

- What was the Egyptian cult of the dead? Why were Egyptians obsessed with life after death?
- Research the building of the pyramids. What do we know and not know about this? For instance, how did workers move the stones into position and lift the heavy blocks?
- It was once thought that slaves built the pyramids, but historians now believe that Egyptians built them willingly. Why would they have?
- Describe a typical pyramid with all its elements--the pharaoh's burial chamber, other chambers, underground passages, and so on.
- Research mummies. How were they prepared? If possible, visit a museum where you can see actual mummies.

#### Internet Resources

[members.aol.com/donnandlee/History.html](http://members.aol.com/donnandlee/History.html)

Mr. Donn's History Pages.

Created by a teacher, the site includes teaching units, games, activities, and links to sites on Egypt and other ancient civilizations.

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/>

The Ancient Egypt site, created by the British Museum containing discussions, worksheets, activities and more.

<http://www.julen.net/ancient/>

The Ancient World Web, providing links to many sites on ancient civilizations, including Egypt

[www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt](http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt)

The Egyptology Home Page, with numerous links to other sites and a bibliography.

#### Other Resources

##### FOR STUDENTS

**Grant, Neil. The Egyptians.** Oxford University Press, 1993.

**Hart, George. Ancient Egypt.** Knopf, 1990.

**Wilkins, Frances. Egypt.** Chelsea House, 1999.

**Wood, Tim. Ancient Wonders.** Viking, 1997.

##### FOR ADULTS

**Hobson, Christine. The World of the Pharaohs.** Thames & Hudson, 1987.

**Reeves, Nicholas. The Complete Tuthankhamun,** Thames & Hudson, 1990.

**Silverman, David, ed. Ancient Egypt.** Oxford University Press, 1997.

**What Life Was Like on the Banks of the Nile: Egypt 3050-30 BC.** TimeLife Books, 1997.

## GEOGRAPHICAL ODYSSEYS EGYPT: VALLEY OF THE NILE

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## GEOGRAPHICAL ODYSSEYS

# EGYPT

## VALLEY OF THE NILE

Come explore Egypt and the Valley of the Nile River, a world of mysteries and monuments.

Here, temples, pyramids, golden tombs, and the Great Sphinx were built to the glory of the afterlife.

All the while, real life flourished and continues to do so on the banks of the bountiful river.





After studying the map and reading about Egypt and the Nile region's place in the world, read the sections on vocabulary and important people, places, and dates to provide a focus while viewing the program.

After viewing the program, review the sections listed above and consider the Things to Think About. Research topics further using the Internet and other resources provided.

#### Context in the World

There are archaeological records of ancient Egypt dating back to 4000 BC. A unified Egyptian kingdom arose around 3100 BC, its economy based on the fertile soil and annual flooding of the Nile. Pharaohs began building the pyramids around 2600 BC. The Egyptian Empire flourished and reached its height as a power in the late 15th century BC, but the empire ended in 1100 BC. Subsequently, Egypt was ruled by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and Turks. In the 20th century, the country was a British protectorate, eventually achieving independence in 1953. Today, Egypt is a republic. It was at war with Israel in the 1960s and 1970s, but a peace agreement was signed in 1979. The country now faces problems with violence mounted by Muslim extremists.

The Nile continues to play an influential role in Egypt today.

Cairo, on the Nile, is a booming metropolis; tourism, much of it centered on the valley's sights, is a major industry; and agricultural products, grown along the fertile Nile, are still an important part of Egypt's economy.

#### Vocabulary

- Amun-Re** -- The Egyptian creator sun god, who was the principal Egyptian god.  
**Apis** -- The Egyptian god of the Nile.  
**bas-relief** -- A scene that projects slightly from the surface on which it is carved.  
**Books of the Dead** -- Papyrus scrolls that were a guide to the underworld.  
**colossus** -- A giant statue.  
**Copts** -- Egyptian Christians who claim to be direct descendants of the ancient civilization of the pharaohs.  
**feluccas** -- Narrow sailing vessels that travel the Nile.  
**hieroglyphics** -- A system of writing using pictorial characters.  
**mosque** -- A Muslim temple.  
**mummies** -- Bodies that were prepared for burial with preservatives, then wrapped in long linen bandages.  
**Mut** -- The Egyptian god symbolizing earth, and the consort of Amun-Re.  
**Nileometer** -- An ancient instrument used to calculate the height of the Nile's annual floods.  
**oasis** -- A green, fertile area in a desert.  
**obelisk** -- A four-sided stone pillar that gradually tapers to the top.  
**pharaohs** -- Ancient Egyptian kings who were omnipotent and considered gods or demigods.  
**pyramids** -- Large stone tombs built for the pharaohs.  
**Re** -- The Egyptian sun god.  
**sarcophagus** -- A decorated stone coffin.  
**silt** -- The rich soil deposited after the annual overflowing of the Nile.  
**sphinx** -- A colossal figure of a lion with the head of a man, ram, or hawk.

#### Important People

- Cheops** -- Pharaoh for whom the Great Pyramid at Giza was built.  
**Chephren** -- The son of Cheops, with a tomb at Giza.  
**Hatshepsut** -- The first woman to be crowned pharaoh.  
**Imhotep** -- Architect who invented the pyramid.  
**Mycermius** -- The wife of Cheops, with a tomb at Giza.  
**Nefertari** -- The principal wife of Ramses II, said to be one of the most beautiful women in the world.  
**Ramses II** -- Once the greatest pharaoh of the ancient world, who in his 67-year reign in the 13th century BC brought stability and built many monuments.  
**Ramses III** -- Pharaoh who ruled in the 12th century BC.  
**Seti II** -- Pharaoh whose tomb is in the Valley of the Kings.  
**Tutankhamen** -- Pharaoh whose tomb was discovered intact, containing his body and all his treasures.

#### Important Places

- Abu Simbel** -- Site of temples dedicated to Ramses II and his consort, Nefertari.  
**Aswan Dam** -- Dam built in 1970 to control the flooding of the Nile.  
**Cairo** -- The capital city of Egypt, located on the Nile.  
**Faiyum** -- An oasis in northern Egypt.  
**Giza** -- Site of the Great Pyramid, Egypt's largest.  
**Gurna** -- A fishing village near Luxor.  
**Karnak** -- Site of one of the most opulent Egyptian temples, dedicated to Amun-Re.  
**Lake Nasser** -- The second largest manmade lake in the world.  
**Luxor** -- Site of the ancient city of Thebes.  
**Memphis** -- The first great capital of Egypt, now in ruins.  
**Nile River** -- The longest river in the world, which flows through Egypt.  
**Qarun** -- A saltwater lake near Faiyum.  
**Saqqara** -- Site of the first pyramid built in Egypt.  
**Thebes** -- The capital of Egypt from about 2050 BC to 1940 BC.  
**Valley of the Kings** -- A steep-sided valley on the west bank of the Nile near Thebes, where many pharaohs are buried and King Tutankhamen's tomb is located.

#### Important Dates

- c. 3100 BC** -- Egypt is united as a single kingdom  
**c. 2600 BC** -- Egyptians begin building pyramids  
**c. 2550 BC** -- Work begins on the Great Pyramid at Giza  
**c. 2500 BC** -- Statue of Ramses II is built  
**1498 BC** -- Hatshepsut becomes the first woman to be crowned pharaoh  
**1325 BC** -- Tutankhamen dies  
**1100 BC** -- The Egyptian Empire ends after the death of Ramses III  
**early 7th century AD** -- Egypt becomes part of the Arab Muslim world  
**1922** -- The tomb of Tutankhamen is discovered intact  
**1970** -- The Aswan Dam is completed

#### Things to Think About

- The Greek historian Herodotus said that "Egypt is the gift of the Nile." What did he mean? Is it still true today?
- How is life in an Egyptian peasant village the same today as in the time of the pharaohs?
- Research and compare methods of agriculture in ancient Egypt with those used today.
- What has been the effect of the building of the Dam?