ANCIENT EGYPT
Gift of the Nile

I. Egypt has been called the "Gift of the Nile," because the Nile flooded predictably and regularly depositing very rich, fertile soil.

A. Ancient Egypt was a river valley civilization
   1. Very dry climate
   2. 9/10 of the land is desert.
   3. Almost the entire population lived within ten-fifteen miles of the Nile River.
The Nile River

The Nile River is the world's longest river, approximately 4,000 miles. It overflows each year around the month of April and subsides around October. The flood waters are caused by rains in Eastern Africa and spreads rich deposits of fertile soil along the banks of the Nile River called **Silt**.
The Nile River

The mouth of the Nile River is located on the north coast of Egypt. At its mouth, the Nile empties into the Mediterranean Sea. At this location, a triangle-shaped delta of marshy flatlands became home to many villages. A delta is the sand, earth, and other material that collects at the mouth (end) of some rivers. The Egyptians compared the delta to a blossoming flower. Even from outer space, the resemblance of the river to a blossoming flower can be seen.

The Nile River
flows from the south to the north; therefore, downstream would be the lower area, although it is on the upper part of a map.
Irrigation

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Egyptians was the development of an irrigation system. Irrigation is the watering of dry land by means of man-made streams, canals, or pipes.
The Egyptian social structure could be compared to a pyramid. Look at the Chart to see the different levels of social groups in ancient Egypt.
Egyptian Society: Unskilled Laborers

Unskilled laborers, the largest class by far, made up 70% of the population. Most of them were very poor that worked on farms or as various laborers. Enjoyed few privileges and lived and died for one purpose- to work and support the kingdom.
Egyptian Society: Slaves

Slaves made up 20% of the population. Many slaves were Jewish who were enslaved by the Egyptians during the Exodus. Prisoners captured in foreign wars became slaves and formed a separate class. These slaves did have some rights. There were documented cases in which children were sold into slavery by poor families to pay off debts.
Egyptian Society: Pharaohs

The power of the Pharaohs in Ancient Egypt was absolute, meaning it was unchallenged or unquestioned by any of the Egyptian people. Pharaoh (s) owned all the land and controlled the surplus wealth of Egypt. Pharaoh (s) were both the political, religious and military leaders. Pharaoh (s) were often thought of as one of the gods.

Pharaoh was the chief priest and it was his responsibility to keep the gods happy.
Egyptian Society: Military leaders
Egyptian Society: Landlords & Government Officials

**Government officials**
Held high offices and **advised Pharaohs**. Collected taxes and **checked on government projects**.

**Landlords**
Ran the farms.
Egyptian Society: Priests

Priests
The priesthood (priest or priestess) was very important in ancient Egyptian society. The members of the priesthood performed both religious and political duties. For example, one priest would decide when to plant crops, while another would keep track of the hours in the day.
Egyptian Society: Scribes

Scribes

Scribes were at a high level in Egyptian society. This was because they were educated and skilled in keeping careful records of transactions and other events that occurred. These individuals were important because they recorded births and deaths. Wrote royal decrees using hieroglyphics (hye roh GLIF iks).

In addition, the scribes also kept records of day to day business activities.

The scribe was very important and many parents wanted to send their kids to scribal school where they could learn to read and write. This would allow them to enter the government of royal services and become rich and powerful.
Tradesmen traveled up and down the Nile River trading goods produced in each village. To trade goods without money is called Barter.
Before the “Old Kingdom,” Egypt was divided into Upper and Lower kingdoms. Lower Egypt was in the NORTH. Upper Egypt was in the SOUTH.

The early people who settled along the Nile River banded together into two main groups.

One group lived around the mouth of Nile River, near the Mediterranean Sea. Their king wore a Red Crown. Their land was called Lower Egypt.

The other group lived near the mountains to the South. Their king wore a White Crown. Their land was called Upper Egypt.

These two groups had much in common. They spoke the same language. They worshipped the same gods. They had the same culture. But, they did not get along. They were always fighting.
Old Kingdom (3400 B.C. to 2500 B.C.)

The "Old Kingdom" is a period of time during the history of Ancient Egypt from 2575 BC to 2150 BC.

Over these 400 years, Egypt had a strong central government and a prosperous economy.

The Old Kingdom is most famous as a time when many pyramids were built.
Menes

Around 3100 BC, Menes (MEE neez), the ruler of Upper Egypt, established the first Egyptian dynasty. Menes conquered Lower Egypt and combined the two kingdoms into one. This gave him a great amount of power. Memphis became the new Egyptian capital.

King Menes conquered Lower Egypt. Both kingdoms continued to fight. One day, King Menes had an idea. If the color of a crown was so important, why not invent a new crown? King Menes created the Double Crown, a mix of white and red. His idea worked.
Pyramids Kings and pharaohs were treated with great respect by their people. They carried this respect even through death. Egyptians constructed huge burial tombs called pyramids for their kings and pharaohs.

Pyramids were huge structures built to hold a royal tomb. Pyramids had storage rooms, courtyards, secret passageways, and traps to catch robbers who might break into the pyramid.
Did You Know?
The building measurements on the pyramids are very precise. The stone slabs on the outside of the Great Pyramid fit so snugly side by side that a hair cannot be pushed into the joints between them.

The Pyramids: Diagram

Fake Burial Chambers
Sometimes fake burial chambers or passages would be used to try and trick grave robbers. Because there was such valuable treasure buried within the pyramid, grave robbers would try to break in and steal the treasure. Despite the Egyptian's efforts, nearly all of the pyramids were robbed of their treasures by 1000 B.C.

False Door
Tombs had false doors decorated with prayers and the owner’s names. They were sacred places for the living to leave offerings for the dead.

Did You Know?
The Egyptians built over seventy pyramids.
The Great Sphinx is a large human-headed lion that was carved from a mound of natural rock. It is located in Giza where it guards the front of Khafra's pyramid.

The missing nose; It was first believed that the Sphinx lost its nose to Napoleon's men, but 18th century drawings reveal that the nose of the Sphinx was missing before Napoleon's arrival, it is believed that the nose of the Sphinx was shot off by the Turks.

The Great Sphinx is huge! It is 241 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 66 feet high.
Decline of the “Old Kingdom”

The government during the Old Kingdom grew corrupt. Leaders fought among themselves for power and wealth. When a civil war erupted, the Old Kingdom ended.
Middle Kingdom (2,500 to 1,580 B.C.)

During this time all of Egypt was united under a single government and ruler, but divided into forty regions with governors appointed to rule each region. Egyptian Nobles became very powerful and engaged in a civil war against the Pharaohs. Chaos and continued disunity had made Egypt very weak and ripe for invasion.
About 1700 B.C., Egypt was invaded by the nomadic and less civilized Hyksos. The Hyksos had superior weapons and technology and overwhelmed the Egyptians using Chariots. The cruel Hyksos ruled Egypt for over 200 years.
New Kingdom: The Age of Empire  (1580 B.C. to 1150 B.C.)
The kings of the New Kingdom were the first to be referred to as pharaohs. By using military skills, bronze weapons, and horse drawn chariots they learned from the Hyksos, they finally ousted the Hyksos and regained control of Egypt. These pharaohs expanded Egypt’s territory immensely across new lands. The Egyptian capital was re-located in Thebes.
Hatshepsut (haht SHEP soot) was the first female Pharaoh. She also dressed like the Pharaoh to reinforce her power including the crown and ceremonial beard. She encouraged trade with many other countries and saw Egypt grow very wealthy. She ordered many temples to be built at Thebes. The temple ruins are still standing today.

In public Hatshepsut dressed like a man and wore a false beard so people wouldn’t know she was a woman.

Temple of Queen Hatshepsut
This first great empire eventually fell into decline after 3000 years. In 1100 B.C., a pharaoh by the name of Ramses III led Egypt into a war in an attempt to conquer Syria. This war was costly and drained the treasury of Egypt. Beginning in 945 B.C., Egypt was conquered and ruled by a succession of different foreign powers including: Libya, Assyria, Persia, and Rome.
## Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt (Diagram)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD KINGDOM</th>
<th>MIDDLE KINGDOM</th>
<th>NEW KINGDOM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharaohs organized a strong central state, were absolute rulers, and were considered gods.</td>
<td>Large drainage project created arable farmland. Traders had contacts with Middle East and Crete. Corruption and rebellions were common. Hyksos invaded and occupied the delta region.</td>
<td>Powerful <strong>pharaohs</strong> created a large empire that reached the Euphrates River. Hatshepsut encouraged trade. Ramses II expanded Egyptian rule to Syria. Egyptian power declined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egyptians built pyramids at Giza.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power struggles, crop failures, and cost of pyramids contributed to the collapse of the Old Kingdom.</td>
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Egyptian Religion: Afterlife

The Egyptians believed that there was a life after death. The first conception of immortality (life after death.) A key component was that the body be preserved for this to happen. This is why the Egyptians used the embalming process, or mummification, to preserve the dead.

Did You Know?
When someone died an idealized face death mask was made that looked similar to the person. This allowed the soul to find the body in the afterlife.
Judgment Day

Upon death, a person began the precarious journey to the afterlife, a journey that could lead to eternal life in paradise, or—if incorrect answers were uttered and the heart was not pure—to being devoured by a beast, leaving the spirit restless and wandering forever.

1. Passing through a series of gates and doorways, the deceased is asked a number of questions. Correct answers at each step are required to continue.

2. The god Aker admits the deceased into the Hall of Two Truths.

3. Anubis directs the weighing of the heart, placing it on a scale to balance it against a feather. During the weighing, the deceased tells the gods about his or her behavior on earth.

4a. If the deceased has not been truthful and led a wicked life, his or her heart is devoured by the monster, Ammit.

4b. If the deceased is truthful and has led a good life, the scales are balanced. The deceased is then given a place to live eternally in the idyllic Field of Reeds.
Egyptian Contributions: Mummification

Mummification

Egyptians preserved dead bodies by embalming them.

Did You Know… Preparing an Egyptian mummy sometimes took up to 70 days. When unwrapped, the bandages of an Egyptian mummy could stretch to 1.6 km or 1.5 miles.
Mummification Process (Preparing the Body)

1. Washing the Body

First, his body is taken to the tent or the 'place of purification'. There the embalmers wash his body with good-smelling palm wine and rinse it with water from the Nile.
2. Embalming the Body

One of the embalmer's men makes a cut in the left side of the body and removes many of the internal organs. It is important to remove these because they are the first part of the body to decompose.

The liver, lungs, stomach and intestines are washed and packed in natron (salt) which will dry them out. The heart is not taken out of the body because it is the centre of intelligence and feeling and the man will need it in the afterlife.

A long hook is used to smash the brain and pull it out through the nose.
Mummification Process (Aging)

3. Preparing the Body for Aging

The body is now covered and stuffed with natron (salt) which will dry it out. Then, the insides are stuffed with linen, more natron, sawdust, sweet-smelling spices, and will be saved and buried along with the body.
Mummification Process (Preparation)

4. Preparing the Body for Mummification

After forty days the body is washed again with water from the Nile. Then it is covered with oils to help the skin stay elastic.
5. Preparing the Body for Mummification

The dehydrated internal organs are wrapped in linen and returned to the body. The body is stuffed with dry materials such as sawdust, leaves and linen so that it looks lifelike. Finally the body is covered again with good-smelling oils.
Mummification Process (Canopic Jars)

6. Storing the Internal Organs

In the past, when the internal organs were removed from a body they were placed in hollow canopic jars. Over many years the embalming practices changed and embalmers began returning internal organs to bodies after the organs had been dried in natron. However, solid wood or stone canopic jars were still buried with the mummy to symbolically protect the internal organs.

The lids of canopic jars represented gods called the 'four sons of Horus'. These gods protected the internal organs.
Mummification Process (Canopic Jars)

7. Canopic Jars

Imsety the human-headed god looks after the liver.

Hapy the baboon-headed god looks after the lungs

Duamutef the jackal-headed god looks after the stomach.

Qebehsenuef the falcon-headed god looks after the intestines.
Mummification Process (Wrapping)

8. Wrapping the Mummy

The body has been cleaned, dried and rubbed with good-smelling oils. Now it is ready to be wrapped in linen.

First the head and neck are wrapped with strips of fine linen. Then the fingers and the toes are individually wrapped.
9. Wrapping the Mummy

The arms and legs are wrapped separately. Between the layers of wrapping, the embalmers place amulets to protect the body in its journey through the underworld.

This is the 'Isis knot' amulet which will protect the body.

This is the 'Plummet' amulet which will keep the person balanced in the next life.
10. Wrapping the Mummy

A priest reads spells out loud while the mummy is being wrapped. These spells will help ward off evil spirits and help the deceased make the journey to the afterlife.
11 Wrapping the Mummy
The arms and legs are tied together. A papyrus scroll with spells from the Book of the Dead is placed between the wrapped hands.

12 Wrapping the Mummy
More linen strips are wrapped around the body. At every layer, the bandages are painted with liquid resin that helps to glue the bandages together.
13 Wrapping the Mummy

A cloth is wrapped around the body and a picture of the god Osiris is painted on its surface.

14 Wrapping the Mummy

Finally, a large cloth is wrapped around the entire mummy. It is attached with strips of linen that run from the top to the bottom of the mummy, and around its middle. Next, a board of painted wood is placed on top of the mummy before the mummy is lowered into its coffin. The first coffin is then put inside a second coffin.
Mummification Process (Religious Rituals)

15 Religious Rituals

A ritual called the 'Opening of the Mouth' is performed, allowing the deceased to eat and drink again.

A mask is then put over the mummy’s face. A priest dressed as Anubis, a god of the dead, prayed over the body.

Finally, the body and its coffins are placed inside a large stone casket in the tomb. Furniture, clothing, valuable objects, food and drink are arranged in the tomb for the deceased.
Mummification Process (Funeral)

16 Funeral

The funeral is held for the deceased and their family mourns their death.

Now the body is ready for its journey through the underworld. There its heart will be judged by his good deeds on earth. If its heart is found to be pure he will be sent to live for all eternity in the beautiful 'Field of Reeds'.
Egyptian Religion: Polytheism

Religion played a big part in the lives of the Ancient Egyptians.

**Polytheism** - The Egyptians believed and worshipped in a wide variety of gods and goddesses.

These gods could take different forms, usually as animals. The same animal may represent a different god depending on the area, temple, or timeframe.
Egyptian Animal Worship: Cats

Cats were an important animal to people in ancient Egypt. The cat goddess Bast was worshiped for 3000 years or more up until 390 AD. Cats were praised for their natural ability to catch mice and snakes, which protected stored grain from these pests. It was even considered a death sentence if a cat was killed accidentally. Thousands of mummy cats have been found in tombs and graves.
Egyptian Animal Worship: Crocodiles

Crocodiles were formidable animals of the Nile River. The river was widely used for transportation. Sailors would pray to god of crocodiles, Sobek, in the hopes that a crocodile wouldn’t eat them. Like other highly worshiped animals, crocodiles were mummified when they died.
Egyptian Gods

Isis
Osiris
Ra
Horus
Anubis
Sobek
Thoth
Hathor
Amon
Seth
Egyptians had many different gods.

Thus, Egyptian religion was polytheistic.

These were the most important ones.
Ra

- He was also a creator deity. He gave life to everything and resurrected the dead.
- He was represented as a man with the head of a falcon.
- The sun-disk rests on his head.

They say that the sun god Ra is born every day to drive the sun across the sky for 12 hours. Then he dies, and it becomes night as he crosses into the underworld, where he battles demons that threaten the prosperity of Egypt.
Osiris

- God of fertility and agriculture.
- He presided the Judgement of the Dead.
- His skin was green.
- He held a whip and a crook.
- His wife was Isis, and their son was Horus.

He is the god of the Underworld, and the chief judge of all human souls. He wears white to represent the mummy dress, and has a green body to represent the earth and vegetation from the Nile river.
Isis (Aset)

- She was the goddess of maternity, love and birth.
- Stood to protect the birth of children, mothers and the home.
- She wears a headdress shaped like a throne.
- She was the sister and wife of the god Osiris.
- Her name “Aset” translates to “Queen of the Throne”.
Isis could also be represented with wings
Horus

- He was represented as a man with the head of a falcon.
- He also wore the double crown.
- He was the god of the skies.

Horus is seen with the head of a falcon, the personification of courage. All of the pharaohs of Egypt took on Horus as their personal icon. Horus became the direct line from life as a Pharaoh in this world to life as a God in the afterlife.
Anubis

- He was the god of the cemeteries and the dead.
- He would take the dead to the underworld.
- He was represented as a man with the head of a jackal.
- He helped with the mummification.

The jackal head is painted black, representing the Nile river where all life begins and ends.
A Priest Wearing the Mask of Anubis Mummifies a Dead Body.
Amun

- Represented as a man with red skin, and a long hat with two feathers.
- He holds a stick and the cross of life.
- He was a creator deity.
During the reign of the pharaoh Akenaton (14th century BC), Aton became the only god (monotheism).

Amun became Aton. However, this god was no longer worshipped after Akenaton's death.

Symbols: sun and rays.
Maat

- Goddess of justice, truth and harmony in the universe.

- She was represented as a woman with the feather of an ostrich on her head as a symbol of harmony.
Ptah

- God of magic and architects.
- He could cure the sick.
- He was represented as a mummified man with green skin all covered with linen, holding a long scepter in his hands.

Ptah is the patron of all craftsmen, sculptors and architects. The staff he carries represents stability, life and longevity. He is said to have built the sky and the heavens, as well as the boats that souls use in the underworld.
Thoth

- He was the god of wisdom, writing and music.
- He was represented as a man with the head of an ibis (a bird).
- He invented languages and all the words.

Thoth is the patron of writers, and is also credited with many inventions, including astronomy and medicine. He is known as the god of wisdom and knowledge.
Sobek

- God of the Nile.

- Known as a fierce god, and was sometimes associated with chaos.

- He was represented as a man with the head of a crocodile and a crown, which was symbolic of the power of the Pharaoh.
Bastet

- Goddess of the homes.
- She gave joy and happiness to people.
- She was the cat goddess. She could be represented as a cat, or a woman with the head of a cat.

The cat was a sacred animal to the Egyptians, who used them as hunting companions.
Seth

- God of violence and pain.
- He was a nasty god.
- He was represented as a man with the head of a non-identified animal.

Set was the storm god, associated with earthquakes, eclipses and the desert. His name “Set” is also associated with immoral acts, and confusion. Later on he was considered to be evil, in fact, the evil brother of Osiris.
Egyptian Contributions: Art

The Egyptians excelled in architecture and sculpture. Great temples, pyramids, and other structures were built. Egyptian sculptors carved lifelike statues of men and beasts. Beautiful jewelry and other objects of copper and bronze were made.
Hieroglyphics was a crude system of writing using pictures and symbols. When these hieroglyphics were discovered by archaeologists, they were unable to decipher, or decode, the words. The writings remained a mystery for many years. In 1799, a French soldier in Napoleon's army discovered the Rosetta Stone, which was the key to the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Written in Hieroglyphics, late Egyptian, and Greek languages.

Early in the 1800s, a French scholar, Jean Champollion, deciphered the Rosetta Stone. It took him nearly 22 years to translate the text. His work enabled scholars to translate thousands of other records that had been a mystery until that time.
Hieroglyphics Alphabet

Can you spell your name using Hieroglyphics?
Other Contributions Credited to Ancient Egypt

Egyptians were the first to use pen and paper. They used a paper made from the “papyrus" reed. As a matter of fact our word paper comes from the word papyrus.

Used geometry for building and surveying. We learned much of our knowledge in geometry from the ancient Egyptians. This measuring led the Egyptians to become proficient in mathematics, especially geometry. They learned to measure the areas of squares and circles. The Egyptians also learned to figure volumes of cylinders and spheres.

Invented the decimal system.

Used a twelve-month calendar of 365 days, based on the movement of the sun. The annual flooding of the Nile and other events that occurred regularly, such as eclipses, led to the development of a calendar that is similar to the one used today. Their calendar contained twelve months, each having 30 days. Five extra days were added as feast days for the gods.
Medical Discoveries

Many medical discoveries were made by Egyptians. They studied the human body and learned to perform surgery. Performed surgical operations in which drugs were used as anesthetics.

Ancient texts describe how they treated spinal injuries and broken bones. They were the first to use splints, bandages, and compresses.

Egyptians learned to sew up cuts or wounds on the human body. Egyptians even had treatments for indigestion and hair loss.

Greeks based many of their medical beliefs on what the Egyptians learned and recorded.
Terms to Know:

Gift of the Nile  Old Kingdom
Nile River       Menes
Silt            Memphis
Irrigation      Pyramids
Slaves          Middle Kingdom
Priests         Hyksos
Land Lords      Chariots
Government Officials New Kingdom
Military Leaders Hatshepsut
Scribes         Thebes
Tradesmen       Polytheism
Barter          Rosetta Stone
Pharaoh         Hieroglyphics
Lower Egypt     Mummification
Upper Egypt     Papyrus
Concepts to Know:

• Why was ancient Egypt called the, "The Gift of the Nile?"
• Describe the Nile River and why it helped civilization develop along its banks?
• Describe the social pyramid of ancient Egyptian society.
• Explain the unification of ancient Egypt.
• Describe the "Old Kingdom" and some of its events.
• What are the pyramids and why were they built?
• Describe the "Middle Kingdom" and some of its events.
• Who were the Hyksos and why did they conquer ancient Egypt so easily?
• Describe the "New Kingdom" and rule of Hatshepsut.
• Describe ancient Egyptian religion.
• Describe ancient Egyptian art.
• What are Hieroglyphics? The Rosetta Stone?
• Describe ancient Egypt's contributions to science.
• Explain the ancient Egyptian mumification process.
• Describe some of the other contributions of the ancient Egyptians.