Section 1 Geography and Ancient Egypt

cataracts, delta, pharaoh, dynasty

Section 2 The Old Kingdom

Old Kingdom, theocracy, Khufu, afterlife, mummies, pyramids

Quiz-Section 1 & 2 Sept. 20th

Section 3 The Middle & New Kingdoms

Middle Kingdoms, New Kingdom, Queen Hatshepsut, Ramses the Great

Section 4 Egyptian Achievements

Hieroglyphics, papyrus, Rosetta Stone, sphinxes, obelisk, King Tutankhamen

Quiz – Section 3 & 4 October 21st

Test and Notebook Check on Oct. 26th – Review available in link below this one.
Notes from Tuesday, August 13th

THE GIFT OF THE NILE

- The existence of Egypt was based solely around the Nile, the world’s longest river. The Nile carries water from central Africa through a vast stretch of desert land. The Nile also carries fine black silt as it flows. When the river floods, it deposits this soil along its banks. The land surrounding the Nile Valley was arid desert, so the area along the river was the lifeline for everyone who lived in the region. The river was so important to people that Egypt was called the “gift of the Nile.”
- Ancient Egypt developed along a 750-mile stretch of the Nile, and was originally organized into two kingdoms—Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Upper Egypt was located upriver in relation to the Nile’s flow. Lower Egypt was the northern region and was located downriver.
- Cataracts, or steep rapids, marked the southern border of Upper Egypt. Lower Egypt was centered in the river delta, a triangle-shaped area of land made of soil deposited by the river. In midsummer the Nile would flood Upper Egypt. In the fall the river would flood Lower Egypt.
The Floods of the Nile

- Because it received so little rain, most of Egypt was desert. Each year, however, rainfall far to the south of Egypt in the highlands of east Africa caused the Nile to flood. The Nile floods were easier to predict than those of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia. Almost every year, the Nile flooded Upper Egypt in midsummer and Lower Egypt in the fall, coating the land around the river with a rich silt.
- The silt from the Nile made the soil ideal for farming. The silt also made the land a dark color. That is why the Egyptians called their country the black land. They called the dry, lifeless desert beyond the river valley the red land.
- Each year, Egyptians eagerly awaited the flooding of the Nile. For them the river’s floods were a life-giving miracle. Without the floods, people never could have settled in Egypt.

Civilization Develops Along the Nile

- With dry desert all around, it is no wonder that ancient settlers were attracted to this abundant and protected area of fertile farmland. Hunter-gatherers first moved to the area around 12,000 years ago and found plenty of meat and fish to hunt and eat. By 4500 BC farmers were living in villages and growing wheat and barley. They were also raising cattle and sheep.
- Around 3200 BC the Egyptian villages became organized into two kingdoms. The capital of Lower Egypt was located in the northwest Nile Delta at a town called Pe. The capital city of Upper Egypt was called Nekhen. It was located on the west bank of the Nile.

RELIGION AND EGYPTIAN LIFE

- Like Mesopotamians, Egyptians practiced polytheism. The Old Kingdom formalized a religious structure that everyone was expected to follow. Everyone was expected to worship the same gods, though how they worshipped the gods might differ from one region of Egypt to another. Over time certain cities built temples and were associated with particular gods.
- The Egyptians had gods for nearly everything, including the sun, the sky, and the earth. Many gods mixed human and animal forms. For example, Anubis, the god of the dead, had a human body but a jackal’s head. Other major gods included:
  1. Re, or Amon-Re, the sun god
  2. Osiris, the god of the underworld
  3. Isis, the goddess of magic, and life
  4. Horus, a sky god, god of the pharaohs
- Much of Egyptian religion focused on the afterlife, life after death. Paintings from Egyptian tombs show the afterlife as an ideal world where all the people are young and healthy. Each person’s ka (KAH), or life force, existed after death but remained linked to the body. To fulfill the ka’s needs, people filled tombs with objects for the afterlife. These objects included furniture, clothing, tools, jewelry, and weapons.
Burial Practices

- To keep the ka from suffering, the Egyptians developed a method called embalming. Embalming allowed bodies to be preserved for many, many years as mummies, specially treated bodies wrapped in cloth. A body that was not embalmed would decay quickly.
- Embalming was a complex process that took several weeks. When finished, embalmers wrapped the body with linen cloths and bandages. The mummy was then placed in a coffin. Relatives often wrote magic spells inside the coffin to help the mummy receive food and drink.

The Pyramids

- Egyptians believed that burial sites, especially royal tombs, were very important. As a result, they built spectacular monuments in which to bury their rulers. The most spectacular of all were the pyramids, huge stone tombs with four triangle shaped walls that met in a point on top.
- The Egyptians began to build pyramids during the Old Kingdom. Some of the largest pyramids ever constructed were built during this time. Many of these huge structures are still standing. The largest is the Great Pyramid of Khufu (also known as the Great Pyramid of Giza) near the town of Giza. It covers more than 13 acres at its base and stand 481 feet high. This single pyramid took more than 2 million limestone blocks to build. Historians are still not sure exactly how Egyptians built the pyramids. They are, however, amazing feats of engineering, the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, the science of design and building.
- Burial in a pyramid demonstrated a pharaoh’s importance. The size was a symbol of the pharaoh’s greatness. The pyramid’s shape, pointing to the skies, symbolized the pharaoh’s journey to the afterlife. The Egyptians wanted the pyramids to be spectacular because they believed that the pharaoh, as their link to the gods, controlled everyone’s afterlife. Making the pharaoh’s spirit happy was a way of ensuring a happy afterlife for every Egyptian.

Check out more about mummification here:

http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/mummies/home.html

Notes from Monday, September 19th

KINGS UNIFY EGYPT

- Around 3100 BC Menes (MEE-neez), the king of Upper Egypt, invaded Lower Egypt. He married a princess there in order to unite the two kingdoms under his rule. Menes was the first pharaoh, title used by the rulers of Egypt which literally means ruler of a “great house.” He also started the first Egyptian dynasty, or series of rulers from the same family. He built a new capital city, Memphis, which became a popular cultural center. His dynasty ruled for nearly 200 years.

EARLY EGYPTIAN SOCIETY

- Around 2700 BC the third dynasty, or Old Kingdom, a period in Egyptian history that lasted from about 2700 BC to 2200 BC, came to power in Egypt. During the next 500 years, the Egyptians developed a political system based on the belief that the pharaoh was both a king and a god called a theocracy. The most famous pharaoh of the Old Kingdom was Khufu, in whose honor the largest of the pyramids was built.
- Although the pharaoh owned everything, he was also held personally responsible if anything went wrong. He was expected to make trade profitable. It was up to him to prevent war. To manage these duties, he appointed government officials, mostly from his family. Social classes
developed, with the pharaoh at the top and nobles from rich and powerful families making up the upper class. The middle class included some government officials, the scribes, and rich craftspeople. Most people, including farmers, belonged to the lower class. The pharaoh often used people from the lower class as a source of labor.

- During the time of the Old Kingdom, trade between Egypt and other areas developed. Traders sailed the Mediterranean Sea, south on the Nile River, and on the Red Sea to acquire gold, copper, ivory, slaves, wood, incense, and myrrh.

Check out this video that explains the Pharaoh’s Symbols of Power:

http://www.showme.com/sh/?h=kzazdg0

Notes from Wednesday, September 21st

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

- The Old Kingdom ended with the pharaohs in debt. Ambitious nobles serving in government positions managed to take power from the pharaohs and rule Egypt for nearly 160 years. Finally, a powerful pharaoh, Mentuhotep II, regained control of Egypt around 2050 BC and started a peaceful period of rule. This era was called the Middle Kingdom a period of stability and order in ancient Egypt between about 2050 and 1750 BC and lasted until Hyksos, Southwest Asian invaders, conquered Lower Egypt around 1750 BC.

THE NEW KINGDOM

- When an Egyptian named Ahmose (AHM-ohs) drove away the invaders and declared himself king of Egypt in 1550 BC, he ushered in Egypt’s eighteenth dynasty and the start of the New Kingdom, the height of Egypt’s power and glory, between 1550 and 1050 BC. Responding to invasions, Egypt took control of the invasion routes and became the leading military power in the region. Egypt’s empire extended from the Euphrates River in the northeast to Nubia in the south. These conquests made Egypt rich through gifts and vastly expanded trade routes.
Notes from Thursday, September 22nd

Growth and its Effects on Trade

- Conquest also brought Egyptian traders into contact with more distant lands. Egypt’s trade expanded along with its empire. Profitable trade routes, or paths followed by traders, developed. Many of the lands that Egypt took over also had valuable resources for trade. The Sinai Peninsula, for example, had large supplies of turquoise and copper.
- One ruler who worked to increase Egyptian trade was Queen Hatshepsut. She sent Egyptian traders south to trade with the kingdom of Punt on the Red Sea and north to trade with the people of Asia Minor and Greece.
- Hatshepsut and later pharaohs used the wealth that they earned from trade to support the arts and architecture. Hatshepsut especially is remembered for the many impressive monuments and temples built during her reign. The best known of these structures was a magnificent temple built for her near the city of Thebes.

Queen Hatshepsut

- Ruled c. 1472 – 1458 BC
- Hatshepsut was married to the pharaoh Thutmose II, her half-brother. He died young, leaving the throne to Thutmose III, his son by another woman. Since Thutmose III was still very young, Hatshepsut took over power. Many people did not think women should rule, but Hatshepsut dressed as a man and called herself king. After Hatshepsut died, her stepson took back power and destroyed all of the monuments Hatshepsut had built during her rule.

Notes from Friday, September 23rd

Invasion of Egypt

- Despite its great success, Egypt’s military might did not go unchallenged. In the 1200s BC the pharaoh Ramses II, or Ramses the Great, came to power. Ramses, whose reign was one of the longest in Egyptian history, fought the Hittites, a group from Asia Minor. The two powers fought fiercely for years, but neither could defeat the other. Ramses and the Hittite leader eventually signed a peace treaty. Afterwards, the Egyptians and the Hittites became allies.
- Egypt faced threats in other parts of its empire as well. To the west, a people known as the Tehenu invaded the Nile Delta. Ramses fought them off and built a series of forts to strengthen the western frontier. This proved to be wise decision because the Tehenu invaded again a century later. Faced with Egypt’s strengthened defenses, however, the Tehenu were defeated once more.
- Soon after Ramses the Great died, invaders called the Sea Peoples sailed into southwest Asia. Little is known about these people. Historians are not sure who they were. All we know is that they were strong warriors who had crushed the Hittites and destroyed cities in southwest Asia. Only after 50 years of fighting were the Egyptians able to turn them back.
- Egypt survived, but its empire in Asia was gone. Shortly after the invasions of the Hittites and the Sea Peoples, the New Kingdom came to an end. Egypt once again fell into a period of violence and disorder. Egypt would never again regain its power.
Notes from Monday, September 19th

DAILY LIFE & SOCIAL CLASSES

• During the Middle and New Kingdoms, Egypt’s population continued to grow and became more complex. Professional and skilled workers like scribes, artisans, artists, and architects were honored. These roles in society were usually passed on in families, with young boys learning a trade from their father.

• For farmers and peasants, who made up the vast majority of the population, life never changed. In addition to hard work on the land, they were required to pay taxes and were subject to special labor duty at any time. Only slaves were beneath them in social status.

• Most Egyptian families lived in their own homes. Boys were expected to marry young and start their own families. Women worked in the home, but many also had jobs outside the home. Egyptian women had the legal rights to own property, make contracts, and divorce their husbands.
Notes from Tuesday, October 18th

EGYPTIAN WRITING

• Egyptians invented one of the world’s first writing systems, using a series of images, symbols, and pictures called **hieroglyphics** (hy-ruh-GLIH-fiks) or **sacred writing**. Each symbol represented one or more sounds in the Egyptian language. Hieroglyphics could be written either horizontally or vertically. They could be written from right to left or from left to right.

• At first hieroglyphics were carved in stone. Later they were written with brushes and ink on **papyrus** (puh-PY-ruhs) or a long-lasting, paper-like substance made from reeds. Because papyrus didn’t decay, many ancient Egyptian texts still survive, including government records, historical records, science texts, medical manuals, and literary works such as *The Book of the Dead*. The discovery of the **Rosetta Stone** in 1799 provided the key to reading (decoding) Egyptian writing. The **Rosetta Stone** contained the same text inscribed in both hieroglyphics and Greek.
Notes from Wednesday, October 19th

EGYPT’S GREAT TEMPLES

• Egyptian architects are known not only for the pyramids but also for their magnificent temples. The temples were lavishly designed with numerous statues and beautifully painted walls and pillars. **Sphinxes**, huge ancient Egyptian statues of imaginary creatures with the heads of people and bodies of lions, and **obelisks**, a tall, four-sided pillar that is pointed on top, were usually found near the entrances to the temples. The **Temple of Karnak** is only one of Egypt’s great temples. Others were built by Ramses the Great at Abu Simbel and Luxor.

EGYPTIAN ART

• Ancient Egyptians were masterful artists and many of their greatest works are found in either the temples or the tombs of the pharaohs. Most Egyptians, however, never saw these paintings because only kings, priests, or other important people could enter these places.
• Egyptian paintings depict a variety of subjects, from crowning kings to illustrating religious rituals and showing scenes from daily life. The paintings also have a particular style, with people drawn as if they were twisting as they walked, and in different sizes depending upon their stature in society. In contrast, animals appear more realistically. The Egyptians were also skilled stone and metal workers, creating beautiful statues and jewelry.
• Much of what we know about Egyptian art and burial practices comes from the tomb of King Tutankhamen, one of the few Egyptian tombs that was left untouched by raiders looking for valuables. The tomb was discovered in 1922.
King Tut

• **Growing Up**
  Tutankhamun was born a prince in Egypt's royal court around the year 1341 BC. His father was the Pharaoh Akhenaten. Tutankhamun's birth name was Tutankhaten, which he changed after his father died.
  Tutankhamun was born to one of his father's lesser wives and not to his main wife, the powerful Nefertiti. His presence may have caused some strain in the royal courts as Nefertiti had only daughters, but desperately wanted to have a son of her own to take over the throne.

• **The Boy Pharaoh**
  At the young age of seven years old Tutankhamun's father died. A few years later Tutankhamun married his half-sister (which was common for Pharaoh's in Ancient Egypt) and became Pharaoh. Since he was so young he had help ruling the country. The real rulers were a powerful general named Horemheb and Tutankhamun's vizier named Ay.

• **Ruling Egypt**
  Many people of Egypt had been unhappy with the religious reforms of his father. Tutankhamun and his advisors tried to fix all the changes that his father had made. Under Tutankhamun Egypt returned to their old gods and the old temples were repaired. The capital city was also moved back to the city of Memphis. He even changed his name from Tutankhaten, "the living image of Aten", to Tutankhamun, "the living image of Amun".

• **Death and Burial**
  Tutankhamun died around the age of nineteen. Archeologists aren't sure what killed him. Some people think that he was assassinated, but the likely cause of his death was a wound to his leg. Scientists have determined that the leg of his mummy was broken and badly infected before his death. This injury probably happened from an accident.