

## History of Ancient Egypt

### Section 4



#### MAIN IDEAS

1. Egyptian writing used symbols called hieroglyphics.
2. Egypt's great temples were lavishly decorated.
3. Egyptian art filled tombs.

### Key Terms and Places

**hieroglyphics** Egyptian writing system, one of the world's first, which used symbols

**papyrus** long-lasting, paper-like substance made from reeds

**Rosetta Stone** a stone slab discovered in 1799, that was inscribed with hieroglyphics and their Greek meanings

**sphinxes** imaginary creatures with the bodies of lions and the heads of other animals or humans

**obelisk** a tall, four-sided pillar that is pointed on top

Copy and  
define 2x each  
on back

### Section Summary

#### 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). Each symbol represented one or more sounds in the Egyptian language.

At first hieroglyphics were carved in stone. Later, they were written with brushes and ink on **papyrus** (puh-PY-ruhs). 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 Egyptian writing, as its text was inscribed both in hieroglyphics and in Greek.

What language helped scholars to understand the meaning of hieroglyphics on the Rosetta Stone?

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#### EGYPT'S GREAT TEMPLES

Egyptian architects are known not only for the pyramids but also for their magnificent temples.

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The temples were lavishly designed with numerous statues and beautifully painted walls and pillars.

**Sphinxes** and **obelisks** were usually found near the entrances to the temples.

### 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 to 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.

Who was allowed to see ancient Egyptian sculpture and painting?

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Why is King Tutankhamen's tomb so important for the study of Egyptian history?

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### CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

**Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences** ~~Using the library or an online resource, find a key to translate Egyptian hieroglyphics into English. Write a message using hieroglyphics and trade with another student to see if you can read each other's messages. Then write a paragraph about the advantages and disadvantages of hieroglyphics in comparison to **our** alphabet. Be sure to provide your paragraph along with a copy of your message and the translation to your teacher.~~

← complete this

Section 4, *continued*

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hieroglyphics	King Tutankhamen	obelisk
papyrus	Rosetta Stone	sphinxes

**Follow  
DIRECTIONS**

Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

1. What discovery was the key needed to read ancient Egyptian writing?

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2. Which pharaoh's tomb provided information about Egyptian burial practices and beliefs?

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3. What is the name of the ancient Egyptian writing system?

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4. What object stands on either side of the gate at the entrance of many Egyptian temples? Describe this object.

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5. What paper-like material did the Egyptians make and use to write on?

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6. What statues of imaginary creatures are found along the path leading to the entrance of many Egyptian temples?

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