy**. The mummy of a poor person was often buried in a cave or in the sand. The mummy of a rich person was placed inside a special case or coffin. The coffin was then placed in a tomb.

 **Reading Check**  
Why did the Egyptians develop the practice of **embalming**?

 **Reading Check**  
What is a **mummy**?

## Section 2 Assessment

1. **Define:** pharaoh, pyramids, embalming, mummy.
2. How did most Egyptians live during the Old Kingdom?
3. What did the Egyptians believe happened to a person after death?

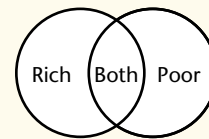
### Critical Thinking

4. **Making Comparisons** How were the pharaohs similar to and different from

government leaders of the United States today?

### Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw this diagram, and use it to compare the Egyptian burial practices for the rich and the poor.



## SECTION 3 The Middle Kingdom

About 2300 B.C., government officials, jealous of the pharaoh's power, took control of Egypt. Almost 200 years of confusion followed. Finally, new pharaohs brought peace and a new period called the Middle Kingdom.

Pharaohs had less power in the Middle Kingdom. After death, they were no longer buried in pyramids but in tombs cut into cliffs. Then the Egyptians began to trade with countries beyond the Nile valley.

The Middle Kingdom came to an end in 1786 B.C., when Egypt was invaded by the Hyksos (hik' sōs), a people from western Asia. The Hyksos crossed the desert in horse-drawn chariots and used weapons made of bronze and iron. Egyptians had always fought on foot with weapons made of copper and stone and were defeated.

Egyptian  
Bronze Art





The Hyksos ruled Egypt for about 150 years. They copied some Egyptian customs but most Egyptians hated them. Around 1550 B.C., an Egyptian prince named Ahmose (ah mo' suh), using Hyksos weapons, led an uprising and drove the Hyksos out of Egypt.

### Section 3 Assessment

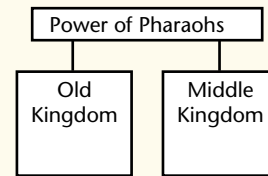
1. How did the Middle Kingdom come about?
2. What ended Hyksos rule?

#### Critical Thinking

3. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment**  
Do you think the decrease in the pharaohs' power had a positive or negative effect on Egypt? Explain.

### Graphic Organizer Activity

4. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to compare the power of the pharaohs in the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom.



## SECTION 4 The New Kingdom

Ahmose founded another line of pharaohs and began the period known as the New Kingdom. During this time, Egypt became richer and its cities grew larger.

During the New Kingdom, most pharaohs were no longer content to remain within the Nile valley but marched their armies into lands to the east. It was during this period that the Egyptian empire was founded. One warrior-pharaoh, Thutmose III (thūt mō' suh), with an army of 20,000 archers, spear throwers, and charioteers, extended Egyptian control into Syria (sir' ē uh) and Palestine (pal' uh stīn).

One of the few pharaohs who was not interested in war and conquest was Hatshepsut (hat shep' sūt), Thutmose III's stepmother, who had ruled Egypt before her stepson. Her chief interests were trade and the building of temples. During her rule, Egyptian traders sailed along the coast of east Africa to the land of Punt. In the land of Punt, the Egyptians traded beads and metal tools and weapons for such things as ivory, a black wood called *ebony* (eb' uh nē), monkeys, hunting dogs, leopard skins, and *incense*, or material burned for its pleasant smell. The Egyptians had never seen most of these things. They welcomed the returning traders with a huge reception.

Statue of  
Hatshepsut



**Religion** The Egyptians of the New Kingdom began to worship a new god. As the god of the city of Thebes, he had been called Amon. When Thebes became the capital of Egypt,

# Reading Map Legends

In order to show information on maps, mapmakers use symbols. These are marks that stand for such things as places, directions, and features. Symbols include lines, dots, stars, and small pictures.

A list of symbols and what they stand for is called a **legend**. By reading legends, it is possible to identify empires, nations, religions, climates, and any other information that can be shown on a map.

For example, on the “Ancient Egypt” map below, notice that there are three symbols in the legend. Each symbol stands for the boundary of one of the Egyptian kingdoms. The broken line

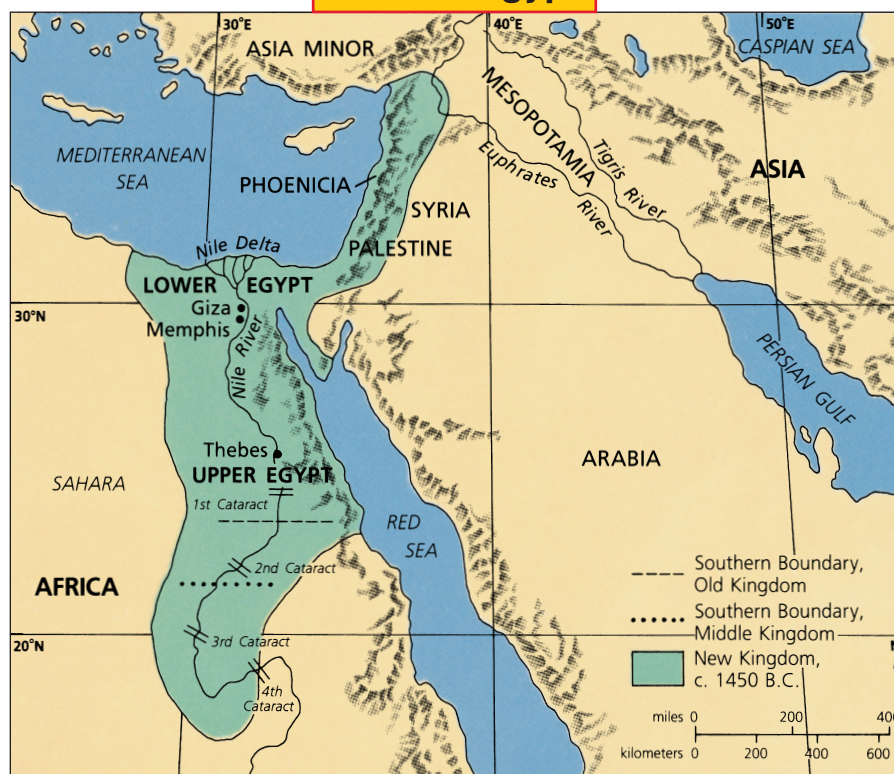
stands for the southern boundary of the Old Kingdom. The Middle Kingdom’s boundary is shown by the dotted line. The area of the New Kingdom is shown in green.



## Map Practice

1. Which Egyptian kingdom included only the first cataract?
2. Which kingdom extended to the second cataract?
3. In which kingdom was Thebes located?

## Ancient Egypt



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**TEMPLE AT KOM OMBO** Warring pharaohs of the New Kingdom built large temples to honor their gods. The stone block in front of this temple shows Egyptian hieroglyphs. This temple has many statues and monuments. **Who provided the labor to build temples?**

## Fun Facts

### The Best Dentist

Egyptians could have benefited from regular trips to the dentist. Everyone, rich and poor, suffered from cavities, inflamed gums, and infections. A physician in the Old Kingdom named Hesire won the title of “Chief of the Tooth-doctors.”

however, the Egyptians combined Amon with the sun god Re. They called the new god Amon-Re (ah’ muhn rā’). Amon-Re became the most powerful god of all. People built many temples in his honor. These were built, in part, by enslaved persons who had been captured by the warring pharaohs.

The temples were more than houses of worship. They were industrial centers. They gave work to sculptors and artisans who carved statues, built furniture, and made clothes for priests. They were treasuries, filled with copper, gold jewelry, glass bottles, bundles of grain, dried fish, and sweet-smelling oils. The temples were also schools—places where young boys were trained to be scribes. The right to become a scribe was passed on from father to son.

Scribes wrote religious works in which were spells, charms, and prayers. They kept records of the pharaohs’ laws and lists of



the grain and animals paid as taxes. They copied fairy tales and adventure stories and wrote down medical prescriptions.

There were several kinds of Egyptian writing. One was **hieroglyphic** (hī uhr uh glif' ik), or a kind of writing in which pictures stand for words or sounds. The Egyptians carved and painted hieroglyphs, or picture symbols, on their monuments. However, scribes needed an easier form of writing to keep records. So, they developed two other kinds of writing in which hieroglyphs were rounded off and connected.

**Decline of Egypt** Over time, the priests of Amon-Re gained much power and wealth. They owned one third of Egypt's land and began to play a major role in the government. As time passed, the pharaohs' power declined.

Then, about 1370 B.C., a new pharaoh named Amenhotep IV (ah muhn hō' tep) came to the throne. He did not like the priests. He did not agree with them on what was good for Egypt. He wanted to return power to the pharaohs. Amenhotep IV closed the temples of Amon-Re and fired all temple workers. He set up a new religion that was different from the old religion because only one god was worshiped. This god was called Aton (ah' tuhn). Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaton (ahk nah' tuhn), which means "Spirit of Aton." Only his family and close advisers, however, accepted the new religion.

**HIEROGLYPHS** Ancient Egyptians viewed hieroglyphs as gifts from the gods. The pictures were first used as a way of keeping records. Later, they represented the sounds of spoken language. Here, hieroglyphs are painted on a coffin lid. **How did hieroglyphs differ from cuneiform?**



 **Reading Check**  
What was  
**hieroglyphic** writing?

## People in History



**Tutankhamen**  
c. 1369 B.C.–1351 B.C.

### Egyptian Pharaoh

Nicknamed the "boy king," Tutankhamen came to power at age 9. He pleased the priests by rejecting Akhenaton's religion. Although frail, he loved to race chariots and hunt animals. When he died at age 18, officials placed him in a treasure-filled tomb. The tomb's beautiful contents, discovered in 1922, made "King Tut" one of Egypt's most famous pharaohs.

After Amenhotep IV died, about 1360 B.C., his son-in-law Tutankhamen (tū tahng kah' muhn) became pharaoh. He was only nine years old. The priests made Tutankhamen return to the old religion. He died after ruling for only nine years.

Little by little, Egypt lost its power. One reason was the struggle between the priests and the pharaohs. Another was the pharaohs' attempts to keep neighboring countries under Egyptian control. Much energy and money was spent on war. Then, too, other peoples of the eastern Mediterranean were using iron weapons. Since Egypt had no iron ore, money was spent to bring in small amounts to make weapons.

By 1150 B.C., Egypt's empire was gone. Egyptian civilization kept growing weaker until Egypt was taken over by a people known as the Assyrians (uh sē' rē uhnz) in 671 B.C.

## Section 4 Assessment

1. **Define:** hieroglyphic.
2. How did rulers of the New Kingdom expand trade?
3. Why did Egypt grow weak?

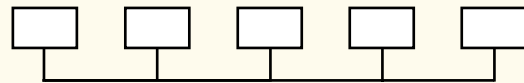
### Critical Thinking

4. **Drawing Conclusions** In your opinion, which of the following pharaohs contributed the most to Egyptian civilization:

Thutmose III, Hatshepsut, Amenhotep IV, or Tutankhamen? Explain.

### Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw this diagram, and use it to show important events in the history of the New Kingdom. (Add boxes as needed.)



## SECTION 5 Contributions



### Reading Check

How was papyrus made?

The Egyptians made many contributions to other civilizations. One was a paper called **papyrus** (puh pī' ruhs). It was made from a reed also called papyrus. In order to write on papyrus, the Egyptians invented ink. The dry climate of Egypt preserved some writings so well that they can still be read today.

Papyrus had other uses. It was made into baskets and sandals. It was also tied in bundles to make columns for houses. Even rafts and riverboats were made of papyrus.

Other contributions of the Egyptians lay in the field of mathematics. They used a number system based on ten. They also



used fractions and whole numbers. They used geometry to *survey*, or measure, land. When floods washed away the boundary markers that separated one field from the next, the Egyptians surveyed the fields to see where one began and the other ended.

The Egyptians knew the Nile flooded about the same time every year. They used this knowledge to make a calendar. The calendar had three seasons of 120 days each, and 5 special feast days for the gods.

The Egyptians also made contributions in the field of medicine. As dentists, eye doctors, animal doctors, and surgeons, Egyptian doctors were the first specialists in medicine. They were



#### Student Web Activity

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at [humanheritage.glencoe.com](http://humanheritage.glencoe.com)

and click on **Chapter 4—**

**Student Web Activities** to find out more about Egyptian contributions.

**CLICK HERE**

#### MEDICAL PRACTICE IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Egyptian skill in medicine was highly valued in the Mediterranean area for 2,500 years. Here, an Egyptian doctor gives medicine to a patient. The doctor's assistant holds a scroll listing directions for treating the illness. What kind of medical help did Egyptian doctors give their patients?





the first to use splints, bandages, and compresses. They were masters at sewing up cuts and at setting broken bones. The Egyptians also treated such problems as indigestion and hair loss. For indigestion, they used castor oil. For hair loss, they used a mixture of dog toes, dates, and a donkey hoof.

## Section 5 Assessment

1. **Define:** papyrus.
2. What mathematical contributions did the Egyptians make to civilization?
3. What medical contributions did the Egyptians make to other civilizations?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment**  
Which Egyptian contribution do you think has had the greatest impact on life in the United States today?

## Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to rate Egyptian contributions from most important to least important. (Add lines as needed.)

Most \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Least \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter Summary & Study Guide

1. Egyptian civilization began in the Nile River valley over 5,000 years ago.
2. About 3100 B.C., Narmer united Upper and Lower Egypt.
3. The Old Kingdom began about 2600 B.C. and lasted for nearly 650 years.
4. Kings of Egypt became known as pharaohs and were viewed by Egyptians as rulers, priests, and gods.
5. During the Old Kingdom, pyramids were built as tombs for pharaohs.
6. The Egyptians worshiped many gods.
7. The Egyptians placed great importance on life after death and created a process to preserve bodies as mummies.
8. The Middle Kingdom began about 1950 B.C. and lasted until the Hyksos invasion of Egypt in 1786 B.C.
9. The New Kingdom began after Ahmose drove the Hyksos out of Egypt about 1550 B.C.
10. During the New Kingdom, most pharaohs were interested in conquest.
11. During the New Kingdom, priests became very powerful.
12. Amenhotep IV tried to establish a religion based on one god, but he failed.
13. Toward the end of the New Kingdom, Egypt began to decline.
14. Egyptian contributions to later civilizations included the use of geometry, surveying, and papyrus.



### Self-Check Quiz

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at [humanheritage.glencoe.com](http://humanheritage.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 4—Self-Check Quiz** to assess your understanding of this chapter.

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# CHAPTER 4 Assessment

## Using Key Terms

Use the following list of words to write a newspaper article describing the contributions of the Egyptians.

sadoof      pharaoh      pyramids  
embalming      mummy      legend  
hieroglyphic      papyrus

## Understanding Main Ideas

1. What did the Egyptians borrow from the Sumerians?
2. What did the Nile River give to the Egyptian people?
3. Why did the Egyptians show such great respect for the pharaoh?
4. What role did the Hyksos play in the development of Egyptian civilization?
5. What role did religion play in Egypt during the Old Kingdom? During the New Kingdom?
6. What kinds of writing did the Egyptians have, and why were they used?
7. What problems did flooding of the Nile River create, and how did the Egyptians try to solve them?
8. How did the Egyptians use the papyrus reed?

## Critical Thinking

1. Do you agree with experts who call Egypt “the gift of the Nile”? Explain.
2. How was the government of Egypt similar to that of Babylonia? How was it different?
3. Do you think Amenhotep IV was wise in opposing the priests of Amon-Re? Explain.
4. Would you have liked living in ancient Egypt? Why or why not?

## Graphic Organizer Activity

**History** Create a chart like this one, and use it to compare characteristics of the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom of Egypt.

Old Kingdom	Middle Kingdom	New Kingdom



## Geography in History

**Environment and Society** Note the area covered by ancient Egypt on the map on page 75. Why do you think the empire developed where it did, rather than expanding to the west or only to the south? Explain your answer.

## Using Your Journal

Compare the effect of government on the lives of Egyptians with the effect of government on your daily life. Write a few short paragraphs explaining elements that are similar and those that are different.