

Ancient Egypt – Worksheets

Activity 1 – The pyramids

A. Read the text and match the headings in the box to paragraphs (1-5).

- a) How was it built? b) One of the Seven Ancient Wonders c) Ruling over the desert
d) The Sphinx – a symbol of Egypt e) World of beliefs

[1] _____

The Great Pyramid of Giza is the last of the Seven Ancient Wonders left for us to see today and is probably the most famous of all the Egyptian pyramids. The Great Pyramid is one of three at Giza and was built by Khufu, or Cheops, over four thousand years ago.

[2] _____

Next to it is a smaller pyramid built by Khufu's son, Khaefre. Khaefre's pyramid, although smaller, looks bigger! This is because it is built on higher ground and has a slightly steeper angle. Khaefre's pyramid also has the added attraction of the Sphinx which crouches besides the pyramid. Along with the pyramids themselves, the Sphinx is probably the best known landmark in Egypt.

[3] _____

Khufu's pyramid rises from the desert and was the highest man-made object until the Eiffel Tower was built in the nineteenth century. The pyramid is built on a perfectly level area using over a million blocks of stone. Some of the stones, for example the 'blue' stones in the King's chamber, came from hundreds of kilometres away.

[4] _____

Inside the pyramid there is a complex maze of 'corridors' with thousands of paintings of animals and other symbols lining the walls. Many of these pictures tell stories and show the pharaoh travelling to his final resting place. In ancient Egypt the pyramids were seen as 'resting places for the dead' on their way to another world. The Egyptians worshipped lots of different gods and also believed in life after death. The Great Pyramid is also perfectly aligned to the stars with each corner pointing to a point on the compass – North, East, South and West.

[5] _____

Even today, building something as big and complex as the pyramid would be difficult. But, four thousand years ago they had no electric drills or saws, no mechanical diggers and cranes and no computers to help with the designs, plans and construction. So, how was the pyramid at Giza built? Many people have wondered how the pyramids were built and some people even think that they were built by aliens from another planet!

B. Read the text again. Are these sentences true (✓) or false (✗)?

1. You can't see any of the Seven Ancient Wonders nowadays.
2. The Great Pyramid of Giza was built by King Khufu.
3. Khaefre's pyramid is smaller but looks bigger.
4. The Eiffel Tower is higher than the Pyramid of Giza.
5. People know how the Pyramid was built.
6. The pyramid is built completely of 'blue' stones.
7. The paintings show the story of Khufu's journey into the next world.
8. It would be easy to build the pyramid nowadays.
9. They didn't use the same tools as we would use today.
10. Some people think that aliens built the Great Pyramid.

C. How do you think the pyramids were built?

Here are some things for you to think about:

- 1) How did they make the land flat?
- 2) How did they align the pyramid to the stars?
- 3) How did they cut the blocks of stone?
- 4) How did they move the stones from the quarry to the building site?
- 5) How did they get the stones 'up' the pyramid?

Activity 2 – The Egyptians



Hieroglyphs

The Ancient Egyptians thought that it was important to write things down. However, they didn't use an alphabet like the one used in English, they used something called Hieroglyphs. Hieroglyphs are pictures or symbols that represent words. For centuries, the meaning of these mysterious symbols was lost. Then, in 1799, the discovery of the 'Rosetta Stone' helped archaeologists to learn how to read hieroglyphics.



This means *goodbye*.



Pharaohs

The rulers of Ancient Egypt were called pharaohs. They were thought to be the representative of the Gods on Earth and, as such, they had absolute power. One of the most famous was Tutankhamen, the boy king. When his tomb was discovered in 1922 a curse was found on the entrance to the tomb. Six weeks later Lord Carnarvon, the man who paid for the excavation, died. Another pharaoh that many people have heard about is Ramesses II who ruled for 67 years. One of his queens was Nefertari who was buried in the Valley of the Queens at Luxor.




Gods and Goddesses

The Ancient Egyptians believed in many different gods and goddesses with each one having a particular role. So, for example, Ra was the sun god and was the most important god. He was drawn as a man with the head of a hawk and a sun disc as a headdress. The Egyptians thought that he was swallowed every night by the sky goddess Nut and then born again every morning. Anubis was the god of the dead. He was drawn as a man with the head of jackal. Priests often wore jackal masks when a person died.



Quiz sheet

- 1) What does this  hieroglyph mean?
- 2) Who did the discovery of the 'Rosetta Stone' help?
- 3) What do hieroglyphs represent?
- 4) Why did the pharaohs have absolute power?
- 5) Which pharaoh is known as the boy king?
- 6) How long did Ramesses II rule?
- 7) Where is the Valley of the Queens?
- 8) Why did the ancient Egyptians have lots of gods and goddesses?
- 9) Which god had a sun disc as a headdress?
- 10) Which god had the body of a man and the head of a jackal?