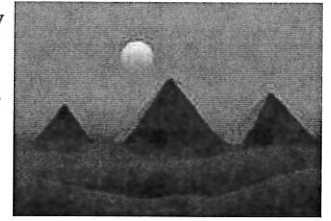


Reading Comprehension-Ancient Egyptian Pyramids

Instructions- Read the story below. Then, answer the questions and complete each activity. Be sure to highlight or underline where you find each answer.

¹ Every ancient civilization had its own famous landmarks. Some were destroyed by disasters like fires, earthquakes, and wars. But others have survived and remained standing even today. Egypt's pyramids are those fortunate ones in the second category. They have weathered all sorts of obstacles, including the demise of the very civilization that helped create them.



² About 4,600 years ago, an Egyptian pharaoh (king) named Djoser ordered the construction of his own tomb. His specification was fairly straightforward. He wanted something unique. Pharaoh tombs before his time were rectangular bunkers made out of stones. Those tombs (called mastabas) looked bulky and unimpressive. Djoser didn't like them, so he commissioned an architect named Imhotep to come up with a new design.

³ Imhotep did not let the pharaoh down, for he built the world's first pyramid!

⁴ Djoser's pyramid is a step pyramid. It does not have smooth, triangular faces that a true pyramid must possess. When Imhotep began tackling the project, he first constructed a huge, rectangular mastaba covering an area of about 142,400 square feet. He then built five more mastabas of various sizes on top of it. The series of six mastabas, once completed, rose to a height of 198 feet. It resembles a wedding cake, with the smallest layer at the top and the biggest at the bottom. The base mastaba has a vertical shaft leading to Djoser's burial chamber about 100 feet underground. The only way to get to that shaft is from the mortuary temple located north of the step pyramid. Besides the limited access to the burial chamber, Imhotep also put in several other security measures to ward off intruders. For example, he surrounded the entire 37-acre complex with a 34-foot wall. Along the walls, he installed many fake entrances. The real entrance was at the southeastern corner.

⁵ After the debut of Djoser's Step Pyramid, pharaohs of later times all wanted this kind of grand-looking tomb. Thus, step pyramids mushroomed in Egypt.

⁶ Building a pyramid, by all means, was not an easy task. While the actual construction method is still an unsolved mystery, many scientists believe that the ancient Egyptians slid massive blocks of stones up a long ramp to the level of the pyramid they were working on. The entire project, from the beginning to the end, could easily take two decades. Given that it took so long to build a single pyramid, one may assume that Egyptian pharaohs would never bother to construct more than one. Well, guess again.

⁷ Sneferu was the first pharaoh of the 4th dynasty. He ruled Egypt about 40 years after Djoser. Over his 24-year reign, he built three pyramids. The first one, commonly known as the Meidum Pyramid, was originally a step pyramid. When the work was done, the steps were filled in with stones, and a smooth outer limestone casting turned the structure into a true pyramid. Unfortunately, the casting did not last long and started to crumble. So Sneferu, determined to have a tomb in the shape of a true pyramid, tried again. The Bent Pyramid was his second attempt. This pyramid started out at a very steep angle of about 52 degrees and then suddenly reduced in midway to a more gradual angle of 43 degrees. The last-minute change in the blueprint was probably because the original angle was too steep, and the inside began to collapse. No matter what the real reason was, the Bent Pyramid was rather awkward-looking. Sneferu didn't like it. He figured that he ought to try again. The third time was indeed a charm! The Red (or North) Pyramid, rising at an angle of 43 degrees, became the world's first true pyramid.

⁸ After Sneferu's success, step pyramids fell out of fashion, and true pyramids were in! Three of his successors -- Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura -- constructed three large pyramids in Giza. Those three, without a

doubt, are the most famous of all pyramids. They have become the symbols of Egypt. Of the trio, the Great Pyramid by Pharaoh Khufu is the tallest. It stands 480 feet high. Its burial chamber is hidden away at the heart of the pyramid. The entire complex in Giza contains more than the three celebrated pyramids. It also has several temples, seven smaller pyramids for members of the royal families, and the Sphinx. The Sphinx is a huge stone sculpture of a human-headed lion in a crouching position. The Sphinx's face is believed to be that of Pharaoh Khafra.

⁹ Pyramids are not an exclusive affair in Egypt. Many other ancient civilizations, such as the Mayas and the Aztecs, also had similar structures. But none had perfected the skill the way the Egyptians had, for the other pyramids were all step pyramids!

Comprehension Questions- *Be sure to highlight or underline where you find each answer.*

1. Who designed the world's first pyramid? <input type="radio"/> A Imhotep <input type="radio"/> B Sneferu <input type="radio"/> C Djoser <input type="radio"/> D Khufu	2. How many pyramids did Sneferu have? <input type="radio"/> A One <input type="radio"/> B Four <input type="radio"/> C Three <input type="radio"/> D Two
3. Djoser's Step Pyramid is taller than Khufu's Great Pyramid. <input type="radio"/> A False <input type="radio"/> B True	4. How many layers does Djoser's Step Pyramid have? <input type="radio"/> A Nine <input type="radio"/> B Six <input type="radio"/> C Seven <input type="radio"/> D Four
5. Which of the following was the world's first true pyramid? <input type="radio"/> A The North Pyramid <input type="radio"/> B The Meidum Pyramid <input type="radio"/> C The Bent Pyramid <input type="radio"/> D The Great Pyramid	6. Khafra's pyramid is the tallest pyramid in Giza. <input type="radio"/> A False <input type="radio"/> B True
7. Which of the following about Djoser's pyramid is correct? <input type="radio"/> A The burial chamber for Pharaoh Djoser is hidden away at the heart of the pyramid. <input type="radio"/> B The 37-acre complex contains nothing but the pyramid itself. <input type="radio"/> C The base mastaba is about 142,400 square feet. <input type="radio"/> D The steps of the pyramid were filled in with stones, and a smooth outer limestone casting turned the structure into a true pyramid.	8. Which of the following pharaohs did not have his tomb in the pyramid complex in Giza? <input type="radio"/> A Djoser <input type="radio"/> B Menkaura <input type="radio"/> C Khafra <input type="radio"/> D Khufu
9. What is the angle of Sneferu's last pyramid? <input type="radio"/> A 37 degrees <input type="radio"/> B 52 degrees <input type="radio"/> C 90 degrees <input type="radio"/> D 43 degrees	10. Whose face is believed to be the face of the Sphinx? <input type="radio"/> A Sneferu's <input type="radio"/> B Khufu's <input type="radio"/> C Khafra's <input type="radio"/> D Menkaura's

Mummies are bodies of people who died thousands of years ago in Egypt. They fascinate people because they tell us a lot about ancient Egypt. Mummies were first found in 1798. Many of them were taken out of Egypt, but now the government forbids people to do this.

These bodies were preserved by removing the fluids from them. The Egyptians did this because they wanted to preserve a dead person's identity after death.

At first, mummies were made naturally. About 5,000 year ago Egyptians buried their dead in sand. This warm sand dried the bodies, and natural mummies were the result.

Later on, Egyptians feared grave robbers so they buried the bodies in closed tombs. They had learned how to make their own mummies. It was a long process that took about 70 days. The last step was wrapping the body in linen.

Then the dead person's family and friend's had a great feast. They believed that after the feast the body would go on a long trip. They thought it would go through the underworld to the Judgment Hall. If the person had been good, he would go to a heaven that looked much like Egypt.

People wanted the dead to feel at home so they painted their tombs with happy scenes and put food, drink, and furniture in them. Gold was even placed in the tombs of rich people.

-
1. Egyptians made dead people into mummies because it
 - a. was the law.
 - b. helped prevent disease.
 - c. was a quick way to bury the dead.
 - d. preserved the bodies.
 2. Ancient Egyptian tombs were like
 - a. homes.
 - b. museums.
 - c. churches.
 - d. modern graves.
 3. Choose the best answer.
How long did it take to make a mummy?
 - a. about a month
 - b. about two months
 - c. about three months
 - d. about four months
 4. We can conclude that ancient Egyptian funeral ceremonies were
 - a. long.
 - b. cheap.
 - c. short.
 - d. simple.

In 1922 Howard Carter, a British archaeologist, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen. Tutankhamen, also known as King Tut, was an ancient Egyptian king who died at the age of eighteen or nineteen. Carter spent fifteen years searching for his tomb.

Carter thought that there must be undiscovered tombs in ancient Egypt's royal burial ground. He was sure that a small part of it had not been searched, but most people disagreed.

A few days after his crew started digging they found the beginning of a staircase which seemed like the entrance to a tomb. When the staircase was cleared, they saw the top of a doorway. Carter's search was paid for by Lord Carnarvon, a wealthy Englishman, so Carter immediately wired Carnarvon about his discovery.

When Carnarvon arrived, Carter drilled a small hole through the door. The glint of gold could be seen everywhere. Weapons, vases, and chariots were strewn about. The tomb had been broken into. Carter thought it had been robbed twice, probably soon after the burial.

A few months later the Burial Chamber of the tomb could be entered. King Tut's body was enclosed in three coffins. The inner coffin was solid gold. When it was opened, they saw King Tut's head and shoulders covered with a fabulous, gold funeral mask. Attached to the body and its wrappings were 143 jewels and amulets.

Carter and his staff worked ten years to clean and preserve the treasures of this four-room tomb.

-
1. Choose the best title:
 - a. Tombs of Ancient Egypt.
 - b. An Ancient Egyptian King's Tomb.
 - c. The Work of an American Archaeologist.
 - d. Ancient Burial Grounds.
 2. King Tut's tomb was robbed
 - a. just before Carter discovered it.
 - b. thousands of years ago.
 - c. 100 years ago.
 - d. in 1922.
 3. We can conclude that Carter was a man who
 - a. had great wealth.
 - b. did not give up easily.
 - c. had no patience.
 - d. had no imagination.
 4. Who would be least interested in the discovery of King Tut's tomb?
 - a. historians
 - b. jewelers
 - c. scientists
 - d. athletes

Name _____

Date _____

In ancient days the Egyptians worshipped the cat as a goddess. This worship started about 6,000 years ago. Cats were a sacred part of the Egyptian religion, and priests took special care of them. When the temple cats died, they were embalmed and mummified. They were given funerals and buried in cat cemeteries.

Pet cats were also honored in private homes. The ancient Egyptians thought that a cat's life was more valuable than that of a person.

Later, Egypt became a rich country because of its grain. Traders from all over the world went there to buy grain. In the granaries, cats were used to keep rats and mice away from the grain. Traders who came to Egypt managed to steal cats. They wanted cats to kill the rats that were eating their food supplies on their ships. They also found that they could sell the cats they had stolen in the European and British ports they visited. People in these ports were willing to pay any price for them. Thus, cats came to the western world.

The first settlers in America brought cats with them to protect their food supplies on the ships. When they arrived, they found that the Native Americans had difficulty storing food for the winter. There were too many kinds of rodents in this country. The settlers' cats helped them to survive because they enabled them to store food for the long winter.

Over the years there have been many superstitions about cats. In some countries black cats are considered to be a sign of bad luck, while in others they are thought to bring good luck. It was in Africa that the myth of a cat's having nine lives began. Sailors have always considered the tortoiseshell cat, which has a coat of many colors, a good-luck cat.

-
1. People from other countries wanted cats from Egypt for
 - a. religious reasons.
 - b. help in preserving their food.
 - c. special house pets.
 - d. good luck.
 2. The main reason for Egypt's worldwide fame was its
 - a. full granaries.
 - b. precious gold.
 - c. temple cats.
 - d. cat mummies.
 3. We can conclude from this passage that
 - a. people have always been superstitious.
 - b. only people living in ancient times were superstitious.
 - c. today people are becoming more superstitious.
 - d. today people are becoming less superstitious.
 4. What did the Pilgrims bring with them that was most valuable to them during their first year here?
 - a. their spinning wheels
 - b. their lumber
 - c. their cats
 - d. their books

Narrative

Read the narrative below; then complete the exercise that follows.

THE GREAT PYRAMID

Over two thousand years ago, a Greek writer named Antipater made a list of what he called the Seven Wonders of the World. The only one of those **ancient** sights that remains today is the Great Pyramid, in Egypt.

The Great Pyramid is **located** just outside Cairo. It was built by one of the earliest kings of Egypt, who intended it to be a tomb, or burial place, for himself. Covering an area bigger than one hundred football fields and standing 450 feet high, it is the largest of the more than sixty pyramids in Egypt. It is made of two and a half million blocks of stone, some of which weigh as much as fifteen tons. Its **surface** was once covered in shining white limestone and was perfectly smooth, but over the **centuries** most of this has been stripped away and very little of it is left.

It may have taken as long as twenty years to build the Great Pyramid. The stone came from nearby, while the white limestone on the outside came from **quarries** near the Nile River. The blocks were floated across on rafts and were then dragged up a **ramp** of earth that was built up in stages as the work progressed. Skilled stonemasons worked all year on the pyramid. Other work was done by farmers, who worked for a **portion** of each year, probably from July to October, when the Nile overflowed its banks and flooded the fields. Workers believed that their king, Cheops, was a god, a **descendant** of the sun god Ra, and that he deserved this magnificent tomb.

The **interior** of the Great Pyramid contains many rooms, connected by **passages** leading to the outside. King Cheops was laid to rest in one of the most **spacious** rooms. The Egyptians believed in a life after death, and so they left food and drink with the king's body as well as many **precious** objects he had used in daily life. The Egyptians believed he would need these in the next world.

The **chamber** in which the dead king lay was closed off with huge granite slabs to keep people from gaining **entry** to it. In spite of this, however, **intruders** later found a way in and stole the gold objects and the jewels that were inside. They even made off with the body! The Great Pyramid failed to keep Cheops's body safe, but it has kept his name alive over 4,500 years after his death.

THE GREAT PYRAMID

Answer each of the following questions in a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word, use a vocabulary word in your answer. Use each word only once.

1. What makes the Great Pyramid unusual among the places on Antipater's list?

2. How could one go from room to room within the Great Pyramid?

3. Why would the interior of the Great Pyramid be very dark?

4. How did the Egyptians raise the stones onto the pyramid?

5. Why did the white limestone have to come by water?

6. Why did some people work on the pyramid for only a **portion** of the year?

7. How does the room where the king's body was placed compare with other rooms?

8. Why do you think the narrative refers to the king's room as a **chamber**?

9. What are some of the **precious** objects that might have been left with the dead king?

10. Why did the Egyptians place granite slabs outside the king's tomb?

11. What happened to the gold and the jewels that were inside the tomb?

12. When (to the nearest hundred years) was the Great Pyramid built?

13. Why did the Egyptians think Cheops deserved such a magnificent tomb?

14. How does the Great Pyramid differ from when it was first built?

15. What is the location of Cairo?

WORDLY WISE

You have learned that the Greek word for “eight” is *okto*. In Latin, it became *octo*. (An *octopus* has eight arms. *October* was the eighth month in the Roman calendar; we changed it and made it the tenth month.)



A large number of English words are formed from Greek or Latin numbers. Among them is our word **century**, a period of one hundred years. It comes from the Latin for one hundred, which is *centum*. Other words sharing this root include *cent* (There are one hundred cents in a dollar.), *centipede* (This was once thought to have one hundred legs; it actually has about seventy.), and *centimeter* (There are one hundred centimeters in a meter.).



In 1976 the United States celebrated its *bicentennial*. If you knew nothing of the history of the United States, but knew that the Latin for “two” is *bi*, could you figure out how old the United States was in 1976?

How can the word **quarry** have two such separate and unrelated meanings? For the answer to this question we must look into the word’s history. In fact, it is not one word but two quite different ones that by chance have the same spelling.

The word for an animal being hunted comes from the old French *cuiree*, the name for body parts fed to animals after a successful hunt. The word passed into English as *querre*, which in modern English became *quarry*.

The word for a deep pit where stone is cut out of the ground comes from the Latin *quadrum*, which means “squared at the corners.” It was applied to stones used for building, which were usually squared at the corners. Later, changed over time to *quarry*, it came to mean the place from which the stone was obtained.

Famous Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt



The kings of Ancient Egypt are better known as the pharaohs of Egypt. Modern Egypt no longer has pharaohs as leaders. However, pharaohs ruled as kings and, like kings, pharaohs were succeeded after death by members of their royal family, usually the oldest son. At times a military or other leader was able to take over the throne and his family became the new royal family. Historians call the takeover by a new ruler whose family then rules for a long time as the start of a new dynasty.

The Old Kingdom of Ancient Egypt began around 2650 BCE during the third Egyptian dynasty. Djoser was the second king in the third dynasty. A talented architect and scholar named Imhotep built the first Egyptian pyramid, a step pyramid, for Djoser. Imhotep was so admired by the Egyptian people that he was later worshipped as a god. The first king of the fourth dynasty, Seneferu, built the first true pyramid and historians believe he is buried in the ancient Red Pyramid. Seneferu's son, Khufu, built the Great Pyramid at Giza. Khufu is sometimes called by the Greek version of his name, Cheops. Khufu's son Khafre and grandson Menkaure became pharaohs of Egypt and built their own burial pyramids at Giza. The Old Kingdom ended around 2134 BCE.

After the Old Kingdom ended the provinces of Egypt were ruled by nomarchs, like governors of states. Then the rulers of Thebes took power and moved the capital of Egypt to their city. Three kings from Thebes – Tao I, Kamose and Ahmose – started military campaigns to drive out the foreign rulers who had taken over the northern part of Egypt. Around 1550 BCE what historians call the New Kingdom of Egypt, which included the 18th to 20th dynasties, began.

The pharaohs of the 18th dynasty – Ahmose, Amenhotep I and Tuthmosis I – expanded the Egyptian Empire to the north and south. Hatshepsut, the wife of Tuthmosis II, ruled Egypt after her husband died while his son was too young to rule. She had herself crowned as the first woman pharaoh. Tuthmosis III eventually became pharaoh and history remembers him as a great warrior who led military campaigns against the Syrians. Ramesses II was the builder of many elegant temples and ruled for 67 years. Many of the pharaohs, including the Boy King Tutankhamun, are buried in the Valley of the Kings.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Famous Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. When a pharaoh in Ancient Egypt died he was succeeded by
 - a. Whoever the people selected.
 - b. Whoever the Senate selected.
 - c. Whoever the elders selected.
 - d. His oldest son or other close relative.

2. The builder of the first Egyptian pyramid was
 - a. Imhotep
 - b. Ahmose
 - c. Amenhotep
 - d. Tuthmosis

3. Who is buried at the Great Pyramid at Giza?
 - a. Khufu
 - b. Cheops
 - c. Both a. and b. above
 - d. None of the above

4. Between the Old Kingdom and the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt the capital was located at the city of
 - a. Cairo
 - b. Alexandria
 - c. Thebes
 - d. Karnak

5. The first female ruler of Ancient Egypt was
 - a. Ramesses
 - b. Hatshepsut
 - c. Tutankhamun
 - d. Khafre

6. Many of the kings of the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt are buried at
 - a. The Valley of the Kings
 - b. Giza
 - c. Both a. and b. above
 - d. None of the above

Name: _____ Date: _____

Famous Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt Multiple Choice Questions

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Geography of Ancient Egypt



The timeline of Ancient Egypt begins some 8,000 years ago around 6,000 BCE when early farmers discovered how fertile the soil around the Nile River was. These successful farming efforts eventually led to an amazing civilization that flourished for thousands of years. The Nile River is one of the major rivers of the world and is considered to be the longest river on earth. The Nile River flows through desert areas and since the river floods regularly, the silt it deposits makes fertile land along the river. Without the Nile River, the Ancient Egyptian civilization would not have been possible.

The Nile River is located in the northeastern corner of the continent of Africa and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. Near the Mediterranean Sea the Nile River splits into two branches and the Nile Delta is located between them. Besides the two major branches, the Nile Delta contains smaller outflows that flow into the Mediterranean Sea. The land between these rivers and streams is very fertile and helped the Ancient Egyptians to raise crops like wheat and flax. With a surplus of crops the Egyptians could trade with other areas and support cities, an army and powerful kings.

The Nile Delta was home to many Egyptian cities including Rosetta, Buto, Sais, and Heliopolis. When Alexander the Great of Macedonia in Ancient Greece conquered Egypt in 33 BCE he created Alexandria at the western edge of the Nile Delta to be the new capital of Egypt. The city was known as a trading port on the Mediterranean Sea and its library contained copies of the most important books ever written. Archaeologists are discovering important artifacts from ancient Alexandria in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of present-day Alexandria. They believe that parts of Alexandria might have sunk into the sea due to earthquake activity in ancient times.

The Great Pyramid at Giza is located slightly southwest of the Nile Delta. The Valley of the Kings, the Temple of Karnak and the city of Thebes (called Luxor today) are located in what was called Upper Egypt further south of the Mediterranean Sea along the Nile River. The Red Sea formed the eastern boundary of Ancient Egypt and the desert was the western boundary.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Geography of Ancient Egypt Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Which of the following statements about the Nile River is true?
 - a. The Nile is considered to be the longest river in the world.
 - b. The Nile is considered to be the deepest river in the world.
 - c. The Nile is considered to be the widest river in the world.
 - d. All of the above

2. Ancient Egyptian civilization was able to develop because it was close to the
 - a. Mediterranean Sea
 - b. Red Sea
 - c. Western desert
 - d. Nile River

3. Egypt is located in the continent of
 - a. Asia
 - b. Africa
 - c. Europe
 - d. South America

4. Major crops of Ancient Egypt were
 - a. Wheat and corn
 - b. Corn and flax
 - c. Wheat and flax
 - d. Barley and cotton

5. The city of Alexandria was known in ancient times because
 - a. It became the capital of Egypt
 - b. It was an important trading port
 - c. It had a famous library
 - d. All of the above

6. The Red Sea forms part of which border of Egypt?
 - a. Northern
 - b. Southern
 - c. Eastern
 - d. Western

Name: _____ Date: _____

Geography of Ancient Egypt Short Answer Questions

1. Do some research and draw a map of Ancient Egypt.

2. Explain why the Nile River played an important role in the development of Ancient Egypt.

3. Explain what a river delta is. If you don't know the answer, look it up in an encyclopedia or dictionary.

4. Do some research into artifacts from Cleopatra's time that archaeologists are finding in the Mediterranean Sea near the city of Alexandria. Write a short report about what is being found.

5. Do some research and write a short report about the characteristics of the Red Sea.

6. What is flax and why was it an important crop for the Ancient Egyptians to grow?

7. Do some research about the Great Pyramid at Giza. With your classmates write a play that takes place at the Great Pyramid. Your play can take place at any period in history you select including today.