

# History of Ancient Egypt

## Section 2



### MAIN IDEAS

1. Life in the Old Kingdom was influenced by pharaohs, roles in society, and trade.
2. Religion shaped Egyptian life.
3. The pyramids were built as tombs for Egypt's pharaohs.

### Key Terms and Places

Old Kingdom: a period in Egyptian history that lasted from about 2700 to 2200 BC

nobles: people from rich and powerful families

afterlife: life after death, a widely held ancient Egyptian belief

mummies: specially treated bodies wrapped in cloth

elite: people of wealth and power

pyramids: huge, stone tombs with four triangle-shaped walls that meet at a top point

engineering: application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes

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## Section Summary

### LIFE IN THE OLD KINGDOM

Around 2700 BC the Third Dynasty began a period in Egyptian history known as the Old Kingdom. 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. 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 and 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, scribes, and rich craftspeople. Most people, including

Would you say that there was any distinction between religion and politics in Egypt's Old Kingdom? Why or why not?

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farmers, belonged to the lower class. Lower-class people were often used by the pharaoh as labor.

Trade also developed during the Old Kingdom. Traders sailed on the Mediterranean and south on the Nile and the Red Sea to acquire gold, copper, ivory, slaves, wood, and stone.

Of the upper, middle, and lower classes, which was the largest in ancient Egypt?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION AND EGYPTIAN LIFE

The Old Kingdom formalized a religious structure that everyone was expected to follow. Over time, certain cities built temples and were associated with particular gods.

Much of Egyptian religion focused on the afterlife. Each person's ka (KAH), or life force, existed after death, but remained linked to the body. To keep the ka from suffering, the Egyptians developed a method called embalming to preserve bodies. Royalty had their bodies preserved as mummies, specially treated bodies wrapped in cloth. Other members of the elite also had their bodies preserved.

What is the ka?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

THE PYRAMIDS

Pyramids, spectacular stone monuments, were built to house dead rulers. Many pyramids are still standing today, amazing reminders of Egyptian engineering.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY ← *Complete this too!*

Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences Think about the way in which Egyptians viewed the pharaoh. Then think about how we view our current *world leaders*. In what ways are these views similar? In what ways are they different? Write a one-page essay considering whether people would accept a god-king pharaoh today.

## Section 2, continued

afterlife	elite	engineering	Khufu
mummies	nobles	Old Kingdom	pyramids

**DIRECTIONS** Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

1. Most Egyptians focused on the \_\_\_\_\_ because they believed it was a happy place. (pyramids/afterlife)
2. Only royalty and other members of Egypt's \_\_\_\_\_ could afford to have mummies made. (elite/Old Kingdom)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes. (Khufu/Engineering)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ was the most famous pharaoh of the Old Kingdom and was best known for the monuments built to him. (Pyramids/Khufu)
5. Specially treated bodies wrapped in cloth are called \_\_\_\_\_. (afterlife/mummies)
6. The upper classes of Egypt consisted of priests and key government officials called \_\_\_\_\_. (nobles/engineering)
7. Huge stone tombs with four triangle-shaped walls that meet in a point on top are called \_\_\_\_\_. (mummies/pyramids)
8. During the \_\_\_\_\_ the Egyptians continued to develop their political system, a system that was based on the belief that the pharaoh was both a king and a god. (Khufu/Old Kingdom)
9. Paintings from Egyptian tombs show the \_\_\_\_\_ as an ideal world where the people are young and healthy. (Old Kingdom/afterlife)
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ were built as royal tombs. (mummies/pyramids)