

SECTION
1
HISTORY

Ancient Egypt: Pyramids and Pharaohs



3.01 Identify ways in which people of selected areas in Africa, Asia, and Australia have used, altered, and adapted to their environments in order to meet their needs and evaluate the impact of their actions on the development of cultures and regions.

12.01 Examine the major belief systems in selected regions of Africa, Asia, and Australia, and analyze their impact on cultural values, practices, and institutions.

Connecting to Your World

In 1993, the Mississippi River overflowed after heavy rains. Levees broke, submerging farms, towns, and roads under the muddy water. About 50 people died, and thousands more had to leave their homes. The Mississippi River flood of 1993 was a disaster. But in ancient Egypt, annual river floods were seen as a good thing.

Egypt's Lifeline

KEY QUESTION Why is the Nile called Egypt's lifeline?

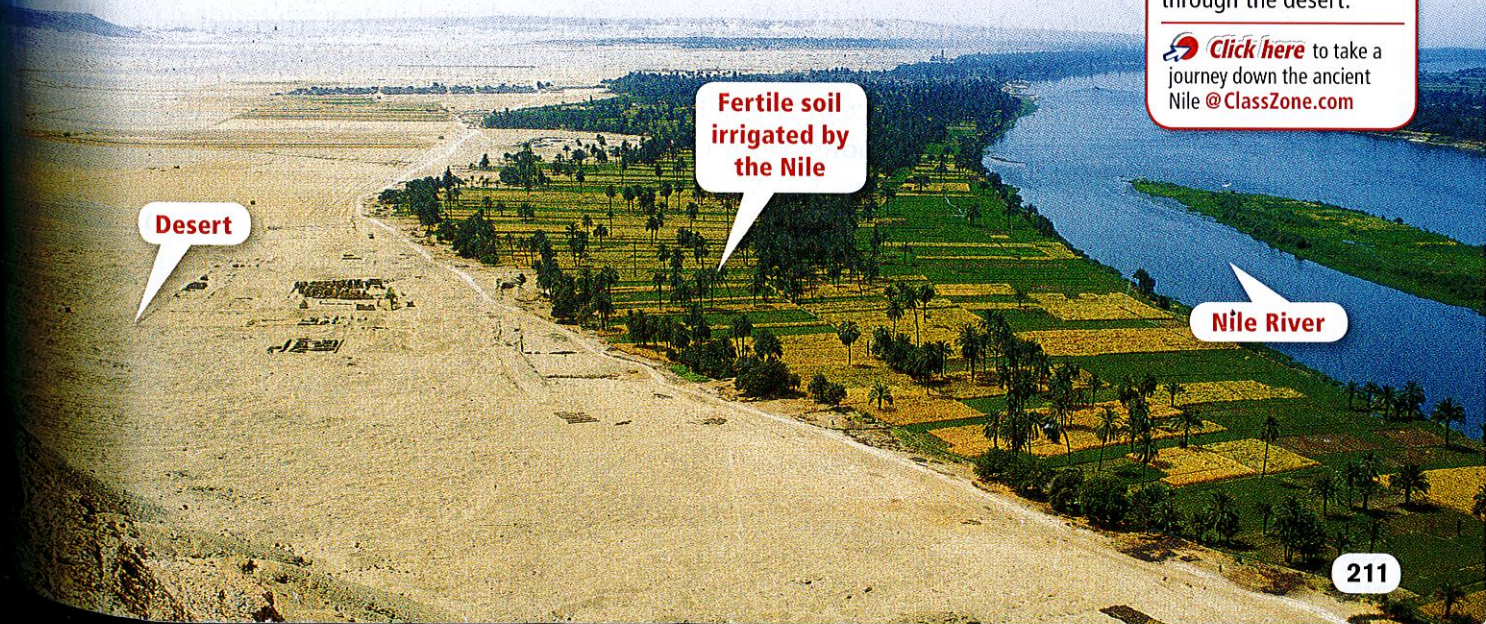
Egypt, in Africa's northeast corner, receives little rainfall. As a result, the country has relied on the **Nile River** for its economy. Each year, the Nile flooded due to upstream rain, depositing rich black soil called **silt** along its banks. The silt at the river's mouth formed a triangular shape, called a **delta**. Most of Egypt's population clustered in the Nile's river valley and delta. The Nile's yearly floods made these regions so fertile that ancient Egyptians called their country Kemet, or the Black Land.

Animated GEOGRAPHY

The Nile Valley

The world's longest river creates a ribbon of fertile soil, cutting through the desert.

Click here to take a journey down the ancient Nile @ClassZone.com



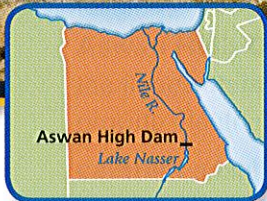
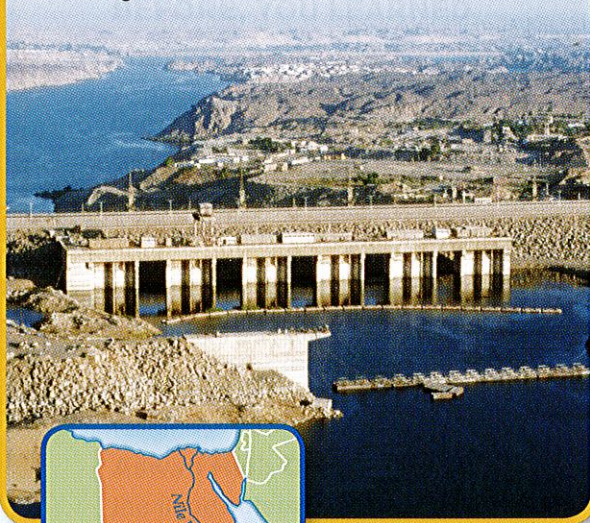
Desert

Fertile soil irrigated by the Nile

Nile River

Aswan High Dam

The Aswan High Dam contains the Nile floodwaters in a reservoir called Lake Nasser. In addition to increasing irrigated land, the dam provides electricity for factories and farm villages. But with little silt reaching the Nile's mouth and flood plain, farmers must now use costly chemical fertilizers, and the Nile delta is actually decreasing in size.



The Nile Then and Now In ancient Egypt, the Nile Valley provided various grasses and reeds used for huts, sandals, baskets, simple boats, and other products. Ancient Egyptians also dug canals to irrigate their fields and channel the Nile's water. Each June, floods would leave behind silt in a narrow strip along the flood plain and at the delta. Today the **Aswan High Dam** controls the Nile's flooding and provides year-round irrigation. Since the Aswan High Dam opened in 1970, Egypt has doubled its agricultural production.

 **FIND MAIN IDEAS** Describe how the Nile has acted as Egypt's lifeline.

History of Ancient Egypt

 **KEY QUESTION** What other civilizations competed with ancient Egypt for power?

Ancient Egypt, one of the world's first great civilizations, arose along the banks of the Nile. For centuries, geography kept Egypt isolated. Six **cataracts**, or high waterfalls and rapids, make the Nile hard to navigate in the south. Deserts surround the Nile in the west and east, and the Mediterranean Sea borders Egypt to the north. People created farming villages along the Nile by about 4000 B.C. Eventually these villages became two kingdoms, Upper Egypt in the south and Lower Egypt at the Nile delta.

Uniting Upper and Lower Egypt Tradition says that around 3100 B.C., King Menes of Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt, uniting the two kingdoms. Modern historians believe King Menes may have been a legend, and that it probably took several rulers to join the kingdoms. King Menes is said to have founded the first Egyptian **dynasty**, or series of rulers from one family. These rulers came to be known as **pharaohs**, from the Egyptian words for "great house."

Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms Historians divide ancient Egyptian history into three periods. During the Old Kingdom, a strong central government supervised the construction of gigantic tombs called **pyramids**. Farmers and laborers built these structures when the Nile's floodwaters covered their fields. During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt conquered its southern neighbor, **Nubia**. Nubia provided Egypt with slaves, soldiers, and gold. Instead of pyramids, Middle Kingdom

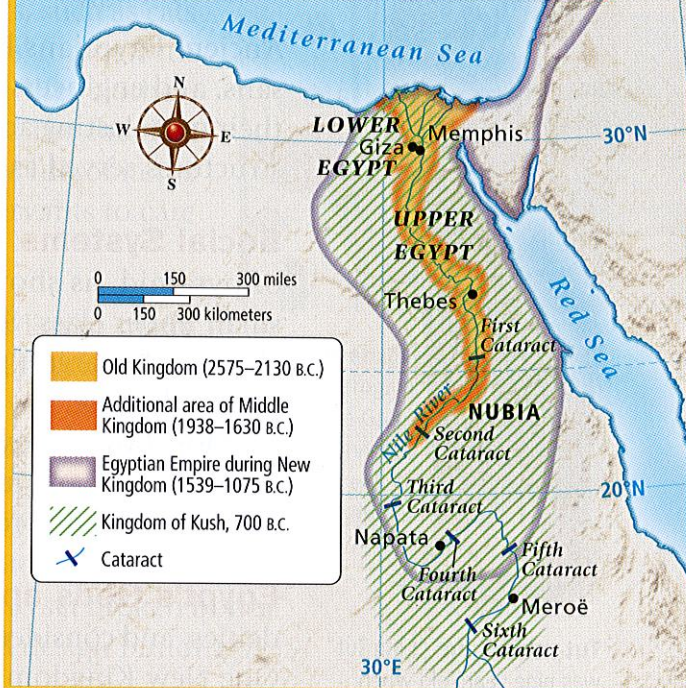
pharaohs built tombs in the desert sands. During the New Kingdom, Egypt became the strongest power in the world. A powerful pharaoh named Queen Hatshepsut led armies, sent off trade expeditions, and built splendid temples. Egypt's power peaked under the 66-year reign of Ramses II. He regained Asian territories that earlier pharaohs had lost. Statues of Ramses II still stand all over Egypt.

Conquest by Foreigners After Ramses' death in 1213 B.C., Egypt began to decline. Eventually, it fell to foreign invaders, including the **Kush** kingdom of Nubia. After an Assyrian invasion ended Kushite rule of Egypt, the Kush civilization withdrew south. In 332 B.C., Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered Egypt. After Alexander's death, one of his generals, Ptolemy (TAHL•uh•mee), became king of Egypt, starting a dynasty that lasted nearly 300 years. One of the last Ptolemies, Queen Cleopatra, married the co-ruler of Rome, Mark Antony. Antony and Cleopatra's attempt to seize power from Antony's co-ruler failed in 31 B.C. The next year, Egypt became a Roman territory.

SUMMARIZE List the civilizations that interacted with ancient Egypt.

Egyptian and Kush Kingdoms

[Click here](#) to learn more about Queen Hatshepsut and the New Kingdom @ [ClassZone.com](#)



CONNECT Geography & History

Movement Which kingdom extended farthest north?

CONNECT to History

Egyptians decorated pyramid walls with elaborate paintings. They honored pharaohs by giving them "perfect" features; no matter how they really looked. Scenes might show pharaohs' accomplishments in life, or show them enjoying the afterlife.



Activity

Make a Pyramid



Materials

- construction paper
- ruler
- scissors
- tape
- markers

1. Research Egyptian pyramids and art.
2. Draw and cut out a six-inch square and four six-inch equilateral triangles (triangles whose sides are of equal length).
3. Decorate one side of each triangle with hieroglyphics and Egyptian paintings.
4. Tape the four sides together so that their top points meet. Then tape three of the bottom sides to the square base.
5. Leave one of the triangles unattached to the square so you can see inside.



Tutankhamen "King Tut" was nine years old when he became pharaoh, and he ruled with the help of advisors.

Culture of Ancient Egypt

KEY QUESTION What were some of the accomplishments of ancient Egyptian culture?

Ancient Egyptians built great cities, where architects, doctors, artisans, and engineers worked. They also invented a form of paper. But their most lasting achievement is probably the pyramids. These giant structures served as both monuments and tombs for the pharaohs.

Social Systems Ancient Egyptian social classes formed a kind of pyramid, as shown below. At the top was the pharaoh, then a small upper class. Skilled or educated workers made up the middle classes. The largest groups, farmers, laborers and slaves, were at the pyramid's base.

Most boys followed their fathers' occupations, and girls usually became wives and mothers. Women could own, buy, sell, and inherit property, and divorce their husbands.

Egypt's Gods and the Afterlife Egyptians worshiped several deities, and considered their pharaohs to be earthly versions of them. One New Kingdom pharaoh, Akhenaton, promoted the worship of only one deity, the sun god Aton. When Akhenaton died, the new king, Tutankhamen, brought back worship of the old gods.

Animated GEOGRAPHY

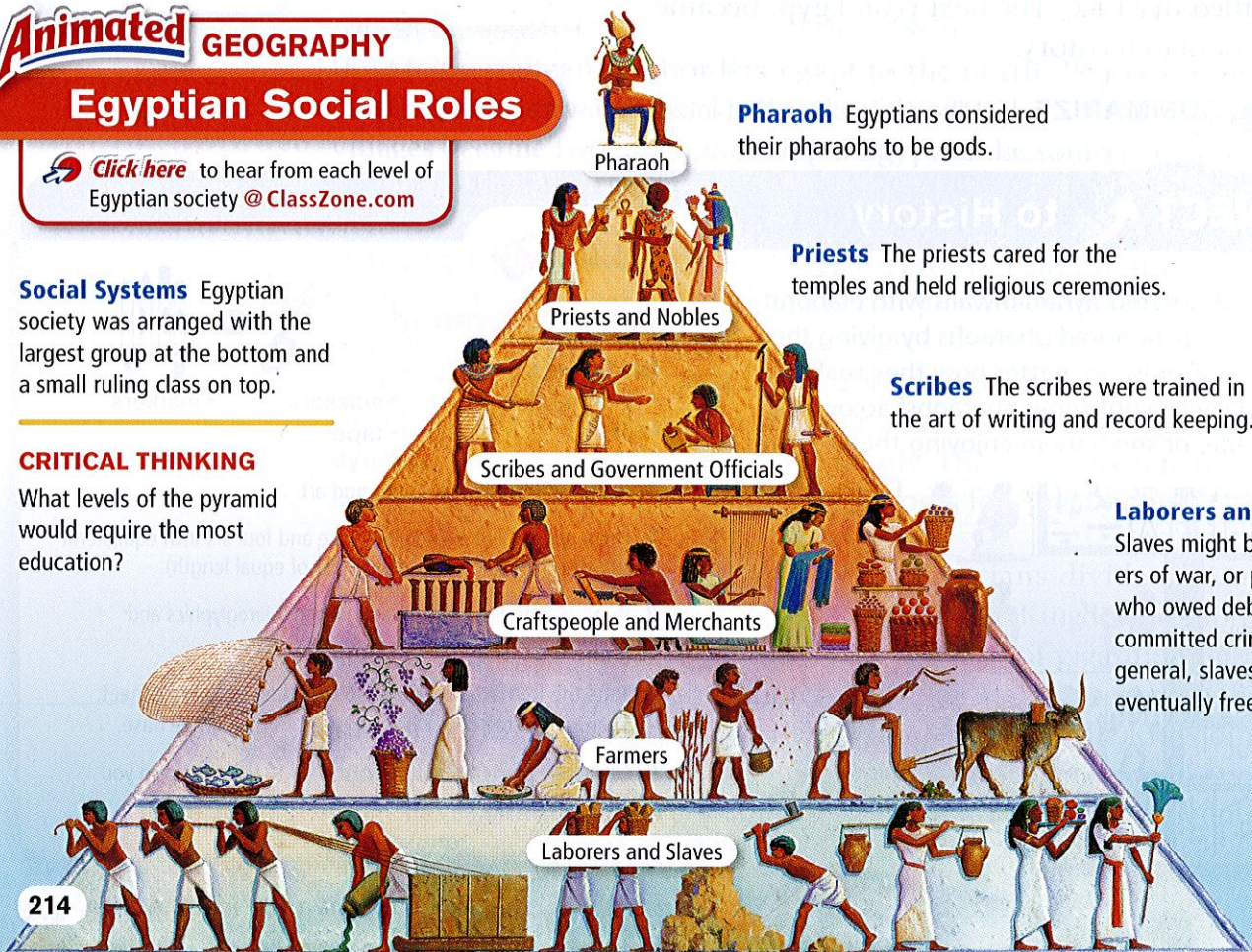
Egyptian Social Roles

[Click here](#) to hear from each level of Egyptian society @ [ClassZone.com](#)

Social Systems Egyptian society was arranged with the largest group at the bottom and a small ruling class on top.

CRITICAL THINKING

What levels of the pyramid would require the most education?



Pharaoh

Pharaoh Egyptians considered their pharaohs to be gods.

Priests and Nobles

Priests The priests cared for the temples and held religious ceremonies.

Scribes and Government Officials

Scribes The scribes were trained in the art of writing and record keeping.

Craftspeople and Merchants

Laborers and Slaves

Slaves might be prisoners of war, or people who owed debts or had committed crimes. In general, slaves were eventually freed.

Farmers

Laborers and Slaves

Egyptians believed in an afterlife that resembled life on Earth. To preserve a person's body for the next life, they embalmed and dried it, and wrapped it in linen bandages, making a **mummy**. Egyptians also mummified pets, such as cats and monkeys. They packed their family members' tombs with items they thought they would need in the afterlife: clothes, food, makeup, and jewelry. Egyptian rulers had the fanciest tombs of all. The pharaohs' burial chambers were full of items such as sparkling gold treasures and statues of servants to care for them in the afterlife.



Hieroglyphics The word hieroglyphics comes from the Greek word for "sacred carving." Why might the Greeks have called hieroglyphics "sacred"?

Ancient Egyptian Contributions Ancient Egypt made advances in language, science, and mathematics. Egyptians invented a form of picture writing called **hieroglyphics** which was used in temples, tombs, and on monuments. A different script was used on scrolls of **papyrus**, a paperlike material made from papyrus grass. The Egyptian calendar was based on the Nile farming cycle of flooding, planting, and harvesting. Doctors in ancient Egypt understood that a person's pulse was connected to the heart, and knew how to set broken bones. Egyptians used geometry to set land borders and design buildings.

SUMMARIZE Name some of the advancements of ancient Egypt.

Section 1 Assessment

ONLINE QUIZ
For test practice, go to
Interactive Review
@ClassZone.com

TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of

- Nile River
- delta
- Kush
- hieroglyphics

USE YOUR READING NOTES

2. Analyze Cause and Effect

Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

What were the results of the Nile's annual floods?

CAUSE	EFFECT
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

KEY IDEAS

3. Why did ancient Egyptians cluster around the valley and delta of the Nile River?
4. What three periods make up ancient Egyptian history?
5. What was the largest social class in ancient Egypt?

CRITICAL THINKING

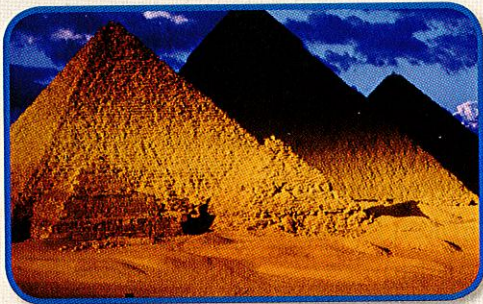
6. **Summarize** What are some positive and negative effects of the Aswan High Dam?
7. **Evaluate** What rights did women have in ancient Egypt?
8. **CONNECT to Today** What are the risks and benefits of living near a great river?
9. **SCIENCE Create a Multimedia Presentation** Using the library or Internet, research mummification and create a slide show to demonstrate the process. Show all the steps from removal of organs and embalming to drying and wrapping.

The Great Pyramid

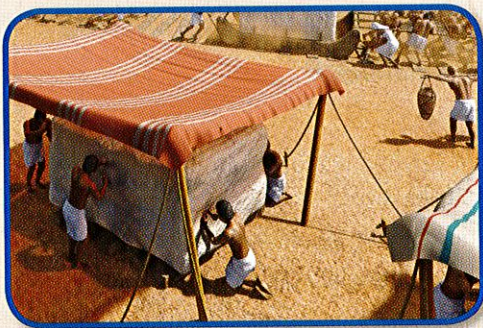
[Click here](#) to enter the Great Pyramid @ClassZone.com

PYRAMIDS

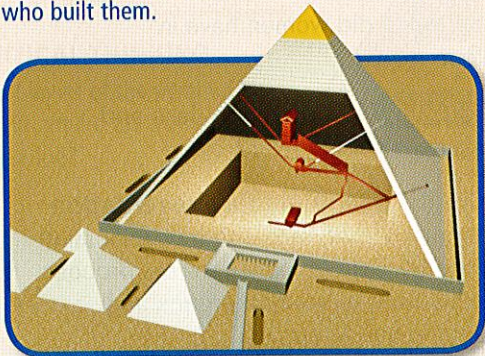
The Great Pyramid of Khufu is Egypt's largest pyramid, originally standing 481 feet high. For more than 4,000 years it stood as the world's tallest building.



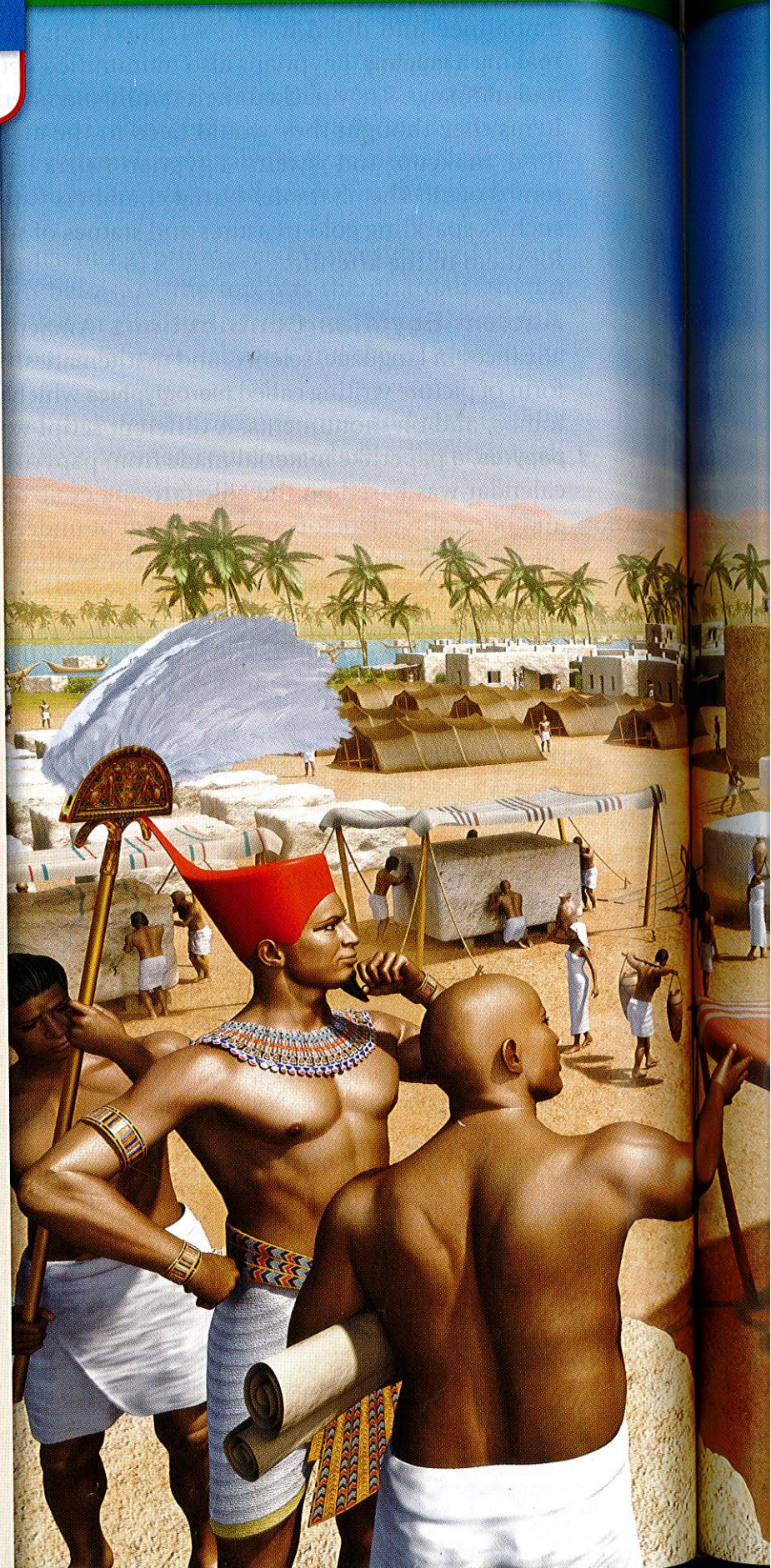
[Click here](#) to visit the pyramids of Egypt today. Learn about the rulers of ancient Egypt and their belief in the afterlife.

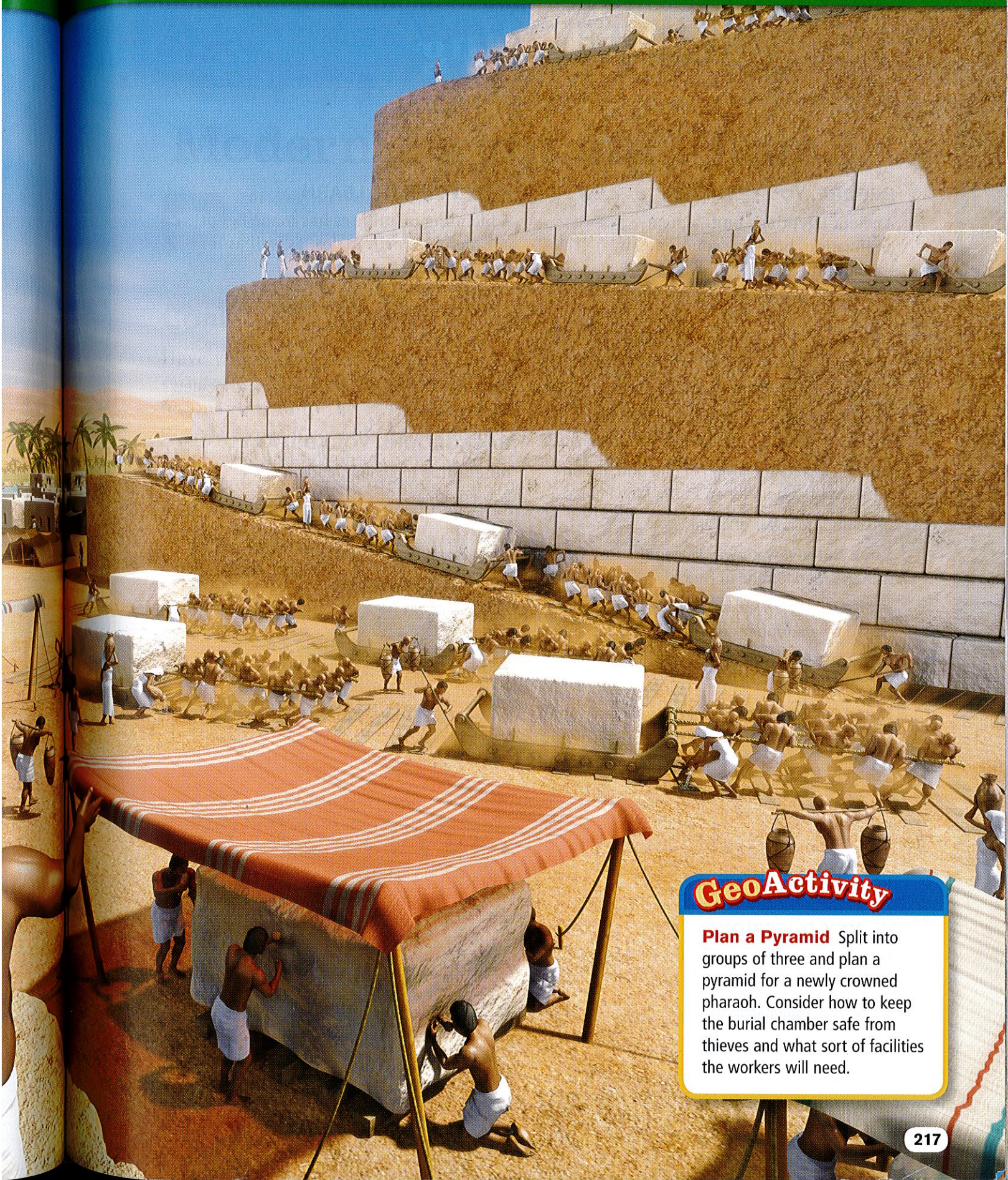


[Click here](#) to see how a pyramid was built. Learn about the materials and methods and the people who built them.



[Click here](#) to explore the passageways and chambers of the Great Pyramid's interior.





GeoActivity

Plan a Pyramid Split into groups of three and plan a pyramid for a newly crowned pharaoh. Consider how to keep the burial chamber safe from thieves and what sort of facilities the workers will need.