

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## Egyptian Agriculture

Agriculture in Ancient Egypt Agriculture was an important aspect of ancient Egyptian economy, and most people of the time were farmers. They grew wheat, barley, and vegetables; fruits like figs, melons, and pomegranates; and flax to be made into linen for cloth. Their staple crop was grain, which was used to make bread, porridge, and beer. Ancient Egyptian agriculture revolved around the cycles of the Nile River, and their year had three seasons. Akhet, known as the inundation or the flooding season, lasted from June to September. During this time, the Nile overran its banks and flooded the farmers' fields. Nothing could be planted during this time. Farmers would do construction work for the pharaoh, look after their animals, and ready their tools for the coming planting season. Peret, from October to February, was the growing season. Crops were grown along the banks of the Nile River, where the receded flood waters left behind a rich black soil called kemet. Grain was planted in this rich soil. Then, after the grain was harvested, vegetables like onions, leeks, cabbages, beans, cucumbers, and lettuce were planted in its place. Shemu, from March to May, was the Harvest Season. During Shemu, reservoirs and canals to trap flood water which could later be used for watering the fields were also prepared for the next upcoming Akhet. Ancient Egyptians had simple farming tools like hoes, rakes, and sickles made out of wood and stone. They had both hand plows and plows pulled by oxen. They used a tool called a shaduf to move water from a lower place to a higher place. They also kept animals like cattle, goats, pigs, ducks, and geese. Animals also performed important functions like trampling in seeds, pulling plows, and providing food.

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### **Agriculture in Ancient Egypt**

1. What did the ancient Egyptians grow?
2. What did ancient Egyptian agriculture revolve around?
3. What were the three seasons in ancient Egypt?
4. Why were crops planted along the banks of the Nile?
5. Why did the ancient Egyptians create reservoirs and canals during the harvest season?
6. What kinds of farming tools did ancient Egyptians have?

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### **The Pyramids**

Pyramids were built by ancient Egyptians as tombs for their pharaohs. There are about eight pyramids that we know of in Egypt today. The biggest and most well preserved of them were built at Giza about 4,500 years ago. The one we refer to as the “Great Pyramid” was the tomb of the pharaoh Khufu. It is the largest pyramid ever built. Pharaohs usually began planning their tombs at the onset of their reigns. Khufu chose a spot on the west bank of the Nile. The west was symbolic, as the sun “died” in the west every night. The four sides of the Great pyramid face exactly north, south, east, and west. After the site was laid out, large blocks of stone were cut from a nearby quarry. Groups of men drug them across the desert and set them in place. After the bottom layer of the pyramid was down, ramps of mudbrick, limestone chips, and clay were built all around the bottom square. These ramps were used to drag the next layer of large stones up on top of the bottom layer. The same technique was used for each successive layer. It took about twenty years to complete all the layers of the Great Pyramid. Once all the layers were in place, a last block, made of gold or electrum so that it shined in the sunlight, was set on the top of the pyramid. The surface of the pyramid was then covered in white limestone, which was shaped so that the four walls of the pyramid were smooth. Because they believed in an afterlife, ancient Egyptian pharaohs were buried with the things it was thought that they would need after death. Thus, Khufu did not just prepare a pyramid for himself; he had an entire complex constructed at Giza. There were three additional pyramids for his queens, deep pits containing boats, a temple where he could be worshipped, a causeway from the pyramid complex down to the valley temple, which was where his funeral would begin, a small 'satellite' pyramid, and the bench-like (mastaba) tombs for nobles.

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### **The Pyramids**

Circle the correct answer.

1. Pyramids were built by ancient Egyptians as tombs for: A. cats B. pharaohs C. workers D. slaves
  
2. The Great Pyramid is:  
A. the tomb of the pharaoh Khufu  
B. the largest pyramid ever built  
C. located at Giza  
D. all of the above
  
3. When did pharaohs begin planning their tombs?  
A. when they knew they would die  
B. when they got married  
C. when their reigns began  
D. none of the above
  
4. The Egyptians used \_\_\_\_\_ to build the layers of the pyramids.  
A. ramps  
B. electrum  
C. limestone  
D. mastaba
  
5. The pharaohs were buried with:  
A. their wives  
B. the things it was thought that they would need after death  
C. food  
D. treasures

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## **Growing Up in Ancient Egypt**

What we know about how children lived in ancient Egypt comes from two sources. The writings of some ancient Egyptian adults include memories from their childhoods. Historians have also studied what provisions for the afterlife were placed in the tombs of children who had died. Like today, Egyptians recognized infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, and adolescence as the stages of growth. But children in ancient Egypt became involved in social and economic responsibilities much earlier than children do today. Children were raised by extended families. Boys were educated at home by their fathers. There is little information about what education girls may have received, and most were likely illiterate. Only sons of scribes and noblemen received a formal education of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Children inherited property, social class, professions, and political offices from their parents. There was little intermingling of social classes. Nearly 30% of infants died before the age of one, most often of accidents or disease, and some children were not named until they had survived the most dangerous first years of childhood. Ancient Egyptians did keep a registry of births and deaths. Children were identified by their given name, the name of their father, and their father's profession, rank, or position, though they were required to prove by passing examinations that they were worthy of the inheritance. Most boys were informally apprenticed to parents or other family members to learn to be laborers, peasants, or craftsmen, though there are known to have been more formal apprenticeships. Girls trained with their mothers to become housewives. Most adolescents married when economically and physically ready, with boys typically being a few years older than girls.

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## Growing Up in Ancient Egypt

Circle the correct answer.

1. What we know about childhood in ancient Egypt comes from”

- A. the writings of adults
- B. items placed into children’s tombs
- C. reading hieroglyphics
- D. A and B

2. Children were raised by:

- A. parents
- B. fathers
- C. the state
- D. extended families

3. Which children received a formal education?

- A. sons of scribes and noblemen
- B. children of scribes and noblemen
- C. boys
- D. girls

4. Which of the following did children NOT inherit from their parents?

- A. property
- B. social class
- C. professions
- D. political offices
- E. education
- F. none of the above

5. \_\_\_\_ out of ten children in ancient Egypt died before the age of one.

- A. one
- B. two
- C. three
- D. four

6. Egyptian adolescents married when:

- A. they were economically and physically ready
- B. marriages were arranged for them
- C. boys received their inheritance
- D. none of the above

