

Meet the ...

ANCIENT EGYPTIANS



James Davies

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Ancient Egypt was one of the greatest civilisations in the history of the world. It lasted from about 3200 BC to 30 BC, which is more than 3,000 years!



It started when travellers settled near the river Nile. Over time, two kingdoms formed. In about 3200 BC the pharaoh of the north conquered the south and united all of Egypt. That pharaoh's name was Menes. We don't know much about him, but we do know he built Memphis (the ancient capital) and was later killed by a hippo!



We have a lot to thank the Ancient Egyptians for.

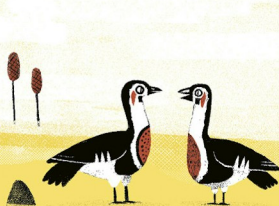


They invented the calendar, toothpaste – and, yes – mummies! Everywhere we look around we can see buildings, films and artwork inspired by the Ancient Egyptians, so let's find out what the fuss is about . . .

Egypt is a hot, dry country. Almost all of it is desert and it never really rains. The river Nile runs through it, creating fertile land along its banks. Ancient Egypt was only able to thrive thanks to the river and today most of the population still live along it.



Every summer the Nile flooded, leaving behind thick mud that was perfect for growing seeds, making bricks and raising cattle alongside. But that's not all. The river also provided fish to catch and reeds to make papyrus (used for writing on).



While kings lived in luxury, most Egyptians were very poor – even though they were doing all the work! These people, known as peasants, had to work many days a year without pay. Doesn't sound great, does it?



It was pretty hard being a peasant and most made their living from farming. Although the Egyptians were one of the first people to use ploughs pulled by oxen, farming was still back-breaking work.



However, some peasants worked as servants for rich nobles or became craftsmen or artists. These peasants could live slightly more comfortable lives – if they were talented enough, that is!

Family was very important in Ancient Egypt. Men would marry young and sometimes had several wives. Women looked after children and the home. Children were considered a blessing from the gods (so they could probably get away with anything!)



Not again! I mean...
how adorable!

If the family had enough money, boys would be sent to school to learn reading, writing and maths. Hardly anyone went to school, though – usually boys would learn trades from their father.



Girls didn't learn to read or write. Instead, they were taught how to look after the home by their mother.

