

Kingdoms of the Nile

Module 4

Lesson 3**MAIN IDEAS**

1. The Middle Kingdom was a period of stable government between periods of disorder.
2. The New Kingdom was the peak of Egyptian trade and military power, but its greatness did not last.
3. Work and daily life were different among Egypt's social classes.

Key Terms and People

Middle Kingdom period of stability and order in ancient Egypt between about 2050 and 1750 BC

New Kingdom the height of Egypt's power and glory, between 1550 and 1050 BC

trade routes paths followed by traders

Queen Hatshepsut New Kingdom ruler renowned for expanding Egyptian trade

Ramses the Great important New Kingdom pharaoh who defended Egypt from invaders and strengthened defenses

Lesson Summary**THE MIDDLE KINGDOM**

The Old Kingdom ended with the pharaohs in debt. Ambitious nobles serving in government positions managed to take power from the pharaohs and rule for nearly 160 years. Egypt had no central ruler during this time. Finally, a powerful pharaoh regained control around 2050 BC and started a peaceful period of rule. This era was called the **Middle Kingdom** and lasted until Southwest Asian invaders conquered Lower Egypt around 1750 BC.

Who ruled Egypt before the Middle Kingdom began?

THE NEW KINGDOM

When an Egyptian named Ahmose (AHM'-ohs) drove away the invaders and declared himself king of Egypt in 1550 BC, he began Egypt's eighteenth dynasty and the start of the **New Kingdom**. Responding to invasions, Egypt took control of possible invasion routes and quickly became the leading military power in the region,

Lesson 3, *continued*

with an empire extending from the Euphrates River in the northeast to Nubia in the south. These conquests also made Egypt rich, through gifts and vastly expanded **trade routes**. One particular ruler, **Queen Hatshepsut**, was active in establishing new paths for traders.

Despite the strong leadership of **Ramses the Great**, a tide of invasions from the west and Southwest Asia eventually reduced Egypt to violence and disorder.

WORK AND DAILY LIFE

During the Middle and New Kingdoms daily life in Egypt did not change very much. The population continued to grow and become more complex. Professional and skilled workers like scribes, artisans, artists, and architects were honored. These roles in society were usually passed on in families, with young boys learning a trade from their fathers.

Farmers and peasants made up the vast majority of the population. In addition to hard work on the land, they were required to pay taxes and were subject to special labor duty at any time. Only slaves were beneath them in social status.

Most Egyptian families lived in their own homes. Boys were expected to marry young and start their own families. Women focused on the home, but many also had other jobs. Egyptian women had the legal rights to own property, make contracts, and divorce their husbands.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Design Design an ancient Egyptian “job want ad,” and then write a letter to a potential employer explaining why you should be hired.

Why did Egypt become the leading military power in the region?

What sort of workers were respected in ancient Egyptian society?

What was daily life like in Egypt for farmers and peasants?

Lesson 3, *continued*

Middle Kingdom	Queen Hatshepsut	trade routes
New Kingdom	Ramses the Great	

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and choose the correct term from the word bank to replace the underlined phrase. Write the term in the space provided and then define the term in your own words.

1. Queen Hatshepsut could not stop invasions from the west and Southwest Asia.

Your definition: _____

2. Ahmose's dynasty began the Middle Kingdom.

Your definition: _____

3. One ruler who worked to increase Egyptian trade was Ramses the Great.

Your definition: _____

4. Paths followed by traders are New Kingdoms.

Your definition: _____

5. The period during which Egypt had a peaceful period of rule is called the trade routes.

Your definition: _____
