NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL STUDIES

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ CHAPTER TWO



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SECTION ONE

Settling the Nile

Between 6000 B.C. and 5000 B.C., hunters and food gatherers moved into the green Nile River valley from less fertile areas of Africa and southwest Asia. They settled down, farmed the land, and created several dozen villages along the riverbanks. These people became the earliest Egyptians.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A Mighty River

Although **Egypt** (EE • jihpt) was warm and sunny, the land received little rainfall. For water, the Egyptians had to rely on the **Nile River** (NYL). They drank from it, bathed in it, and used it for farming, cooking, and cleaning. The river provided fish and supported plants and animals. To the Egyptians, then, the Nile was a precious gift. They praised it in a song: “Hail O Nile, who comes from the earth, who comes to give life to the people of Egypt.”

Even today, the Nile inspires awe. It is the world’s longest river, flowing north from the heart of Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. This is a distance of some 4,000 miles (6,437 km). Traveling the length of the Nile would be like going from Atlanta, Georgia, to San Francisco, California, and then back again.

The Nile begins as two separate rivers. One river, the Blue Nile, has its source in the mountains of eastern Africa. The other, the White Nile, starts in marshes in central Africa. The two rivers meet and form the Nile just south of Egypt. There, narrow cliffs and boulders in the Nile form wild rapids called **cataracts** (KA • tuh • RAKTS). Because of the cataracts, large ships

can use the Nile only for its last 650 miles (1,046 km), where it flows through Egypt.

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A Sheltered Land

In Egypt, the Nile runs through a narrow, green valley. Shortly before the Nile reaches the Mediterranean Sea, it divides into different branches that look like the flower’s blossom. These branches fan out over an area of fertile soil called a **delta** (DEHL• tuh).

On both sides of the Nile Valley and its delta, deserts unfold as far as the eye can see. To the west is a vast desert that forms part of the **Sahara** (suh •HAR• uh), the largest desert in the world. To the east, stretching to the Red Sea, is the Eastern Desert. In some places, the change from green land to barren sand is so abrupt that a person can stand with one foot in each.

The ancient Egyptians called the deserts “the Red Land” because of their burning heat. Although these vast expanses could not support farming or human life, they did serve a useful purpose: they kept outside armies away from Egypt’s territory.

Other geographic features also protected the Egyptians. To the far south, the Nile’s dangerous cataracts blocked enemy boats from reaching Egypt. In the north, the delta marshes offered no harbors for invaders approaching from the sea. In this regard, the Egyptians were luckier than the people of Mesopotamia. In that region, few natural barriers protected the cities. The Mesopotamians constantly had to fight off attackers, but Egypt rarely faced threats. As

a result, Egyptian civilization was able to grow and prosper.

Despite their isolation, the Egyptians were not completely closed to the outside world. The Mediterranean Sea bordered Egypt to the north, and the Red Sea lay beyond the desert to the east. These bodies of water gave the Egyptians a way to trade with people outside Egypt.

Within Egypt, people used the Nile for trade and transportation. Winds from the north pushed sailboats south. The flow of the Nile carried them north. Egyptian villages thus had frequent, friendly contact with one another, unlike the hostile relations between the Mesopotamian city-states.

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1. The Nile River – the longest river in the world – is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ miles long.

A. 6,437 C. 1,046

B. 4,000 D. 650

2. What was Egypt’s physical setting like?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. What natural barriers protected Egypt from invasion?

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The River People

In Chapter 1, you learned that the people of Mesopotamia had to tame the floods of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in order to farm. They learned to do so, but the unpredictable rivers loomed as a constant threat.

Regular Flooding

Like the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians also had to cope with river floods. However, the Nile floods were much more dependable and gentle than those of the Tigris and the Euphrates. As a result, the Egyptians were able to farm and live securely. They did not worry that sudden, heavy overflows would destroy their homes and crops, or that too little flooding would leave their fields parched.

Every spring, heavy rains from central Africa and melting snows from the highlands of east Africa added to the waters of the Nile as it flowed north. From July to October, the Nile spilled over its banks. When the waters went down, they left behind a layer of dark, fertile mud.

Because of these deposits, the Egyptians called their land *Kemet* (KEH • meht), “the Black Land.”

How Did the Egyptians Use the Nile?

The Egyptians took advantage of the Nile’s floods to become successful farmers. They

planted wheat, barley, and flax seeds in the wet, rich soil. Over time, they grew more than enough food to feed themselves and the animals they raised.

One reason for their success was the wise use of irrigation. Egyptian farmers first dug basins, or bowl-shaped holes, in the earth to trap the floodwaters. The farmers then dug canals to carry water from the basins to fields beyond the river’s reach. The Egyptians also built dikes, or earthen banks, to strengthen the basin walls.

In time, Egyptian farmers developed other technology to help them in their work. For example, they used a shadoof (shuh • DOOF), a bucket attached to a long pole, to lift water from the Nile to the basins. Many Egyptian farmers still use this device today.

Early Egyptians also developed geometry to survey, or measure, land. When floods washed away boundary markers dividing one field from the next, the Egyptians surveyed the fields again to see where one began and the other ended.

**Papyrus** (puh•PY• ruhs), a reed plant that grew along the shores of the Nile, became a useful resource. At first the Egyptians harvested papyrus to make baskets, sandals, and river rafts. Later, they used papyrus for papermaking. The first step was to cut the stalks of the plant into narrow strips. Then the Egyptians soaked the strips and pounded them flat. Left in the air to dry, the strips became stiff. They could then be joined to form a roll of paper.

What Were Hieroglyphics?

The Egyptians used their papyrus rolls as writing paper. Like the people of Mesopotamia, the Egyptians developed their own system of writing. Called **hieroglyphics** (HY • ruh•GLIH• fihks), it was made up of hundreds of picture symbols. Some symbols stood for objects and ideas. To communicate the idea of a boat, for example, a scribe would draw a boat. Other symbols stood for sounds, just as the letters of our alphabet do.

Scribes painstakingly carved hieroglyphics onto stone walls and monuments. For everyday purposes, scribes invented a simpler script and wrote on papyrus.

In ancient Egypt, few people could read and write. Some Egyptian men, however, went to special schools located at Egyptian temples to study reading and writing and learn to become scribes. Scribes kept records and worked for the rulers, priests, and traders.

1. How did the Egyptians take advantage of the Nile’s yearly spring flooding?

A. They developed geometry. C. They became successful farmers.

B. They could now live in the desert. D. They could grow papyrus.

2. Which was the result of the Nile River’s flooding?

A. development of papermaking C. development of surveying

B. fertile soil D. both B and C

3. The Nile River’s flooding could be described as

A. cataclysmic. C. gentle and dependable.

B. destructive. D. rare.

4. What crops did the ancient Egyptians grow?

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5. What is papyrus and how did the Egyptians use it?

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A United Egypt

In Egypt, as in Mesopotamia, skillful farming led to surpluses—extra amounts— of food. This freed some people to work as artisans instead of farmers. They wove cloth, made pottery, carved statues, or shaped copper into weapons and tools.

As more goods became available, Egyptians traded with each other. Before long, Egyptian traders were carrying goods beyond Egypt’s borders to Mesopotamia. There they may have picked up ideas about writing and government.

The Rise of Government

The advances in farming, crafts, and trade created a need for government in Egypt. Irrigation systems had to be built and maintained, and surplus grain had to be stored and passed out in times of need. In addition, disputes over land ownership had to be settled. Gradually, government emerged to plan and to direct such activities.

The earliest rulers were village chiefs. Over time, a few strong chiefs united groups of villages into small kingdoms. The strongest of these kingdoms eventually overpowered the weaker ones. By 4000 B.C., Egypt was made up of two large kingdoms. In the Nile delta was Lower Egypt. To the south, upriver, lay Upper Egypt.

Egypt’s Ruling Families

About 3100 B.C., the two kingdoms became one. Credit for this goes to **Narmer** (NAR •muhr), also knownas Menes (MEE • neez). As king of Upper Egypt, he led his armies north and took control of Lower Egypt.

Narmer ruled from Memphis, a city he built on the border between the two kingdoms. To symbolize the kingdom’s unity, Narmer wore a double crown: the helmetlike white crown represented Upper Egypt, and the open red crown represented Lower

Egypt.

Narmer’s united kingdom held together long after his death. Members of his family passed the ruling power from father to son to grandson. Such a line of rulers from one family is called a **dynasty** (DY • nuh • stee). When one dynasty died out, another took its place.

Over time, ancient Egypt would be ruled by 31 dynasties, which together lasted about 2,800 years. Historians group Egypt’s dynasties into three main time periods called kingdoms. The earliest period, the Old Kingdom, was followed by the Middle Kingdom and then the New Kingdom. Each marked a long period of strong leadership and stability.

1. Which answer best describes the type of government in Egypt after 3100 B.C.?

A. a democracy C. a city-state

B. a dynasty D. a strong village chief

2. Also known as Menes, he united Upper and Lower Egypt.

A. Ramses II C. Narmer

B. Piye D. Tutankhamen

3. What is a dynasty?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Early Egyptian Life

If you made a diagram of the different social groups in ancient Egypt, you would find that they make a pyramid shape. At the top was the king and his family. Beneath that level was a small upper class of priests, army commanders, and nobles. Next came a larger base of skilled middle-class people, such as traders, artisans, and shopkeepers. At the bottom was the largest group— unskilled workers and farmers.

Egypt’s Social Classes

Egypt’s upper class was made up of nobles, priests, and other wealthy Egyptians who worked as the government officials. They lived in cities and on large estates along the Nile River. They had elegant homes made of wood and mud bricks, with beautiful gardens and pools

filled with fish and water lilies. Wealthy families had servants to wait on them and to perform household tasks. The men and women dressed in white linen clothes and wore heavy eye makeup and jewelry.

Egypt’s middle class included people who ran businesses or produced goods. They lived in much smaller homes and dressed more simply. Artisans formed an important group within the middle class. They produced linen cloth, jewelry, pottery, and metal goods.

Farmers made up the largest group of early Egyptians. Some rented their land from their ruler, paying him with a hefty portion of their crops. Most, however, worked the land of wealthy nobles. They lived in villages along the Nile, in one-room huts with roofs made of palm leaves. They had a simple diet of bread, beer, vegetables, and fruit.

Many of Egypt’s city dwellers were unskilled workers who did physical labor. Some unloaded cargo from boats and carried it to markets. Others made and stacked mud bricks for buildings. Workers lived in crowded city neighborhoods. They had small mud-brick homes with hard-packed dirt floors and a courtyard for the family’s animals. On the flat rooftops, families talked, played games, and slept. Women worked on the rooftops, drying fruit, making bread, and weaving cloth.

Family Life

In ancient Egypt, the father headed the family. However, Egyptian women had more rights than females in most other early civilizations. In Egypt, women could own and pass on property. They could buy and sell goods, make wills, and obtain divorces. Upper-class women were in charge of temples and could perform religious ceremonies.

Few Egyptians sent their children to school. Mothers taught their daughters to sew, cook, and run a household. Boys learned farming or skilled trades from their fathers. Egyptian children had time for fun, as well. They played with board games, dolls, spinning tops, and stuffed leather balls.

1. What shape does the diagram of Egypt’s social class look like?

A. a pyramid C. a sphere

B. a cube D. a cone

2. In what two ways are Mesopotamia and Egypt the same?

A. government and advances C. rivers and floods

B. natural defenses and floods D. economy and artisans

3. Who made up the largest group in Egyptian society?

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4. What rights did women have in ancient Egypt?

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5. What factors divided Egyptians into social groups?

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SECTION TWO

Old Kingdom Rulers

Around 2600 B.C., the period known as the Old Kingdom began in Egypt. The Old Kingdom lasted until about 2300 B.C. During those years, Egypt grew and prospered. The Egyptians built cities and expanded trade, and their kings set up a strong government.

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The Egyptian kings, or **pharaohs** (FEHR• ohs) as they were called, lived with their families in grand palaces. In fact, the word *pharaoh* originally meant “great house.” The pharaoh was an all-powerful ruler who guided Egypt’s every activity. His word was law, and it had to be obeyed without question.

Pharaohs appointed many officials to carry out their wishes. These officials saw to it that irrigation canals and grain storehouses were built and repaired. They made sure that crops were planted as the pharaoh directed. They also controlled trade and collected tax payments of grain from farmers.

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Why did Egyptians willingly serve the pharaoh? One reason was that they believed the unity of the kingdom depended on a strong leader. Another was that they considered the pharaoh to be the son of Re (RAY), the Egyptian sun god. As a result, his subjects paid him the greatest respect. Whenever he appeared in public, people played music on flutes and cymbals. Bystanders along the road had to bow down and “smell the earth,” or touch their heads to the ground.

The Egyptians thought their pharaoh was a god on earth who controlled Egypt’s welfare. He carried out certain rituals that were thought to benefit the kingdom. For example, he drove a sacred bull around Memphis, the capital city. The Egyptians believed this ceremony would keep the soil rich and ensure good crops. The pharaoh was also the first to cut ripe grain. Egyptians believed this would bring a good harvest.

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1. The Egyptians willingly served their all-powerful leader because they believed

A. unity came from a strong leader. C. the leader’s wealth meant power.

B. the leader was a deity. D. the leader was smart.

2. The chief god of the Egyptians was

A. Bel. C. Osiris

B. Re. D. Tutankhamen.

3. Why did the pharaohs hold so much power?

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Egypt’s Religion

Religion was deeply woven into Egyptian culture. Like the people of Mesopotamia, the ancient Egyptians worshiped many **deities** (DEE•uh• teez), or gods and goddesses. The Egyptians believed these deities controlled the forces of nature and human activities.

The main Egyptian god was the sun god Re. This was probably because of Egypt’s hot, sunny climate and the importance of the sun for good harvests. Another major god was Hapi (HAH • pee), who ruled the Nile River. The most important goddess was Isis (EYE • suhs). She represented the loyal wife and mother, and she ruled over the dead with her husband Osiris (oh •SY• ruhs).

Life After Death

Unlike the Mesopotamians, who imagined a gloomy life after death, the Egyptians took a hopeful view. They believed that life in the next world would be even better than life on Earth. Following a long journey, the dead would reach a place of peace and plenty.

One of the most important manuscripts written in ancient Egypt was the *Book of the* *Dead.* This was a collection of spells and prayers that Egyptians studied to obtain life after death. They believed that the god Osiris would meet newcomers at the entrance to the next world. If they had led good lives and knew the magic spells, Osiris would grant them life after death.

For centuries, Egyptians believed that only the pharaohs and an elite few could enjoy the afterlife. They also believed that the pharaoh’s spirit needed a body to make the journey to the afterlife. If the pharaoh’s body decayed after death, his spirit would be forced to wander forever. It was vital that a pharaoh’s spirit reach the next world. There, the pharaoh would continue to care for Egypt.

To protect the pharaoh’s body, the Egyptians developed a process called **embalming** (ihm •BAHM• ihng). First, priests removed the body’s organs. Aspecial kind of salt was then applied to the body, and it was stored for a number of days to dry. After this, the body was filled with spices and perfumes, then stitched closed. Next, it was cleaned with oils and tightly wrapped withlong strips of linen. The wrapped body was known as a **mummy** (MUH•mee). It was put in several wooden coffins, one fitting inside the other. The pharaoh was then ready for burial in a tomb.

Egyptian Medicine

In the course of embalming the dead, the Egyptians learned much about the human body. Egyptian doctors used herbs and drugs to treat many different illnesses. They grew skilled at sewing up cuts and setting broken bones.

Some doctors focused on treating particular parts of the body, becoming the first specialists in medicine. Egyptians also wrote the world’s first medical books on scrolls of papyrus.

1. Ancient Egyptians studied the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to learn how to obtain lifer after death.

A. *Book of Spells* C. *Book of Life After Death*

B. *Book of the Dead* D. *Book of Prayers*

2. The ancient Egyptian civilization was the first to become specialists in the field of

A. mathematics. C. medicine.

B. astronomy. D. irrigation.

3. An embalmed body wrapped in cloth strips is a

A. corpse. C. copse.

B. mummy. D. cadaver.

4. Who were some of the Egyptians’ main gods and goddesses?

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5. What were the Egyptians religious beliefs?

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The Pyramids

No ordinary tomb would do for a pharaoh of Egypt. Instead, the Egyptians built mountainlike **pyramids** (PIHR • uh • MIHDS) entirely of stone. These gigantic structures, the size of several city blocks, protected the bodies of dead pharaohs from floods, wild animals, and grave robbers. The pyramids also held supplies that the pharaoh might need in the spirit world, including clothing, furniture, jewelry, and food.

How Was a Pyramid Built?

It took thousands of people and years of backbreaking labor to build a pyramid. Most of the work was done by farmers during the Nile floods, when they could not tend their fields. In addition, surveyors, engineers, carpenters, and stonecutters lent their skills.

Each pyramid sat on a square base, with the entrance facing north. To determine true north, the Egyptians studied the heavens and developed principles of astronomy. With this knowledge, they invented a 365-day calendar with 12 months grouped into 3 seasons. This calendar became the basis for our modern calendar.

To determine the amount of stone needed for a pyramid, as well as the angles necessary for the walls, the Egyptians made advances in mathematics. They invented a system of written numbers based on 10. They also created fractions, using them with whole numbers to add, subtract, and divide.

After the pyramid site was chosen, workers went wherever they could find stone—sometimes hundreds of miles away. Skilled artisans used copper tools to cut the stone into huge blocks. Other workers tied the blocks to wooden sleds and pulled them to the Nile over a path “paved” with logs. Next, they loaded the stones onto barges that were floated to the building site. There, workers unloaded the blocks and dragged or pushed them up ramps to be set in place.

The Great Pyramid

About 2540 B.C., the Egyptians built the largest and grandest of the pyramids known as the Great Pyramid. It is located about 10 miles from the modern city of Cairo. This pyramid, built for **King Khufu** (KOO• foo), is one of three still standing in **Giza** on the west bank of the Nile. It rises nearly 500 feet (153 m) above the desert, covers an area about the size of nine football fields, and contains more than 2 million stone blocks. Each block weighs an average of 2.5 tons.

The Great Pyramid was the tallest structure in the world for more than 4,000 years. It is equal to the size of a 48-story building and is the largest of about 80 pyramids found in Egypt. The Great Pyramid is truly a marvel because the Egyptians built it without using beasts of burden, special tools, or even the wheel.

1. The Great Pyramid in Giza was built for which pharaoh?

A. King Khufu C. King Hapi

B. King Khafre D. King Re

2. What was the purpose of pyramids?

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3. How was stone for a pyramid transported to the building site?

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SECTION THREE

The Middle Kingdom

About 2300 B.C., the pharaohs lost control of Egypt as nobles battled one another for power. Almost 200 years of confusion followed. Finally, a new dynasty of pharaohs came to power. They moved their capital south from Memphis to a city called **Thebes** (THEEBZ). There they restored order and stability, ushering in a new period called the Middle Kingdom.

The Middle Kingdom lasted from about 2050 B.C. to 1670 B.C. During this time, Egyptians enjoyed a golden age of stability, prosperity, and achievement.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Drive for More Land

During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt took control of new lands. Soldiers captured Nubia to the south and attacked what is now Syria. The conquered peoples sent **tribute** (TRIH • byoot), or forced payments, to the Egyptian pharaoh, enriching the kingdom. Within Egypt, the pharaohs added more waterways and dams. They increased the amount of land being farmed and built a canal between the Nile River and the Red Sea.

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The Arts Blossom

During the Middle Kingdom, arts, literature, and architecture thrived. Painters covered the walls of tombs and temples with colorful scenes of the deities and daily life. Sculptors created large wall carvings and statues of the pharaohs, showing them as ordinary people rather

than godlike figures. Poets wrote love songs and tributes to the pharaohs.

A new form of architecture was also created. Instead of building pyramids, pharaohs had their tombs cut into cliffs west of the Nile River. This area became known as the Valley of the Kings.

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Who Were the Hyksos?

The Middle Kingdom came to an end in 1670 B.C. Nobles were again plotting to take power from the pharaohs. This time, however, Egypt also faced a serious threat from outside.

A people known as the Hyksos (HIHK • SAHS), from western Asia, attacked Egypt.

The Hyksos were mighty warriors. They crossed the desert in horse-drawn chariots and used weapons made of bronze and iron. Egyptians had always fought on foot with copper and stone weapons. They were no match for the invaders.

The Hyksos ruled Egypt for about 150 years. Then, around 1550 B.C., an Egyptian prince named **Ahmose** (AHM • OHS) led an uprising that drove the Hyksos out of Egypt.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Egyptians enjoyed a period of stability, prosperity, and achievement during this time.

A. the New Kingdom C. the Old Kingdom

B. the Gold Kingdom D. the Middle Kingdom

2. The kind who drove the Hyksos out of Egypt was

A. Amenhotep. C. Amon Re.

B. Meroe. D. Ahmose.

3. Who were the Hyksos?

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4. Describe the achievements of the Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt.

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The New Kingdom

Ahmose’s reign in Egypt began a period known as the New Kingdom. During this time, from about 1550 B.C. to 1080 B.C., Egypt became even richer and more powerful. Most pharaohs made empire building a priority. They marched their armies east into western Asia and fought wars to bring other lands under their control. During the New Kingdom, Egypt reached the height of its glory.

A Woman Ruler

About 1480 B.C., a queen named **Hatshepsut** (hat •SHEHP• soot) came to power in Egypt. She ruled first with her husband and then, after his death, on behalf of her young nephew. Finally she made herself pharaoh. Hatshepsut became the first woman to rule Egypt in her own right.

Hatshepsut was more interested in trade than conquest. During her reign, Egyptian traders sailed along the coast of East Africa. They exchanged beads, metal tools, and weapons for gold, ivory, ebony, and **incense** (IHN • SEHNS), a material burned for its pleasant smell. These trade journeys brought even greater wealth to Egypt.

Hatshepsut used some of this wealth to build monuments. One of her greatest projects was a great temple and tomb in the limestone cliffs of the Valley of the Kings.

Expanding the Empire

When Hatshepsut died, her nephew, **Thutmose III** (thoot • MOH• suh), became pharaoh. Under Thutmose, Egypt began aggressive wars of conquest. Thutmose’s armies expanded Egypt’s borders north to the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia. His troops also moved south and regained control of Nubia, which had broken free from Egypt earlier. Under Thutmose, Egypt controlled more territory than it ever had.

Thutmose’s empire grew rich from trade and tribute. In addition to claiming gold, copper, ivory, and other valuable goods from conquered peoples, Egypt enslaved many prisoners of war. These unlucky captives were put to work rebuilding Thebes. They filled the city with beautiful palaces, temples, and monuments.

Slavery had not been widespread in Egypt before. During the New Kingdom, however, it became common. Enslaved people did have some rights. They could own land, marry, and eventually be granted their freedom.

1. This ruler avoided military conquests and expanded Egypt’s economy.

A. Hatshepsut C. Thutmose II

B. Thutmose III D. Nefertiti

2. Egyptians traded for

A. iron weapons and tools. C. incense.

B. ivory and gold. D. all of the above.

3. Describe Egyptian trade during the rule of Hatshepsut.

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4. What was unusual about the reign of Hatshepsut?

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The Legacies of Two Pharaohs

About 1370 B.C., Amenhotep IV (AH • muhn •HOH• TEHP) came to the throne. With the help of his wife, Nefertiti (NEHF • uhr • TEET • ee), Amenhotep tried to lead Egypt in a new direction.

A Religious Reformer

Amenhotep realized that Egypt’s priests were gaining power at the expense of the pharaohs. In an attempt to maintain his own power, Amenhotep introduced a new religion that swept away the old gods and goddesses. Instead, only one god, called Aton (AH • tuhn), was to be worshiped. When Egypt’s priests resisted these changes, Amenhotep removed many from their positions, seized their lands, and closed temples. He then changed his name to **Akhenaton** (AHK •NAH• tuhn), which means “Spirit of Aton.” He began ruling Egypt from a new city.

To most Egyptians, Akhenaton’s attacks on the gods seemed to be an attack on Egypt itself. They refused to accept Aton as the only god. Meanwhile, Akhenaton became so devoted to his new religion that he neglected his duties as pharaoh. The administrators he appointed were not as experienced as the priests they replaced, and Akhenaton took no action when enemies from what is now Turkey, the Hittites, attacked Egypt. As a result, Egypt lost most of its lands in western Asia, greatly shrinking the empire.

The Boy King

When Akhenaton died, his son-in-law inherited the throne. The new pharaoh, **Tutankhamen** (TOO • TANG • KAH • muhn), was a boy about 10 years old. He relied on help from palace officials and priests, who convinced him to restore the old religion. After ruling for only nine years, Tutankhamen died unexpectedly. He may have suffered a fall or been murdered;

no one is sure.

What *is* certain is that “King Tut,” as he is nicknamed, played only a small role in Egypt’s history. Why, then, is he the most famous of all pharaohs? The boy king captured people’s imaginations after a British archaeologist, Howard Carter, found his tomb in A.D. 1922.

The tomb contained the king’s mummy and incredible treasures, including a brilliant gold mask of the young pharaoh’s face. Carter’s find was a thrilling discovery, because most royal tombs in Egypt were looted by robbers long ago.

1. Who tried to give the Egyptians a new religion?

A. Amenhotep C. Thebes

B. Ramses II D. Osiris

2. Why is Tutankhamen so famous today?

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3. How did Akhenaton upset the traditional order?

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The End of the New Kingdom

During the 1200s B.C., pharaohs worked to make Egypt great again. The most effective of these pharaohs was **Ramses II** (RAM • SEEZ). He reigned for a remarkable 66 years, from 1279 B.C. to 1213 B.C. During this time, Egyptian armies regained lands in western Asia and rebuilt the empire. Ramses also launched an ambitious building program, constructing several major new temples.

Why Were Temples Built?

Under Ramses II and other New Kingdom rulers, scores of new temples rose throughout Egypt. Many were built by enslaved people captured in war. The most magnificent was Karnak at Thebes. Its huge columned hall decorated with colorful paintings still impresses visitors today.

Unlike modern churches, temples, and mosques, Egyptian temples did not hold regular services. Instead, most Egyptians prayed at home. They considered the temples as houses for the gods and goddesses. Priests and priestesses, however, performed daily temple rituals, washing statues of the deities and bringing them food.

The temples also served as banks. Egyptians used them to store valuable items, such as gold jewelry, sweet-smelling oils, and finely woven cloth.

Egypt’s Decline and Fall

After Ramses II, Egypt’s power began to fade. Later pharaohs had trouble keeping neighboring countries under Egyptian control. Groups from the eastern Mediterranean attacked Egypt by sea, using strong iron weapons. The Egyptians had similar arms, but they paid dearly for them because Egypt lacked iron ore.

By 1150 B.C., the Egyptians had lost their empire and controlled only the Nile delta. Beginning in the 900s B.C., Egypt came under the rule of one outside group after another. The first conquerors were the Libyans from the west. Then in 760 B.C., the people of Kush, a land to the south, seized power and ruled Egypt for the next 70 years. Finally, in 670 B.C., Egypt was taken over by the Assyrians.

1. What is the main reason for the decline and fall of the New Kingdom period?

A. The people were too interested in their religion.

B. The Egyptians were attacked by people with stronger weapons.

C. Egyptian crops failed because of drought.

D. The people built too many temples and ran out of money.

2. Which Egyptian ruler built many new temples during the New Kingdom period?

A. Seti I C. Tutankhamen

B. Amenhotep IV D. Ramses II

3. What groups conquered Egypt starting in the 900s B.C.?

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4. Describe the similarities and differences between the rule of Hatshepsut and Ramses II.

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SECTION FOUR

Nubia

The Egyptians were not alone in settling along the Nile River. Farther south, in present-day Sudan, another strong civilization arose. This was in a region called **Nubia** (NOO• bee • uh), later known as **Kush** (KUHSH).

Historians do not know exactly when people arrived in Nubia. Evidence suggests that cattle herders arrived in about 2000 B.C. They grazed their herds on the **savannas** (suh •VA•nuhs), or grassy plains, that stretch across Africa south of the Sahara. Later, people settled in farming villages in Nubia. They grew crops, but they were also excellent hunters, skilled at using the bow and arrow. Soon the Nubians began forming armies known for their fighting skills.

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The Kingdom of Kerma

The more powerful Nubian villages gradually took over

the weaker ones and created the kingdom of **Kerma** (KAR •muh). Kerma developed close ties with Egypt to the north. The Egyptians were happy to trade for Kerma’s cattle, gold, ivory, and enslaved people. They also admired Nubian skills in warfare and hired Nubian warriors to fight in their armies.

Kerma became a wealthy kingdom. Its artisans made fine pottery, jewelry, and metal goods. Like Egyptian pharaohs, the kings of Kerma were buried in tombs that held precious stones, gold, jewelry, and pottery. These items were as splendid as those found in Egypt during the same period.

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Why Did Egypt Invade Nubia?

As you learned earlier, the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III sent his armies into Nubia in the 1400s B.C. After a 50-year war, the kingdom of Kerma collapsed, and the Egyptians took control of much of Nubia. They ruled the Nubians for the next 700 years.

During this time, the people of Nubia adopted many Egyptian ways. They began to worship Egyptian gods and goddesses along with their own. They learned how to work copper and bronze and changed Egyptian hieroglyphs to fit their own language. As people and goods continued to pass between Nubia and Egypt, the two cultures mixed.

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1. Historians think the Nubian people came from the African savannas south of the

A. Eastern Desert. C. Sahara.

B. Red Desert. D. Arabian Desert.

2. This Nubian kingdom was formed when the stronger villages overtook weaker ones.

A. Sudan C. Kush

B. Napata D. Kerma

3. Where was Kush located?

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4. Who were the Nubians?

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The Rise of Kush

As Egypt declined at the end of the New Kingdom, Nubians saw their chance to

break away. By 850 B.C., a Nubian group had formed the independent kingdom of Kush. For the next few centuries, powerful Kushite kings ruled from the city of **Napata** (NA•puh• tuh).

Napata was in a favorable location. It stood along the upper Nile where trade caravans crossed the river. Caravans soon carried gold, ivory, valuable woods, and other goods from Kush to Egypt.

In time, Kush became rich enough and strong enough to take control of Egypt. About 750 B.C., a Kushite king named **Kashta** (KAHSH • tuh) headed north with a powerful army. His soldiers began the conquest of Egypt that his son **Piye** (PY) completed in 728 B.C. Piye founded a

dynasty that ruled both Egypt and Kush from Napata.

The kings of Kush greatly admired Egyptian culture. In Napata they built white sandstone temples and monuments similar to those of the Egyptians. The Kushites also built small pyramids in which to bury their kings. The ruins of these pyramids can still be seen today.

The Importance of Iron

Kush’s rule in Egypt did not last long. During the 600s B.C., the Assyrians invaded Egypt. Armed with iron weapons, they drove the Kushites back to their homeland in the south.

Despite their losses, the Kushites gained something from the Assyrians—the secret of making iron. The Kushites became the first Africans to devote themselves to ironworking. Soon, farmers in Kush were using iron for their hoes and plows instead of copper or stone. With these superior tools, they were able to grow large amounts of grain and other crops.

Kush’s warriors also began using iron spears and swords, increasing their military power. Meanwhile, traders from Kush carried iron products and enslaved people as far away as Arabia, India, and China. In return, they brought back cotton, textiles, and other goods.

A New Capital

About 540 B.C., Kush’s rulers left Napata and moved farther south to be out of the Assyrians’ reach. In the city of **Meroë** (MEHR • oh • ee), they set up a royal court. Like Napata, the new capital had access to the Nile River for trade and transportation. The rocky desert east of Meroë, however, contained rich deposits of iron ore. As a result, Meroë became not only a

trading city but also a center for making iron.

With their growing wealth, Kush’s kings rebuilt Meroë to look like an Egyptian city. Small pyramids stood in the royal graveyard. A huge temple sat at the end of a grand avenue lined with sculptures of rams. Sandstone palaces and redbrick houses had walls decorated with

paintings or blue and yellow tiles.

Building a Profitable Trade

Meroë became the center of a huge trading network that stretched north to Egypt’s border and south into central Africa. Kush’s traders received leopard skins and valuable woods from the

interior of Africa. They traded these goods, along with enslaved workers and their own iron products, to people throughout the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean area.

Kush remained a great trading power for some 600 years. By the A.D. 200s, though, the kingdom began to weaken. As Kush declined, another kingdom rose to take its place. The kingdom is called Axum and was located in what is today the country of Ethiopia. Around A.D. 350, the armies of Axum burned Meroë to the ground. You will read more about the kingdom of Axum when you study Africa.

1. Why was Napata a favorable location for trade?

A. There were many merchants and artisans in the city.

B. A strong army afforded protection from bandits.

C. A powerful king ruled the city.

D. Trade caravans crossed the upper Nile there.

2. Kushite traders brought back cotton, textiles, and other goods in exchange for

A. iron products and slaves. C. ivory and gold.

B. valuable wood and incense. D. wheat and rice.

3. The kingdom of Kush was a great trading power for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years.

A. 200 C. 350

B. 540 D. 600

4. How did Kush become a wealthy kingdom?

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5. How did the Kushite kings demonstrate their admiration for Egyptian culture?

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