

**“The Ancient World”**  
**Ancient Egypt**  
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# UNIT TWO

## The Great Nile River

It is important to understand the geography and climate of Egypt in order to understand the people who lived there. Egypt is located in the Northeast corner of Africa. There are two deserts 90% of the country is desert. There are basically four main geographical regions:

- The Nile Valley and Delta
- The Western Desert or Libyan Desert
- The Eastern Desert or Arabian Desert
- The Sinai Peninsula.

Look at the map below and find all four regions. The Nile River is the blue line that runs through the eastern part of the country, while the Nile River Valley is the green lines on either side of the river.



Because of the vast deserts, the only really good land available for farming and agriculture was near the Nile River. Every year the river would flood the Nile River Valley, these flood waters provided the land huge amounts of nutrients and made the Nile Valley one of the most **fertile** places, fertile means capable of growing many things, on earth.

If the Nile River didn't flood every year, then there is no way that people would have settled in the barren deserts of Egypt.

The **flood plain**, or flat land next to the river that experiences flooding, was a narrow strip of land on either side of the great river. The flood lasts from June to October, or about 5 months of the year. The farmers in Egypt have been planting all their crops on this narrow strip of land for over 6,000 years. They are able to do this because the flood waters carry **silt**, or rich soil, onto the farmed land every summer, replacing the old worn out soil.

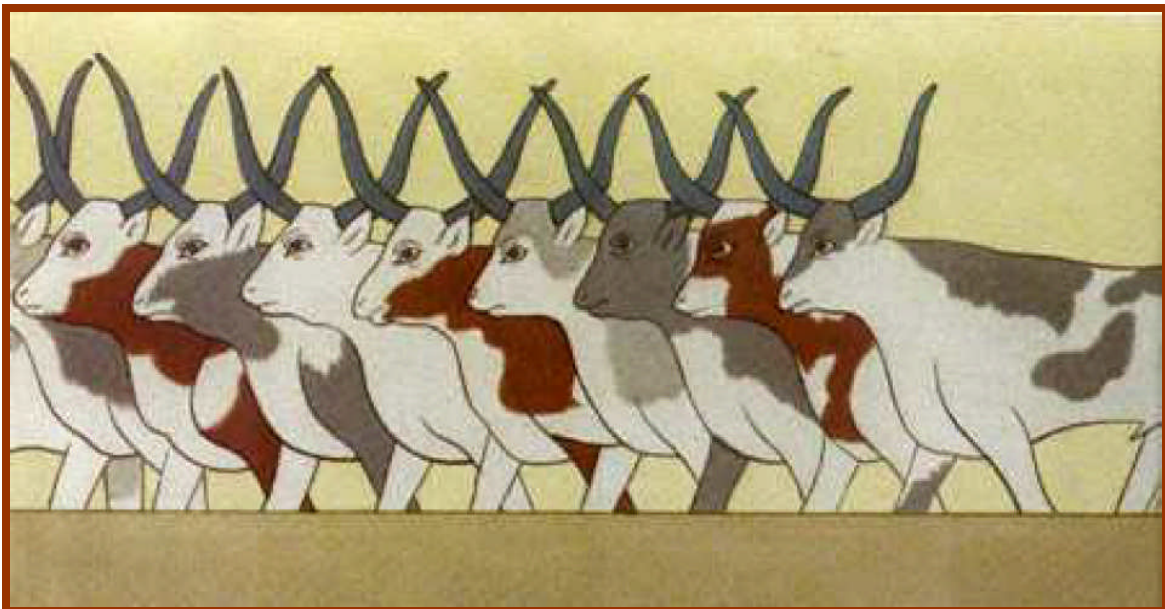
**The Nile River Delta** is the place where the river flows into the Mediterranean Sea. It was a very popular place for the ancient Egyptians to settle because it had easy access to the sea and could support many farming communities.

The ancient Egyptians came up with many useful tools to help them with their farming. Even though the river flooded every year, Egypt was still mostly a desert, so they had to bring water to the people and crops by way of **canal irrigation**.

A canal is a way to move water from the river to the crops or people. They used a special device called a **shaduf**. The shaduf is used to scoop up and carry water from the river to the canal.

Farmers also used a **sickle**, or crescent shaped tool used to cut wheat and other grains.

Even with the rich flood waters of the Nile River, the ancient Egyptians still experienced **famine**. Famine is when there is no food for people to eat. It happens mainly because there is not enough water for the crops to grow or for the animals to drink. I Cattle were also very important to the people along the Nile River. The more cattle a man had, the wealthier he was in the eyes of his fellow countrymen.



The type of oxen, or cattle, the ancient Egyptians kept were typically spotted and had long horns

## ACTIVITES for UNIT TWO

### 2.1 Matching Vocabulary

**Directions:** Match the vocabulary word on the left with the proper definition on the right. Put the correct letter on the blank.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. _____Delta        | A. Flat land that floods from the river              |
| 2. _____Famine       | B. To move water from one place to another for crops |
| 3. _____Sickle       | C. Rich soil allows food to grow                     |
| 4. _____Irrigation   | D. A big food shortage for many people               |
| 5. _____ flood plain | E. River sediment                                    |
| 6. _____ fertile     | F. Mouth of a river                                  |
| 7. _____ Silt        | G. A tool used to cut crops                          |

## Activity 2.2

### Multiple Choice

Read the sentence and circle the best answer.

1. The rich soil was \_\_\_\_\_, this allowed crops to grow and people to thrive.
  - a. Barren
  - b. Fertile
  - c. Sandy
2. Famine means to go without \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Water
  - b. Food
  - c. Gold
3. \_\_\_\_\_ were used to transport water from the river to the crops.
  - a. Irrigation canals
  - b. Shaduf
  - c. Sickle
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ was used to move water from the river to the canal.
  - a. Sickle
  - b. Irrigation
  - c. Shaduf
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ is used to cut down crops such as wheat.
  - a. Shaduf
  - b. Shovel
  - c. Sickle
6. Cows were a sign of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Famine
  - b. Wealth
  - c. Delta

## Activity 2.3

### True or False?

Put a T for true or a F for false in the blank next to the question.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ People in ancient Egypt depended on the Nile flooding every year.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Nile river Valley has been farmed for only 1,000 years.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Many Egyptian cows were a sign that the farmer was rich.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Another name for the Western Desert is the Arabian Desert.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Another Name for the Eastern Desert is the Libyan Desert.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The Sinai Peninsula is a main geographical feature of Egypt.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The Nile River flood plain covered most of the desert.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Egypt is located in the Northeast corner of Asia.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ There was lot of rich farming land in the desert.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The old worn out soil in the Nile River Valley is replaced with new soil every year.

# UNIT NINE

## The Next Best Thing - Valley of the Kings

Not all pharaohs were buried in pyramids, in fact, most of them were buried in a different place altogether. The Great Pyramids are located on the Giza plateau by Memphis, while farther south, by the city of Thebes, is what we now call, **The Valley of the Kings**.

Maybe pyramid tombs were too expensive or maybe they just took too long to build, we don't really know. Regardless, the pyramid tombs were abandoned for a valley on the west bank of the Nile, down in Upper Egypt. They thought that the new tombs could be excavated underneath the hills in the limestone and protected from grave robbers.

The Valley of the Kings was used for royal burials from approximately 1539 BC to 1075 BC, and contains at least 63 tombs, beginning with Thutmose I and ending with Ramses X or XI.

The name of the necropolis in ancient times was "**The Great and Majestic Necropolis of the Millions of Years of the Pharaoh, Life, Strength, Health in the West of Thebes.**" Modern people think that title is a little bit of a mouthful, so it was changed to a shorter, yet still appropriate, name.

A typical tomb had a long inclined (sloping) corridor (hallway) cut out of rock. This corridor went through one or more halls, finally ending at the burial chamber. Most of the royal tombs are decorated with religious texts and images. The earlier tombs

were decorated with scenes from **Amduat**. That text describes the journey of the sun-god through the twelve hours of the night. Later, tombs were decorated with the **Book of Gates**, which shows the sun-god passing through the twelve gates that divide the night time, and ensure the tomb owner's own safe passage through the night.

Even later still, the **Book of Caverns**, which divided the underworld into massive caverns containing deities and the deceased waiting for the sun to pass through and restore them to life. From the time of the burial of Ramses III **The Book of the Earth** was copied onto the walls of the burial chamber. The Book of the Earth describes how the underworld is divided into 4 sections, and then ends with the sun being pulled from the earth and put into the heavens.

Eventually the ceilings of the burial chambers were decorated with the **Book of the Heavens**, which again describe the sun's journey through the twelve hours of night.

The most famous tomb at the Valley of the Kings is of course, the **Tomb of Tutankhamun**, not because he was important remember, but because the tomb was almost completely untouched by robbers. People who have visited the valley say that his tomb is barely worth visiting when compared to the others you would see, because it is much smaller and has few decorations.

Tut's tomb was found by a man named Howard Carter in 1922. Inside they found clothes, weapons, jewelry, furniture, musical instruments, and small boats. King Tut was buried in three **sarcophaguses**, or coffin-like containers, which were placed inside crypts. His mummified body was carefully wrapped in white cloth

and a funeral death mask, made of SOLID GOLD was placed over his head. It weighed a whopping 220 pounds!



King Tutankhamen's Death Mask

## ACTIVITES for UNIT NINE

### Activity 9.1

#### Report Writing

This time you will have a choice of two subjects to write your report on. Either one of the pyramids or the Sphinx at Giza, or any pharaoh buried at the Valley of the Kings. Don't do the same pharaoh you did for your last report.

**First** - look for a good article on your chosen ruler or structure on the internet or in a book.

**Second** - write down the answers to the questions below.

**Third** - put all your facts into a report on the last page of this unit.

Name of your chosen pharaoh **or** structure

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When did they rule **or** when was it built?

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Who were their parents? (The pharaoh before them) **or** who was buried in the structure?

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What did they accomplish during their rule **or** how was the structure built?

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Where are they buried, when was it discovered, and who discovered it? **Or** when was the structure entered for the first time in modern history and what did they find?

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What did the burial chamber of your pharaoh or structure look like? If your structure didn't have one, skip this question.

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When and how did the person in the burial chamber die?

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**Now that you have a lot of good interesting facts, write them in a report on the next page using complete sentences.**

