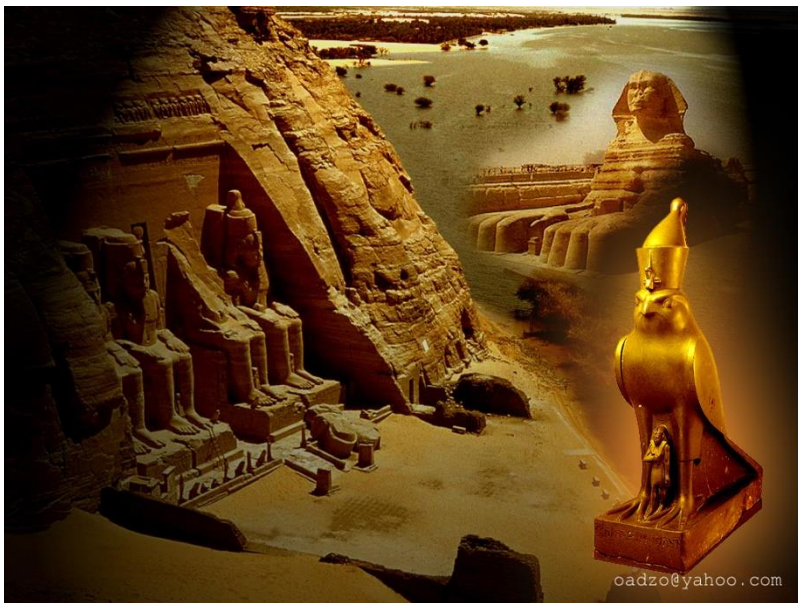


About Ancient Egypt

Fast Facts

- The kingdom of ancient Egypt lasted almost 3,000 years.
- Historians divide the history of ancient Egypt into three long periods – Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom – with shorter periods of civil war and invasion in between.
- One ancient name for Egypt was *Kemet*, meaning ‘black land’; because of the rich black soil along the Nile River.
- The original capital of ancient Egypt was Memphis, located near the site of present-day Cairo, Egypt’s current capital.
- Some historians think King Memes, the first pharaoh of Egypt, built Memphis.
- During the New Kingdom, Egypt grew enormously rich by trading in gold and controlling Asian mines.
- The New Kingdom ended when, under weak rulers, one enemy after another attacked Egypt. The Nubians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans all controlled Egypt for a time.
- The total population of Ancient Egypt was probably about 4 million.



The period known as ancient Egypt ended over 2,000 years ago, and it has fascinated people ever since. In fact, you may already know more about ancient Egypt than you realize – mummies, Sphinx, hieroglyphics, pharaohs, pyramids, papyrus, Cleopatra ... do any of these words sound familiar?

Ancient Egypt was one of the earliest civilizations in the world, located along the Nile River in northern Africa. It was originally two kingdoms – Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. At the time, the people did not use the word *Nile* or even the word *Egypt*. According to historians, ancient

Egyptians called their home ‘Two lands’.

The rulers came to be known as pharaohs, or lords of the Two Lands. To ancient Egyptians, pharaohs were more than kings. They were living gods. People believed the pharaohs were so powerful that they kept the Nile flowing. The ancient Egyptian society lasted roughly 3,000 years, and during that time the civilization was ruled by over 200 pharaohs spread throughout 31 dynasties, or political families,

Today the Sahara Desert covers much of northern Africa. However, when Egypt was young, the region around the Nile had a wetter climate. Every year the river flooded depositing rich soil along its banks and creating green grasslands where people grew crops and raised livestock. Egyptians relied on the river for many daily activities, including transportation, fishing, and recreation. The Nile was the Main Street, supermarket and playground of ancient Egypt, all in one!