

>> Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, sought eternal life and obtained the plant of youth. However, a snake ate it, which, according to the legend, is why people do not live forever.

 Interactive Flipped Video

 **TEKS**
1.A, 2.C, 16.B, 19.A, 27.A

>> Objectives

Understand how geography influenced the development of civilization in the Fertile Crescent.

Outline the main features of Sumerian civilization.

Explain how the advances in learning made by the Sumerians left a lasting legacy for later peoples to build on.

>> Key Terms

Fertile Crescent
Mesopotamia
Sumer
The Epic of Gilgamesh
hierarchy
ziggurat
cuneiform

2.1

A desert climate dominates the land between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea, yet a number of early civilizations arose here. The region of the Middle East is called the Fertile Crescent, named for its rich soils and golden wheat fields. Over time, nomadic herders, ambitious invaders, and traders easily overcame the region's few natural barriers. As a result, the region became a crossroads where people and ideas met and mingled. This region is often referred to as the "cradle of civilization." Many of the earliest human civilizations developed in this river valley region because of the availability of water and other agricultural resources.

A Civilization Emerges in Sumer

Civilizations Arise in the Fertile Crescent

The Fertile Crescent curves from the Persian Gulf to the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Within the Fertile Crescent lies a region that the ancient Greeks later named **Mesopotamia**, which means "between the rivers." Mesopotamia is the area of land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which flow from the highlands of modern-day Turkey through Iraq into the Persian Gulf. Around 3300 B.C., the world's first civilization developed in southeastern Mesopotamia, in a region called **Sumer**.

Sumerians Overcome Environmental Challenges Control of the Tigris and Euphrates was key to developments in Mesopotamia. The rivers frequently rose in terrifying floods that washed away topsoil and destroyed mud-brick villages. The Mesopotamian narrative poem *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was first told orally in Sumer, describes a great flood that destroys the world. Archaeologists have indeed found evidence that catastrophic floods occurred regularly in the ancient days of the Fertile Crescent.

To survive and to protect their farmland, villagers along the riverbanks had to work together. Even during the dry season, the rivers had to be controlled in order to channel water to the fields. Temple priests or royal officials provided the leadership that was necessary to ensure cooperation. They organized villagers to work together on projects such as building dikes to hold back flood waters and irrigation ditches to carry water to their fields.

Sumerian City-States By 3000 B.C, Sumerians built a number of cities. Each city and the land surrounding formed a city-state. The Sumerians had few natural resources to build these cities, but they made the most of what they did have. They lacked building materials such as timber or stone, so they built with clay and water. They used the clay to make bricks, which they shaped in wooden molds and dried in the sun. These bricks were the building blocks for some of the world's first great cities, such as Ur and Uruk.

Trade brought riches to Sumerian cities. Traders sailed along the rivers or risked the dangers of desert travel to carry goods to distant regions. Although it is unclear where and when the wheel was invented, the Sumerians may have made the first wheeled vehicles.

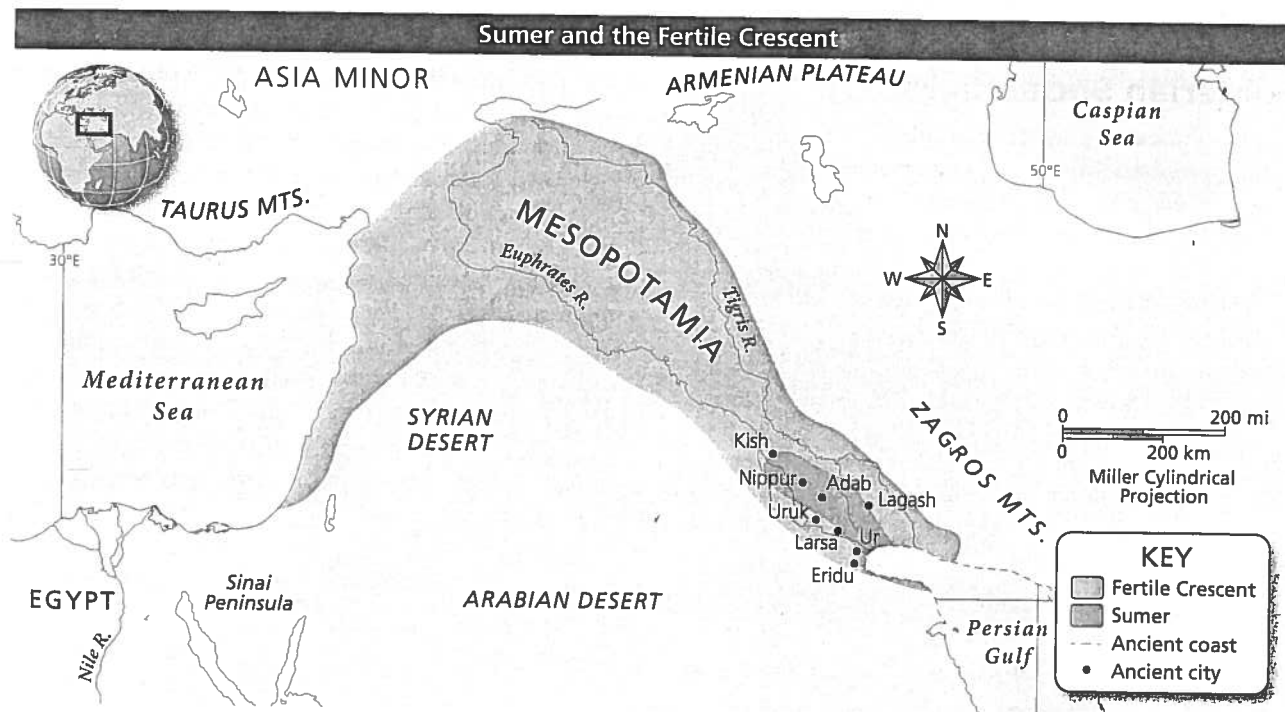
Archaeologists have found goods from as far away as Egypt and India in the rubble of Sumerian cities.

IDENTIFY MAIN IDEAS How did geography influence the development of civilizations in the Fertile Crescent?

Sumerian Civilization Develops

Within a few hundred years of its beginning, Sumer included at least 12 separate city-states. Rival city-states often battled for control of land and water. For protection, people turned to war leaders. Over time, the practice of rule by war leaders evolved into hereditary rule. This resulted in the formation of monarchies. A monarchy is a government in which one person has complete authority to rule in peacetime and to lead soldiers in wartime.

Sumerian Government In each city-state, the ruler was responsible for maintaining the city walls and the irrigation systems. He led its armies in war, enforced the laws, and employed scribes to carry out functions such as collecting taxes and keeping records. The ruler was seen as the chief servant of the gods and led



>> Analyze Maps A series of early civilizations arose between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, called Mesopotamia. What natural features may have limited the expansion of these civilizations?

Interactive Map

ceremonies meant to please them. Although Sumerian government consisted of an absolute monarchy, characteristics of theocracies were present since the kings were seen as intermediaries between the human and the divine.

Sumerian Society Each Sumerian city-state had a distinct social **hierarchy** (HY ur ahr kee), or system of ranking groups. The highest class included the ruling family, leading officials, and high priests. A small middle class was made up of lesser priests, scribes, merchants, and artisans. Artisans who practiced the same trade, such as weavers or carpenters, often lived and worked on the same street.

The majority of people were peasant farmers, and they formed the lowest level of society. Some had their own land, but most worked land belonging to the king or to temples. Sumerians also owned slaves. Most slaves had been captured in war. Some, though, had sold themselves into slavery to pay their debts.

The role of women in Mesopotamian society changed over time. In Sumer, goddesses were highly honored in religious practice. Perhaps because of the importance of female deities, women held a higher social standing in Sumer than in later civilizations of the region. However, Sumerian women never held legal rights equal to those of men. But some rulers' wives had supervisory powers, and a number wrote songs

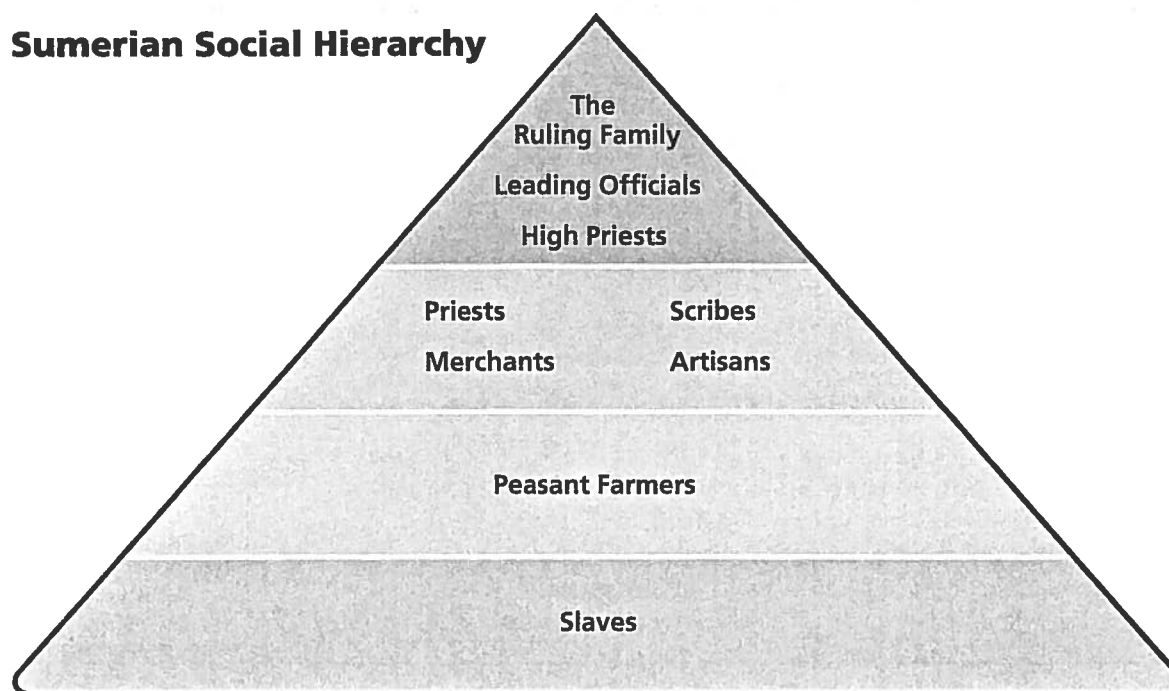
about their husbands, revealing to later scholars that they had learned writing and music. On rare occasion, a woman may have inherited property.

Sumerian Religion Like most ancient peoples, the Sumerians were polytheistic, worshipping many gods. These gods were thought to control every aspect of life, especially the forces of nature. Sumerian monarchs also served as the high priest, representing the city-state's chief deity, or god. The city-states were also theocracies where much of the land belonged to the local deity. Sumerians believed that gods and goddesses behaved like ordinary people—they ate, drank, married, and raised families. Although the gods favored truth and justice, they were also responsible for causing violence and suffering.

Sumerians believed their highest duty was to keep these divine beings happy and, by doing so, ensure the safety of their city-state. Each city built a **ziggurat** (ZIG oo rat), a large, stepped platform thought to have been topped by a temple dedicated to the city's chief god or goddess. Additionally, Sumerians celebrated holy days with ceremonies and processions. In one ritual, the king went through a symbolic wedding to Inanna, the life-giving goddess of love. This rite was meant to ensure a prosperous new year.

The Sumerians believed in an afterlife. In their view, all people lived after death in a grim underworld from

Sumerian Social Hierarchy



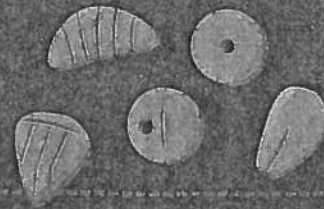
>> **Analyze Information** What does the information on the chart indicate about how Sumerian society supported itself?

CUNEIFORM

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

8000 B.C.

Sumerians began using different-shaped clay tokens to represent various items of exchange, such as sheep or bread.



3500 B.C.

Sumerians began to press the tokens into clay tablets to make signs. They also began to mark the clay with a sharp tool called a stylus.



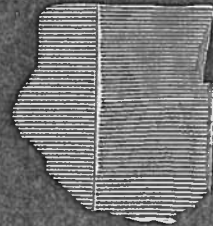
3200 B.C.

Sumerians created a true writing system that included symbols that represented words or syllables. Scribes recorded economic exchanges, myths, prayers, and laws.



SUMERIAN LEGACY

Conquering empires adapted cuneiform into their own cultures, and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is still read today.



>> **Analyze Information** How did cuneiform writing allow Sumerians to communicate more effectively?

 **Interactive Gallery**

which there was no release. One character in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* describes the underworld as “the place where they live on dust, their food is mud, / . . . and they see no light, living in blackness / on the door and door-bolt, deeply settled dust.”

Sumerian Writing By 3200 B.C., Sumerians had invented the earliest known writing. It was later called **cuneiform** (kyoo NEE uh fawm), from the Latin word *cuneus* for “wedge,” because scribes wrote by making wedge-shaped marks on clay tablets. Cuneiform grew out of a system of pictographs used to record goods brought to temple storehouses. Later, the Sumerians developed symbols to represent more complicated thoughts. As their writing evolved, the Sumerians used it to record not only economic exchanges but also myths, prayers, laws, and business contracts.

Sumerian scribes had to go through years of difficult schooling to acquire their skills. Discipline was strict. Untidy copying or talking in class could be punished by caning. Students who did well often learned about religion, mathematics, and literature as well.

? SUMMARIZE Describe the three levels of Sumerian society.

ELPS **ELPS 1.F.1** Practice using words you already know to learn new words in *Sumerian Civilization Develops*.

Sumer's Legacy

Beginning around 2500 B.C., armies of conquering peoples swept across Mesopotamia and overwhelmed the Sumerian city-states. By 1900 B.C., the Sumerian civilization had been replaced by other civilizations and empires that you will read about in the next lesson.

Language and Culture However, Sumer left behind a lasting legacy. Newcomers to the region adopted many ideas and innovations from the Sumerians. For example, the Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians adapted cuneiform so it could be used with their own languages. These peoples then helped spread Sumerian learning across the Middle East. The river-valley civilization that began in Sumer featured a number of elements, beyond a written language, that reappeared in other, later civilizations. Sumer's patriarchal family structure, agricultural-based economies, government structures, and the beginning of a trade base influenced later empires and the rise of classical civilizations, such as Greece and Rome. Later peoples also elaborated on Sumerian oral narratives, such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was written down in cuneiform by both the Akkadians and the Babylonians.

Astronomy and Mathematics Over the centuries, Sumerian scholars had begun to develop astronomy and mathematics. They studied the skies and recorded the



>> The Standard of Ur is a small wooden panel covered on both sides with mosaics composed of stones and jewels. This image shows a banquet scene with the king and his servants.

movements of planets and stars. They also established a number system based on six, dividing the hour into 60 minutes and the circle into 360 degrees, as we still do today.

Although the weakened Sumerian city-states could no longer ward off attacks from surrounding peoples, their advances in mathematics and science did not die. Their achievements in these fields were diffused to other civilizations through trade and warfare, and also as succeeding rulers adapted Sumerian ideas and built upon them.

While the Akkadians, later known as Babylonians, controlled Sumer, Sumerians assimilated into Akkadian culture, and Akkadians adapted many Sumerian technological advances and culture.

Eventually, Babylonians considered themselves to be the inheritors of the Sumerian civilization. They adopted Sumerian history as their own and worshiped many of the same gods, continued Sumerian culture traditions, and used the Sumerian writing and number systems. The Babylonians also used Sumerian mathematical knowledge to develop basic algebra and geometry, to create accurate calendars, and to predict eclipses of the sun and moon.

Technology The Sumerians built the earliest known wheeled carts and wagons. They then developed the

potter's wheel, which is used to shape wet clay into bowls and other kinds of pottery. They used bronze to make tools and weapons and developed looms to weave cloth. Equally important was the technology and engineering skills they invented to build irrigation systems and flood control projects.

Even though the Sumerian city-states were conquered and the Sumerian language disappeared, Sumerian inventions and ideas survived. As you will read, many peoples conquered the Middle East, including the Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians.

These people preserved and furthered Sumerian knowledge and achievements. The rich heritage of Mesopotamian civilizations was later passed on to the Greeks and Romans. From them, this ancient legacy was carried to the Western world. In this way, developments and innovations made more than 5,000 years ago came to shape Western civilization today.

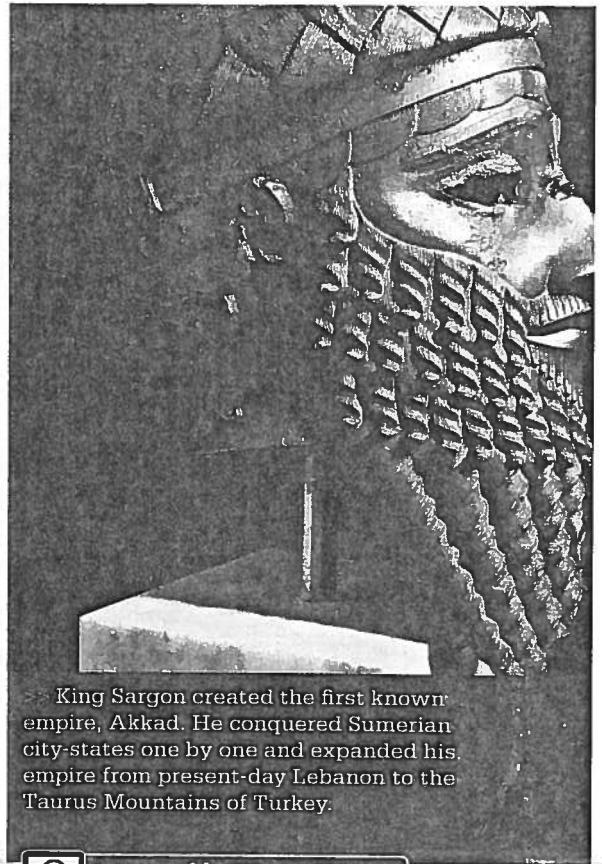
? SYNTHESIZE What advances did the Sumerians make in mathematics and astronomy?

ASSESSMENT

- 1. Describe** What are some Sumerian inventions and advances in learning that influenced the development of later civilizations?
- 2. Determine Relevance** How might the invention of cuneiform writing have strengthened Sumerian government and religious practices?
- 3. Compare** In what way was Sumer both a monarchy and theocracy?
- 4. Summarize** What are some of the main features of Sumerian civilization?
- 5. Synthesize** How did the geography of the Fertile Crescent affect the development of civilizations there?

2.2

Invasion and conquest were prominent features in the history of the ancient Middle East. Again and again, nomadic peoples or ambitious warriors descended on the rich cities of the Fertile Crescent. The region became a vital crossroads where warriors and traders met, clashed, and mingled. While many invaders simply looted and burned, some stayed to rule. Powerful leaders created large, well-organized empires, bringing peace and prosperity for a time to the region. Over several thousand years, these empires made advances in government, technology, and learning that influenced later civilizations from Greece and Rome to India and beyond.



>> King Sargon created the first known empire, Akkad. He conquered Sumerian city-states one by one and expanded his empire from present-day Lebanon to the Taurus Mountains of Turkey.

 Interactive Flipped Video

Empires in Mesopotamia

Empires Emerge in Mesopotamia

The First Empire About 2300 B.C., **Sargon**, the ruler of Akkad, invaded and conquered the neighboring city-states of Sumer. He continued to expand his territory, building the first empire known to history. He appointed local rulers, each of whom served as king of the land he oversaw. However, the world's first empire did not last long. After Sargon's death, other invaders swept into the wide valley between the rivers, tumbling his empire into ruin.

The Babylonian Empire In time, the Sumerian city-states revived, and they resumed their power struggles. Eventually, however, new conquerors followed in Sargon's footsteps and imposed unity over the Fertile Crescent. About 1790 B.C., **Hammurabi** (hah muh RAH bee), king of Babylon, brought much of Mesopotamia under the control of his empire. Hammurabi became king following the abdication of the throne by his father, Sin-Muballit, and formed an empire by winning a series of wars against neighboring kingdoms.

 **TEKS**
1.B, 2.C, 3.A, 20.B, 27.A

>> Objectives

Outline the achievements of the first empires that arose in Mesopotamia

Understand how conquests brought new empires and ideas into the Middle East.

Describe the major political, religious, and cultural influences of Persia.

Summarize the contributions the Phoenicians made to the ancient Middle East.

>> Key Terms

Sargon
Hammurabi
codify
civil law
criminal law
Nebuchadnezzar
bureaucracy
barter economy
money economy
Zoroaster
colony
alphabet

Hammurabi's Code Hammurabi's most ambitious and lasting contribution was his publication of a set of laws known as Hammurabi's Code. Most of the laws had been around since Sumerian times, but Hammurabi wanted to ensure that everyone in his empire knew the legal principles his government would follow. He had artisans carve nearly 300 laws on a stone pillar for all to see. Hammurabi's Code was the first important attempt by a ruler to **codify**, or arrange and set down in writing, all the laws that would govern a state.

Hammurabi's Code gave rise to an important political idea in Mesopotamian civilization that influenced future civilizations. The code developed the principle that government had a responsibility for what occurred in society. Hammurabi's Code is the first set of rules that is reflected in the principles of much later civilizations, such as the idea that the king did not have sole power over the people. Hammurabi's laws brought peace and stability to the Babylonian empire.

Hammurabi Establishes Civil Law One section of Hammurabi's Code codified **civil law**. This branch of law deals with private rights and matters, such as ~~business contracts, property inheritance, taxes,~~ marriage, and divorce. Much of Hammurabi's civil code dealt with property rights, but some of the laws were designed to protect the powerless, such as slaves or

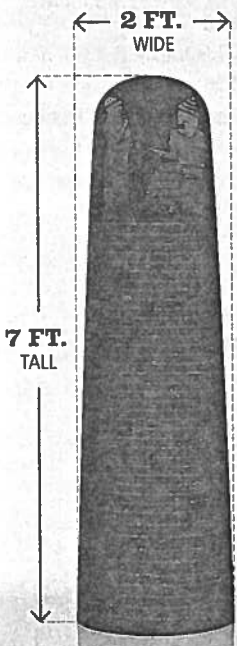
women. Some laws, for example, allowed a woman to own property and pass it on to her children. Another law spelled out the rights of a married woman, saying that if she was found to be blameless for the problems between herself and her husband, she could leave the marriage. If she were found to be at fault, however, the law instructed that she be thrown in the river.

In general, Babylonian civil law gave a husband both legal authority over his wife and a legal duty to support her. The code also gave a father nearly unlimited authority over his children. The Babylonians believed that an orderly household was necessary for a stable empire.

Some elements of Hammurabi's civil law are present in modern laws. For example, family law, which covers marriage and divorce, are addressed in the code. Many of his laws were adapted by succeeding rulers, and many scholars consider them early predecessors of Jewish and Islamic legal systems.

Criminal Law Hammurabi's Code also addressed **criminal law**. This branch of law deals with offenses against others, such as robbery, assault, or murder. Earlier traditions often permitted victims of crimes or their families to take the law into their own hands. By setting out specific punishments for specific offenses,

PURPOSE AND EFFECTS OF HAMMURABI'S CODE



**2 FT.
WIDE**

**7 FT.
TALL**

**ORIGINALLY
CARVED INTO
A STONE STELE,
OR UPRIGHT
SLAB**

**4,000 LINES
OF TEXT**

282 LAWS

- 41 CRIMINAL LAWS** including:
 - COURT PROCEEDINGS
 - SPECIFIC CRIMES
 - PRISONERS
- 241 CIVIL LAWS** including:
 - SLAVERY
 - DEBTS
 - HIRED LABORERS
 - REAL ESTATE
 - FAMILY ISSUES (Divorce, Marriage, Child care)

Sources: Encyclopedia Britannica, Law code of Hammurabi, translated by L.W. King

>> Analyze Information The purpose of Hammurabi's Code was to create common bonds among the diverse people of the society. Why was it important that Hammurabi's Code was a written legal code?

Hammurabi's Code limited personal vengeance and encouraged social order.

Laws varied according to social class and gender. For example, fines for killing a slave woman or causing the death of her unborn child were less than for injuries to a free woman.

By today's standards, the punishments in Hammurabi's Code often seem cruel, following the principle of "an eye for an eye and a life for a life." For example, if a house collapsed because of poor construction and the owner died as a result, the house's builder could be put to death. Still, such a legal code imposed more social order than existed when individuals sought their own justice.

Hammurabi's Accomplishments Although most famous for his code of laws, Hammurabi took other steps to unite his empire. He improved the system of irrigation, organized a well-trained army, and ordered many temples to be repaired. To encourage religious unity across his empire, he promoted Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, over older Sumerian gods. In time, Marduk became the chief god of Babylonian worship.

? **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** What was the most important and lasting legacy of Hammurabi's Code?

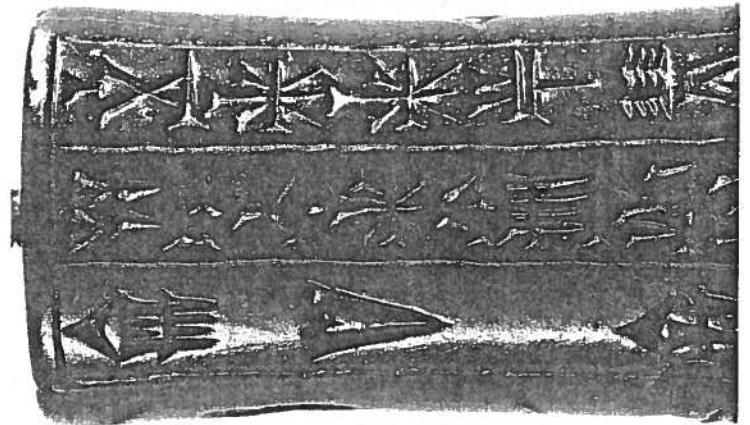
New Empires and Ideas

Later empires shaped the Middle East in different ways. Some conquerors, such as the Hittites, brought new skills to the region's people. Other conquerors uprooted the peoples they defeated, which helped spread the ideas of the uprooted to new regions.

Hittites and the Secret of Ironworking The Hittites pushed out of Asia Minor into Mesopotamia in about 1400 B.C. They brought with them a major advancement—the knowledge of how to extract iron from ore. The tools and weapons they made with iron were harder and had sharper edges than those made out of bronze or copper. Because iron was plentiful, the Hittites were able to arm more people at less expense.

The Hittites tried to keep this valuable technology secret. But as their empire collapsed in about 1200 B.C., Hittite ironsmiths migrated to serve customers elsewhere.

Hittite migration, new conquerors, and traders contributed to the diffusion of technology throughout Mesopotamia and other river valley civilizations. The new knowledge thus spread across Asia, Africa, and Europe, ushering in the Iron Age.



>> The Babylonian empire is known for the flourishing of art, science, music, mathematics, astronomy, and literature. This Babylonian roller seal was used on official documents.



>> The Hittites, known for their ironwork, adapted and improved the horse-drawn chariot. Hittite charioteers used lances, bows and arrows, and axes like the ones shown in the photo.

 **Interactive Gallery**

Assyrian Warriors Build on Ancient Knowledge

The Assyrians, who lived on the upper Tigris, also learned to forge iron weapons. They had established an empire by about 1350 B.C., and by 1100 B.C., they began expanding their empire across Mesopotamia. Over the course of 500 years, they earned a reputation for being among the most feared warriors in history.

Historians are unsure why warfare was so central to Assyrian culture. Was it to keep others from attacking, or to please their god Assur by bringing wealth to the region? Assyrian kings gave a vow to conquer new lands, lands that initially belonged to their central deity, Assur. Whatever the reason for the brutal warfare, Assyrian rulers boasted of their conquests. One told of capturing Babylon. He proclaimed, "The city and its houses, from top to bottom, I destroyed and burned with fire."

Despite their fierce reputation, Assyrian rulers encouraged a well-ordered society. They used riches from trade and war loot to pay for splendid palaces in their well-planned cities. They were also the first rulers to develop extensive laws regulating life within the royal household. For example, women of the palace were confined to secluded quarters and had to wear veils when they appeared in public.

At Nineveh (NIN uh vuh), King Assurbanipal (ahs ur BAH nee pahl) founded one of the world's first libraries.

There, he kept cuneiform tablets that he ordered scribes to collect from all over the Fertile Crescent. Those tablets have offered modern scholars a wealth of information about the ancient Middle East.

The New Babylonian Empire In 612 B.C., shortly after Assurbanipal's death, neighboring peoples joined forces to crush the once-dreaded Assyrian armies. In their absence, Babylon—which a king named Nabopolassar had reestablished as a power in 625 B.C.—quickly revived under its aggressive and ruthless second king, **Nebuchadnezzar** (neb yuh kud NEZ ur). The new Babylonian empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

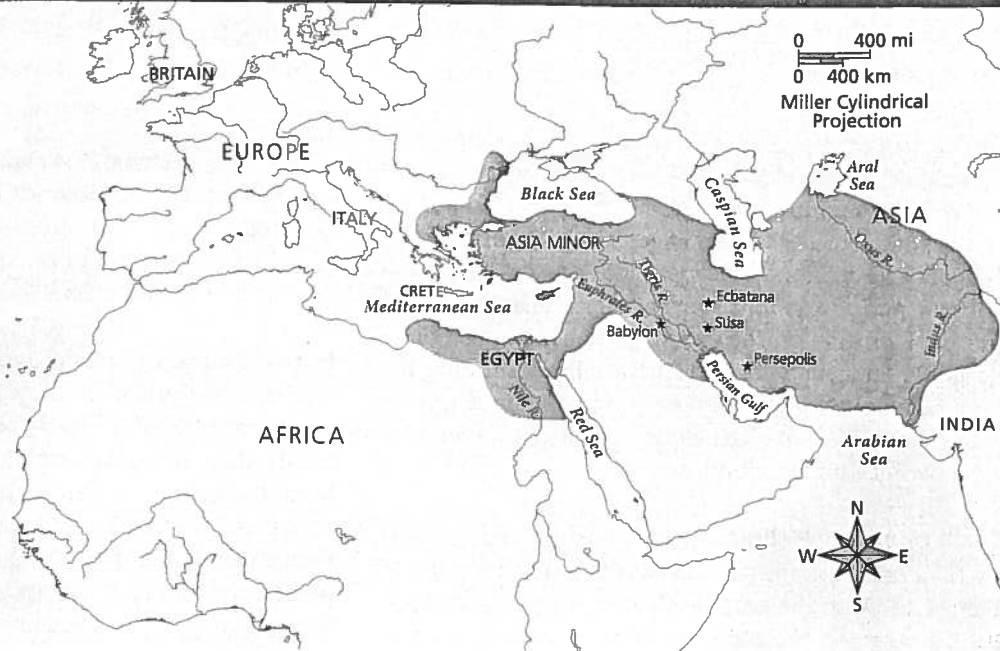
After nearly a thousand years of the city facing decline and destruction, Nebuchadnezzar oversaw the rebuilding of the canals, temples, walls, and palaces of Babylon. During his reign, the city became one of the largest and most highly regarded in the history of ancient Mesopotamia.

Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Babylon with a defensive moat and a brick wall that was 85 feet (26 meters) thick. Nine solid gateways dedicated to important gods allowed people to pass through the wall. The most famous one today, the Ishtar Gate, was made of bricks glazed bright blue and covered in lions representing the goddess Ishtar, dragons representing



>> Analyze Maps The Assyrian empire controlled much of the land in the ancient Middle East. What earlier empires did the Assyrians conquer in order to build their large empire?

Persian Empire, about 500 B.C.



>> **Analyze Maps** Study the locations of the Persian capitals. Were they well placed for rule over the entire empire?

the god Marduk, and bulls representing the god Hadad. At the center of the city, Nebuchadnezzar enlarged and decorated the city's ziggurat to the gods and restored the temple honoring the city's chief god, Marduk.

Although their remains have not yet been found, Nebuchadnezzar may have built the famous Hanging Gardens—known as one of the “seven wonders of the ancient world”—near his main palace. The gardens were probably made by planting trees and flowering plants on the steps of a huge ziggurat. According to legend, Nebuchadnezzar had the gardens built to please his wife, who was homesick for the hills where she had grown up.

? IDENTIFY Name a significant contribution made by the Hittites, Assyrians, and Babylonians after each group's conquest in the Middle East.

Rise of the Persian Empire

The thick walls built by Nebuchadnezzar failed to hold back new conquerors. In 539 B.C., Babylon fell to the Persian armies of Cyrus the Great. Cyrus and his successors went on to build the largest empire yet seen, unifying the various tribes and clans under a single political structure.

The Persians eventually controlled a wide sweep of territory that stretched from Asia Minor to India,

including present-day Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The Persian empire built a network of roads that increased the efficiency of the government and aided the development of the classical civilization of Persia. In general, Persian kings pursued a policy of tolerance, or acceptance, of the people they conquered. The Persians respected the customs of the diverse groups and built a strong, vast empire.

Darius Unites Many Peoples The real unification of the Persian empire was accomplished under the emperor Darius I, who ruled from 522 B.C. to 486 B.C. Darius set up a **bureaucracy**, or a system of government through departments and subdivisions administered by officials who follow set rules. The Persian bureaucracy became a model for later rulers.

Darius divided the empire into provinces, each called a satrapy and headed by a governor called a satrap. Each satrapy had to pay taxes based on its resources and wealth. Special officials visited each satrapy to check on the satraps. Darius created an efficient and successful government structure that was not under the day-to-day control of the king.

Darius adapted laws from the peoples he conquered and, like Hammurabi, drew up a single code of laws for the empire. To encourage unity, he had hundreds of miles of roads built or repaired. Roads made it easier to communicate with different parts of the empire.

Persia's Economy Darius used his power as head of the Persian government to introduce many economic innovations and reforms. To improve trade, Darius set up a common set of weights and measures and introduced a system of taxation. He also encouraged the use of coins, which the Lydians of Asia Minor had first introduced. Most people continued to be part of the **barter economy**, which means they exchanged one set of goods or services for another. Coins, however, brought merchants and traders into an early form of a **money economy**. In this system, goods and services are paid for through the exchange of some token of an agreed value, such as a coin or a bill. By minting his own gold coins, Darius created economic links among his far-flung subjects, helping to expand commerce and promote international trade.

Birth of a New Religion Religious beliefs put forward by the Persian thinker **Zoroaster** (ZOH ruh as tur) also helped to unite the empire. Zoroaster lived about 600 B.C. He rejected the old Persian gods and taught that a single wise god, Ahura Mazda (AH hoo ruh MAHZ duh), ruled the world. Ahura Mazda, however, was in constant battle against Ahriman (AH rih mun), the prince of lies and evil. Each individual would have to choose which side to support.

In the end, taught Zoroaster, Ahura Mazda would triumph over the forces of evil. On a final judgment day, all individuals would be judged for their actions, as described below:

Then the assembly . . . will meet, that is, all men of this earth will stand. In that assembly, every person will see his own good deeds and evil deeds. The righteous will be as conspicuous [obvious] amongst the wicked as a white sheep among the black. . . .

They will then [carry] the righteous to the abode of harmony [heaven], and cast the wicked

back to the wicked existence [hell]. . . . Then [the last savior] Soshyant by order of the Creator will give reward and recompense to all men in conformity with their deeds.

—Bundahishn, Zoroastrian scripture

Three other religions that emerged in the Middle East, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, also stressed ideas of an individual's free will to choose good or evil, and the latter two religions also included the concepts of heaven, hell, and a final judgment day.

Persia's Legacy Persia's legacy to the rest of the world includes the first postal system and the first larger-scale network of roadways, both vital elements for establishing a well-organized and cohesive civilization. In addition, the Persian empire's practice of allowing conquered peoples to retain many of their own customs influenced later rulers. The ancient Greeks adopted religious, cultural, and political ideas from the Persians. Some of these ideas were later spread throughout their empire by the Romans, who admired the Greeks.

? DESCRIBE Describe the steps Darius took to unite the Persian empire.

Phoenician Contributions

While powerful rulers subdued large empires, many small states of the ancient Middle East made their own contributions to civilization. The Phoenicians (fuh NISH unz), for example, gained fame as both sailors and traders. They occupied a string of cities along the eastern Mediterranean coast, in the area that today is Lebanon and Syria.

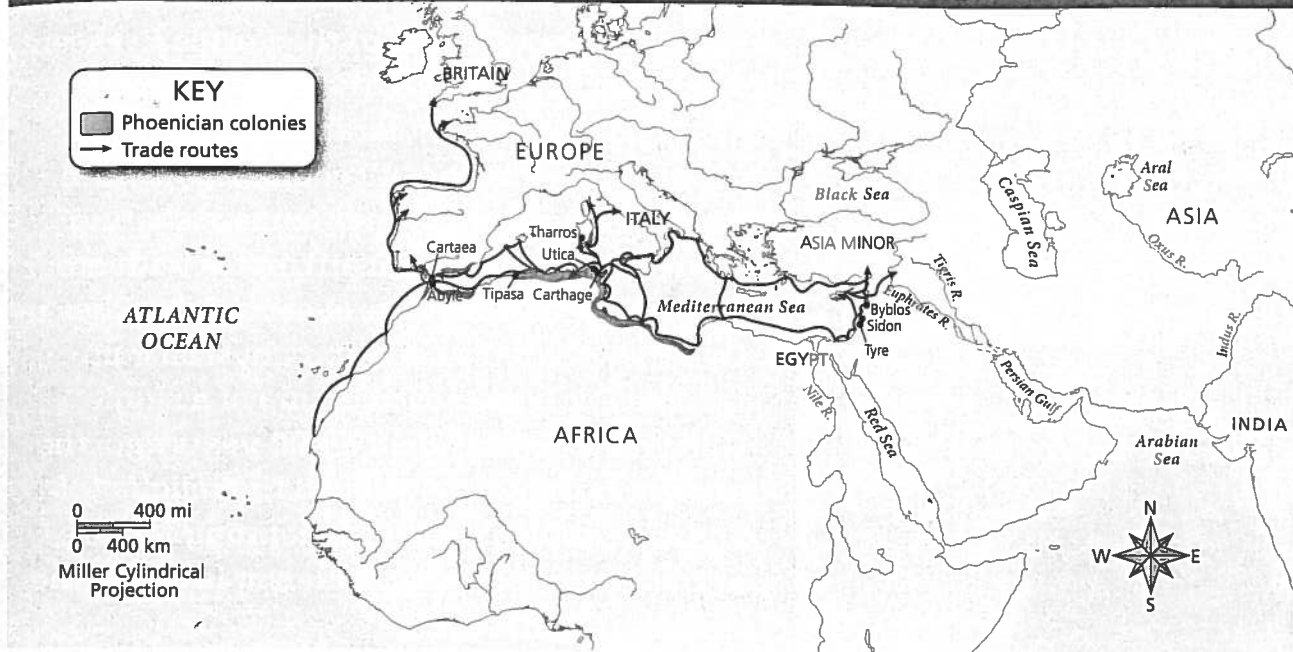
Manufacturing and Trade Expands The coastal land, though narrow, was fertile and supported

Benefits of a Money Economy

SIMPLIFIED EXCHANGES	Only one party is purchasing an item rather than two.
EXACT VALUES	Comparison of items being considered for purchase is simplified because all items are given exact values.
NO LIMITATIONS	Money can be kept for use at a later time, whereas barter items such as live animals may not last.

>> Analyze Information Money economies developed as a result of the benefits they offered to the exchange process. What advantages did a money economy offer?

Phoenician Colonies and Trade Routes, about 700 B.C.



>> **Analyze Maps** What information on the map supports the claim that the Phoenicians were skilled sailors?

Interactive Map

farming. Still, because of their location near the sea, the resourceful Phoenicians became best known for manufacturing and trade. They made glass from coastal sand. From a tiny sea snail, they produced a widely admired purple dye, called “Tyrian purple” after the city of Tyre.

Phoenicians traded with people all around the Mediterranean Sea. To promote trade, they set up colonies from North Africa to Sicily and Spain.

A **colony** is a territory settled and ruled by people from another land. A few Phoenician traders braved the stormy Atlantic and sailed as far as Britain. There, they exchanged goods from the Mediterranean for tin.

The Phoenician Alphabet Historians have called the Phoenicians “carriers of civilization” because they spread Middle Eastern civilization around the Mediterranean. One of the most significant Phoenician contributions to culture was their alphabet. Unlike cuneiform, in which symbols represent syllables or whole words, an **alphabet** is a writing system in which each symbol represents a single basic sound, such as a consonant or vowel.

Phoenician traders developed an alphabetic system of 22 symbols that stood for consonant sounds. Later, the Greeks adapted the Phoenician alphabet and added symbols for the vowel sounds. From this Greek

alphabet came the letters in which this sentence is written—that is, the alphabet we use today.

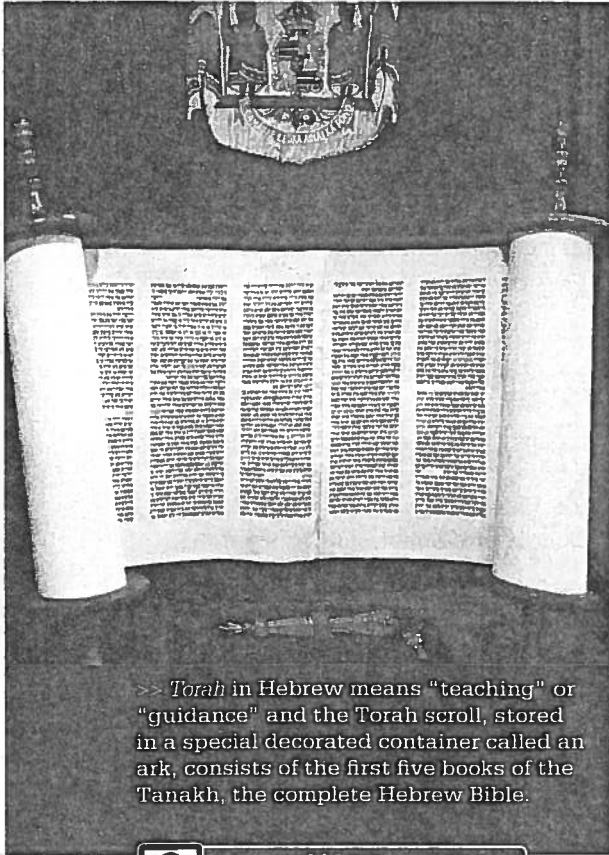
? INTEGRATE INFORMATION How has the Phoenician development of an alphabet been a lasting contribution to civilization?

✚ ELPS ELPS 1.C.1 Use a concept map to learn about *Phoenician Contributions*.

ASSESSMENT

1. **Explain** Explain the importance of Babylonian achievements.
2. **Synthesize** How did the Hittites contribute to cultural diffusion of early Mesopotamian culture and ideas, and what was one of their important technological advancements?
3. **Synthesize** Describe some of the major influences of Persia.
4. **Compare** How did conquests contribute to the growth of well-organized empires?
5. **Synthesize** Explain how the Phoenicians spread ideas among different peoples in the ancient Middle East.


The ancient land of Israel was located at the far western end of the Fertile Crescent, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The first ancient Israelites inhabited small villages in the hill country of central Israel, called at that time Canaan, sharing land and many cultural attributes with other Canaanites. Although archaeology teaches us that they shared a common physical culture, the ancient Israelites' worship of a single God was unique. About 4,000 years ago, the ancient Israelites developed the religion of Judaism, which became a defining feature of their culture. Today, Judaism is one of the world's major faiths.



>> *Torah* in Hebrew means “teaching” or “guidance” and the Torah scroll, stored in a special decorated container called an ark, consists of the first five books of the Tanakh, the complete Hebrew Bible.

 Interactive Flipped Video

TEKS

 1.B, 3.A, 20.A, 20.B, 22.B, 23.A, 23.B

>> Objectives

Understand what made the ancient Israelites' belief system unique from others at the time.

Outline the main events in the early history of the Israelites.

Analyze the central moral and ethical ideas of Judaism.

>> Key Terms

monotheistic
Torah
Abraham
covenant
Moses
David
Solomon
patriarchal
Sabbath
prophet
ethics
Diaspora

The Hebrews and the Origins of Judaism

The Ancient Israelites' Unique Belief System

The beliefs of the ancient Israelites, also called the Hebrews for the first three generations, differed in basic ways from those of nearby peoples. The Israelites were **monotheistic**, believing that there was only one god. At the time, all other peoples worshiped many gods.

A few religious leaders, such as the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaton, spoke of a single powerful god. However, such ideas did not have the lasting impact that Israelite beliefs did.

The Israelites believed in an all-knowing, all-powerful God who was present everywhere. In their views, history and faith were interconnected. Each event reflected God's plan for the people of Israel, and the Israelites' choices and actions made the plan unfold. The **Torah** (TOH ruh), their most sacred text, tells the history of the ancient Israelites and their continuing relationship with God. The Torah includes the first five books of the Hebrew Bible—that is, the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Hebrew Bible includes a total of 24 books. Additional laws, customs,

legends, and ethics written down much later make up another important lengthy text, the Talmud, containing over 12,000 pages.

? SUMMARIZE How did the beliefs of ancient Israelites differ from those of other nearby peoples?

The Ancient Israelites

Abraham is considered the father of the Israelites and their religion, Judaism. According to the Torah, Abraham was born near Ur in Mesopotamia, in present-day Iraq, and moved to Haran in present-day Syria about 2000 B.C. According to Jewish belief, God called to Abraham in Haran. God made an offer to Abraham, telling him that if he left his home and his family, then God would make him the founder of a great nation and bless him. So he and his extended family migrated, herding their sheep and goats into a region called Canaan (KAY nun). Abraham believed that everything was created by a single God, and he began to teach this belief to others.

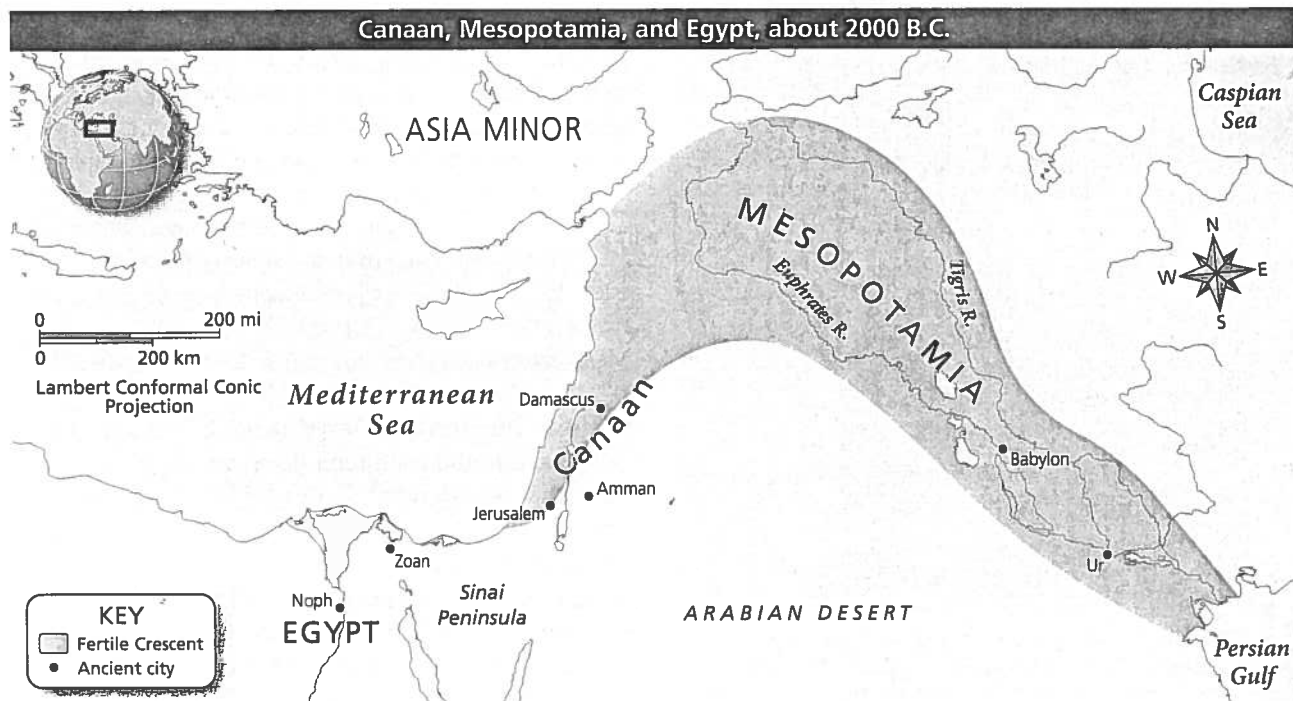
God's Covenant With the Israelites The Israelites believed that God had made the following **covenant**, or promise and agreement, with Abraham:

You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. . . . I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings [short stay], all the land of Canaan. . . .

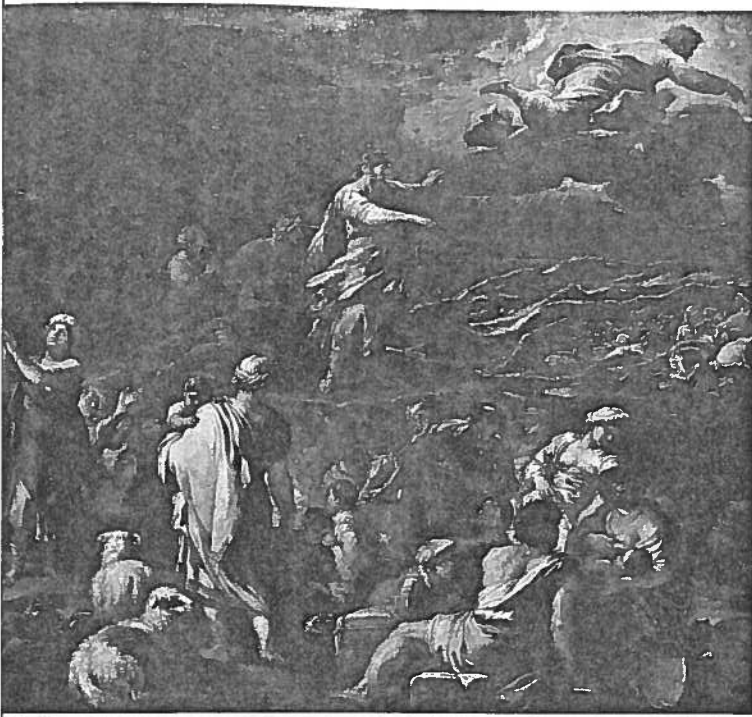
—Genesis 17:4–8

God's covenant with Abraham included two declarations that became the basis of two key beliefs of Judaism. First, God declared that He would have a special relationship with Abraham and his descendants. The Israelites believed that God had chosen them to fulfill certain obligations and duties in the world. Second, God declared that Canaan would one day belong to the Israelites. As a result, the Israelites viewed Canaan as their "promised land."


As described in the Book of Genesis, Abraham and his descendants left their home in Ur and adopted a



>> Analyze Maps What factors may have led to Canaan's becoming a crossroads in the ancient Middle East?



>> In this 17th-century painting, Moses is depicted holding out his staff as the Red Sea is parted by God. According to the Bible, the Israelites were able to cross the sea and escape from Egypt.

 Interactive Gallery



>> This mosaic from a synagogue wall in Jerusalem shows the symbols of the 12 tribes of Israel. Each tribe represents one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

nomadic lifestyle, traveling for many years. Late in life, Abraham and his wife Sarah had a son named Isaac. Isaac had two sons, one named Jacob. Jews believe that Jacob was blessed by God and given the name Israel. Jacob fathered 12 sons, and his many descendants are known as the children of Israel.

Jacob's son Joseph was placed in charge of Egypt's food supplies after he interpreted the pharaoh's dream as predicting a famine. When a famine did strike, Jacob moved his entire family into Egypt, where the pharaoh welcomed them and they lived peacefully. After many years, a new pharaoh came to power. He feared the growing power and numbers of the children of Israel and made them slaves.

Years later, an Israelite named **Moses** renewed God's covenant with the Israelites. In the book of Exodus, Moses tells the Israelites that in return for faithful obedience to God, God will lead them out of bondage in Egypt and into the promised land.

Moses led the Israelites in their exodus, or departure, from Egypt, from slavery to freedom. After 40 years, they reached Canaan, although Moses died just before they arrived.

The Kingdom of Israel By 1000 B.C., the Israelites had set up the Kingdom of Israel. The Torah tells of twelve separate tribes of Israel that were not united before this time. Saul, the first king of Israel, united these tribes into a single nation. The strong and wise second king of Israel, **David**, established Jerusalem as its national capital and led successful military campaigns creating secure borders for Israel.

According to the Torah, David's son **Solomon** followed him as king. Solomon undertook the task of turning the city of Jerusalem into an impressive capital. Jerusalem was praised for its splendid Temple dedicated to God, which David had planned and Solomon constructed. Solomon also won fame for his wisdom and understanding. Additionally, he tried to increase Israel's influence around the region by negotiating with powerful empires in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Israel Is Divided and Conquered Solomon's building projects required such high taxes and so much forced labor that revolts erupted after he died about 922 B.C. The kingdom then split into Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

The Israelites remained independent for 200 years but eventually fell to more powerful peoples. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel. From this time, since most of the remaining Israelites came from the tribe of Judah and were now part of the Kingdom of Judah, they became known

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments helped shape American laws and people's ideas about right and wrong.	
COMMANDMENT	EXPLANATION
1 st "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me."	to recognize God as the one and only God
2 nd "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."	to speak the truth; seen today in legal oaths
3 rd "Remember that you keep Holy the Sabbath Day."	to dedicate one day to worship
4 th "Honor thy father and thy mother..."	to respect and love one's parents
5 th "Thou shalt not kill."	to avoid killing others; seen today in laws about murder
6 th "Thou shalt not commit adultery."	to ensure faithfulness to one's spouse; seen today in divorce laws
7 th "Thou shalt not steal."	to prevent taking another person's belongings
8 th "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."	to prevent lying; seen today by laws against testifying falsely in a court of law
9 th "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."	to prevent wanting other people's possessions
10 th "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."	to help ensure that families are not broken up

>> Over time, the ideas in the Ten Commandments have influenced aspects of some modern legal and political systems.



as *yehudi*, or Jews. In 586 B.C., Babylonian armies captured Judah. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the great temple and forced many of those he defeated into exile in Babylon. This period of exile, called the Babylonian Captivity, lasted about 50 years.

In 539 B.C., the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon and soon freed the Jews. Many Jews returned to Judah, where they rebuilt a smaller version of Solomon's Temple. However, like other groups in the region, they lived under Persian rule.

? **IDENTIFY MAIN IDEAS** According to the Torah, where did the Israelites go once they left Egypt? What was special to them about their destination?

TX ELPS **ELPS 1.D.1** Practice asking for assistance to learn about *The Ancient Israelites*.

Law and Morality in Judaism

From early times, the concept of law was central to the Israelites. The Torah includes many laws and is thus often referred to as the Books of the Law. Some of the laws deal with everyday matters such as cleanliness and food preparation. Others define criminal acts. The Torah also establishes moral principles.

Like other early civilizations, Israelite society was **patriarchal**, which means that men held the greatest legal and moral authority. A family's oldest male relative was the head of the household, but women were respected and had more rights than women in many other ancient societies. A few outstanding women, such as the judge and military leader Deborah and the prophetess Miriam won great honor.

The Ten Commandments as a Guide At the heart of Judaism are the Ten Commandments, a set of laws that Jews believe God gave to them through Moses. The first four commandments stress religious duties toward God, such as keeping the **Sabbath**, a holy day for rest and worship. The rest address conduct toward others. They include "Honor your father and mother," "You shall not murder," and "You shall not steal." In addition to establishing a moral law, the Ten Commandments also helped develop the "rule of law," the idea that laws should apply to everyone equally. Finally, the Ten Commandments guided the ancient Jews in setting up their society and government, an influence that endures into our own time.

A Strong Code of Ethics Often in Jewish history, spiritual leaders emerged to interpret God's will. These **prophets**, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, reminded the Jewish people of their duties.

The prophets also taught a strong code of **ethics**, or moral standards of behavior. They urged both personal morality and social justice, calling on the rich and powerful to protect the poor and weak. All people, they said, were equal before God. Unlike many ancient societies in which the ruler was seen as a god, Jews saw their leaders as fully human and bound to obey God's law.

Scholars have been able to learn more about ancient Israelite culture and ethics as a result of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Scrolls are fragments of early Jewish religious documents. These documents have shed light on the way the Bible and Torah were transmitted to us and have illuminated the religious backgrounds of both Judaism and Christianity.

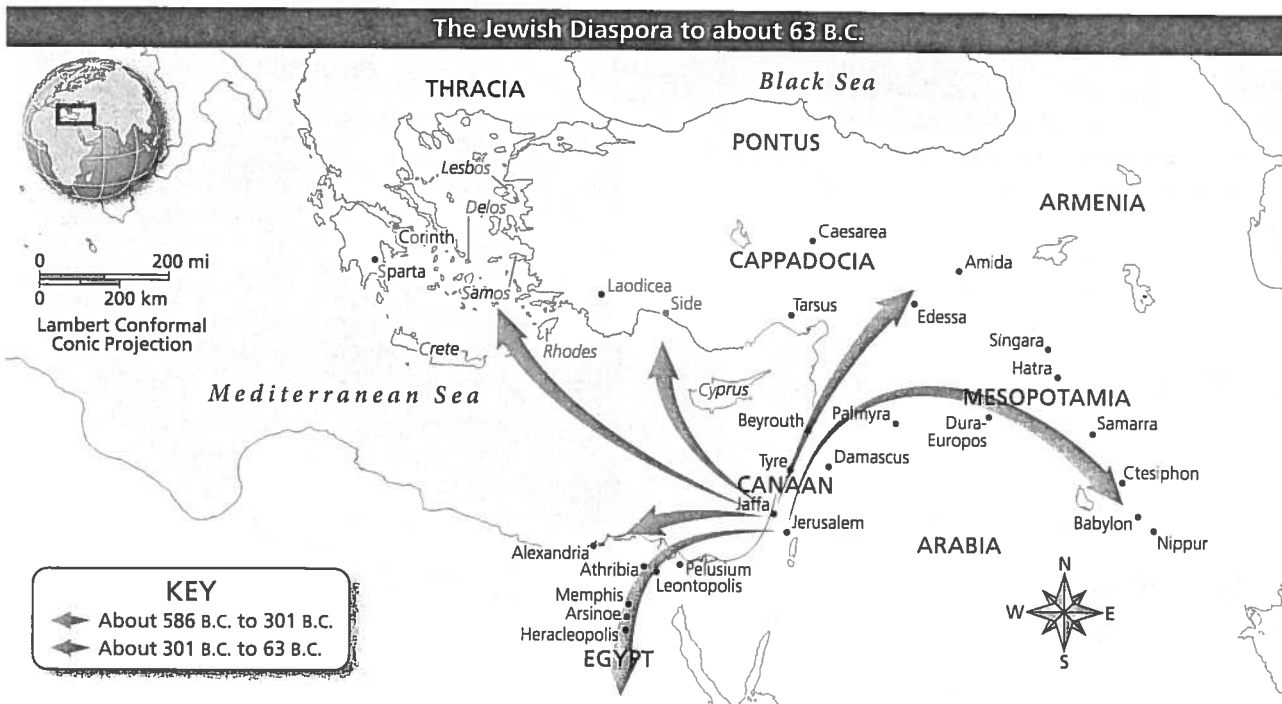
The spiritual ideas of the ancient Israelites later influenced Western culture, morality, ethics, and conduct. Judaism influenced both Christianity and Islam, two other monotheistic faiths that also arose in the Middle East. Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike honor Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, and they all teach the ethical worldview developed by the Israelites. Today, in the West, this shared heritage of Jews and Christians is known as the Judeo-Christian tradition.

and moved to different parts of the world. This spreading out of the Jewish people was called the **Diaspora** (dy AS pur uh). Some Jews were exiled, others moved to farther reaches of the empires that controlled their land, and yet others moved because of discontent with political rulers. Wherever Jews settled, many maintained their identity as a people by living in close-knit communities and obeying their religious laws and traditions. These traditions helped them survive centuries of persecution, or unfair treatment inflicted on a particular group of people, which you will read about in later chapters.

Today, Judaism is numbered among the world's major religions for its contributions to religious thought as well as its strong influence on two later religions, Christianity and Islam. All three of these monotheistic faiths emerged in the Middle East and spread to other parts of the world. Although their beliefs differ in many ways, Jews, Christians, and Muslims all honor Abraham, Moses, and the Hebrew prophets. All three teach the ethical worldview developed by the Israelites.

Judaism Spreads For a 500-year period that began with the Babylonian Captivity, many Jews left Judah

Judeo-Christian Influences Some people have suggested that Judeo-Christian traditions had an even more far-reaching impact on world history. They trace today's democratic-republican forms of government to the teachings of these religions, such as ideas about



>> Analyze Maps The Jewish Diaspora began with the Babylonian Captivity in 6th century B.C. and has continued throughout history. How did the Diaspora contribute to the spread of Judaism?

the worth of the individual, the importance of social responsibility, and the concept that all believers were equal before God. They look to Judeo-Christian legal traditions for the origins of such rights and concepts as trial by jury and innocent until proven guilty. Indeed, the Ten Commandments, the teachings of the Hebrew prophets, and the historical traditions of the ancient Israelites helped shape Western culture, morality, ethics, and conduct over many centuries.

2 EXPLAIN How did the prophets help Jews uphold the law?

ASSESSMENT

- 1. Identify Main Ideas** How did the religion of the ancient Israelites differ from those of its neighbors?
- 2. Support Ideas with Examples** Name two events from Jewish history that reflect the Israelites' belief that God had a plan for the people of Israel.
- 3. Identify Cause and Effect** Explain what happened to the Israelites after the death of Solomon.
- 4. Summarize** Identify the points in Israel's early history when it was unified, divided, or ruled by outsiders.
- 5. Synthesize** How did Judeo-Christian ideas influence legal traditions in Western countries?

The fertile lands of the Nile Valley attracted Stone Age farmers. People migrated there from the Mediterranean area, from hills and deserts near the Nile, and from other parts of Africa. In time, a powerful civilization emerged that depended heavily on the control of river waters.



>> These statues at Thebes stood in front of a temple destroyed by the Nile's flooding. Egyptians learned to control the flooding and use the Nile for agriculture as well as transportation.



Interactive Flipped Video

TEKS



1.A, 2.C, 16.B, 19.A, 24.A, 26.B, 27.A

>> Objectives

Understand the ways in which geography helped shape ancient Egypt.

Explain how Egypt grew strong during the New Kingdom.

Describe the ways in which religious beliefs shaped the lives of ancient Egyptians.

Explain how the Egyptians organized their society.

Outline the advances that the Egyptians made in learning, the arts, science, and literature.

>> Key Terms

cataract	mummification
delta	hieroglyphics
dynasty	papyrus
pharaoh	decipher
vizier	Rosetta Stone
Hatshepsut	
Thutmose III	
Ramses II	
Amon-Re	
Osiris	
Isis	
Akhenaton	

Egyptian Civilization

Geography Shapes Egypt

"Egypt," said the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, "is wholly the gift of the Nile." Without the Nile, Egypt would be just the barren desert that surrounds the river. But while the desert protected Egypt from invasion, it also limited where people could settle.

In ancient times, as today, farming villages dotted the narrow band of land watered by the Nile. Beyond the rich, irrigated "Black Land," generally no more than ten miles wide, lay the "Red Land," a sun-baked desert that stretched across North Africa. Farmers took advantage of the fertile soil of the Nile Valley to grow wheat and flax, a plant whose fibers were used for clothing.

Benefits of Nile Flooding The Nile rises in the highlands of Ethiopia and the lakes of central Africa. Every spring, the rains in this interior region send water racing down streams that feed the Nile River. In ancient times, Egyptians eagerly awaited the annual flood. It soaked the land with life-giving water and deposited a layer of rich silt.

People had to cooperate to control the Nile's floods. Under the direction of early governments, they built dikes, reservoirs, and irrigation ditches to channel the rising river and store water for the dry season.



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Two Regions United Ancient Egypt had two distinct regions, Upper Egypt in the south and Lower Egypt in the north. Upper Egypt stretched from the Nile's first **cataract**, or waterfall, to within 100 miles of the Mediterranean Sea. Lower Egypt covered the delta region where the Nile empties into the Mediterranean. A **delta** is a triangular area of marshland formed by deposits of silt at the mouth of some rivers.

About 3100 B.C., Menes, the king of Upper Egypt, united the two regions. He founded Egypt's first capital at Memphis, a site near where the Nile empties into its delta. Menes and his successors used the Nile as a highway linking north and south. They could send officials or armies to towns along the river. The Nile thus helped make Egypt one of the world's first unified states.

The river also served as a trade route. Egyptian merchants traveled up and down the Nile in sailboats and barges, exchanging the products of Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean region.

2 IDENTIFY MAIN IDEAS How did the yearly floods of the Nile influence life in ancient Egypt?

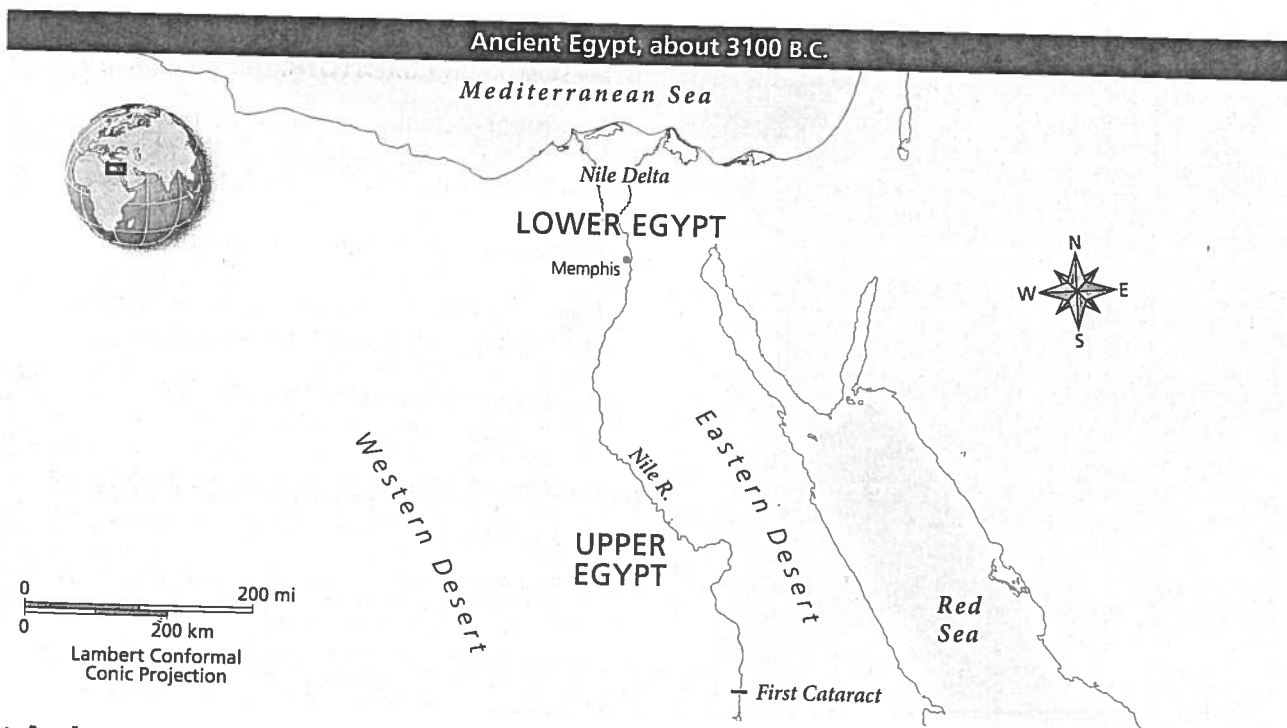
The Old Kingdom

Scholars divide the history of ancient Egypt into three main periods: the Old Kingdom (about 2575 B.C.–2130 B.C.), the Middle Kingdom (about 1938 B.C.–1630 B.C.), and the New Kingdom (about 1539 B.C.–1075 B.C.). Although power passed from one **dynasty**, or ruling family, to another, the land generally remained united.

A Structured Government During the Old Kingdom, Egyptian kings, later called **pharaohs** (FEHR ohz), organized and developed a strong, centralized state. Pharaohs held absolute power and played key roles in government and religion. Egyptians believed each pharaoh was a god. However, the pharaohs were also seen as human. People expected their pharaohs to behave morally and judged the pharaohs for their deeds.

Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom ruled by means of a bureaucracy. The pharaoh depended on a **vizier** (vih ZEEER), or chief minister, to supervise the government. Under the vizier, various departments looked after tax collection, farming, and the all-important irrigation system. Thousands of scribes carried out the vizier's instructions.

Ptah-hotep (ptah HOH tep), who lived around 2450 B.C. in Egypt, was a vizier to a pharaoh who took an interest in training young officials. Based on his vast experience of government, he wrote a book, *Instructions*



>> Analyze Maps The Nile extends another 3,600 miles south of its first cataract. What geographic features might have limited the expansion of civilization beyond the Nile Valley?

of the Vizier Ptah-hotep, in which he emphasized the importance of being humble and honest, obedient to one's father and superiors, and fair in dealing with other officials of all ranks.

Building the Great Pyramids During the Old Kingdom, Egyptian pharaohs built many necropolises (neh KRAHP uh lis iz), or cemeteries, containing majestic pyramids in the areas surrounding Memphis. Today, the best known are the Great Pyramids that still stand at Giza.

Tombs within the pyramids were considered homes in which the deceased would live for eternity. Because Egyptians believed in an afterlife, they preserved the bodies of their dead rulers and provided them with everything they would need in their new lives. Building each of the pyramids took so long that often a pharaoh would begin to build his tomb as soon as he came to power.

? CHECK UNDERSTANDING How was the Egyptian government structured during the Old Kingdom?

Middle and New Kingdom Egypt

Power struggles, crop failures, and the cost of building the pyramids all contributed to the collapse of the Old Kingdom. Then, after more than a century of disunity, new pharaohs reunited the land, ushering in a new era, the Middle Kingdom.

The Middle Kingdom The Middle Kingdom was a turbulent period. The Nile did not rise as regularly as it had in the past. Corruption and rebellions were common. Despite the struggles, strong rulers were able to organize a large drainage project, creating vast new stretches of arable, or farmable, land. During this period, the central state ended the powers and privileges of the regional aristocrats. In addition, Egyptian armies occupied part of Nubia (also known as Kush), a gold-rich land to the south. Traders also had greater contacts with the peoples of the Middle East and the Mediterranean island of Crete.

About 1700 B.C., foreign invaders called the Hyksos (HIK soh) occupied the Nile delta region. Although the Hyksos took over the governance of Egypt, there was little conflict between the new rulers and the Egyptian people. The Hyksos aided the Egyptians with their horse-drawn war chariots. In time, the Egyptians

BUILDING THE PYRAMIDS

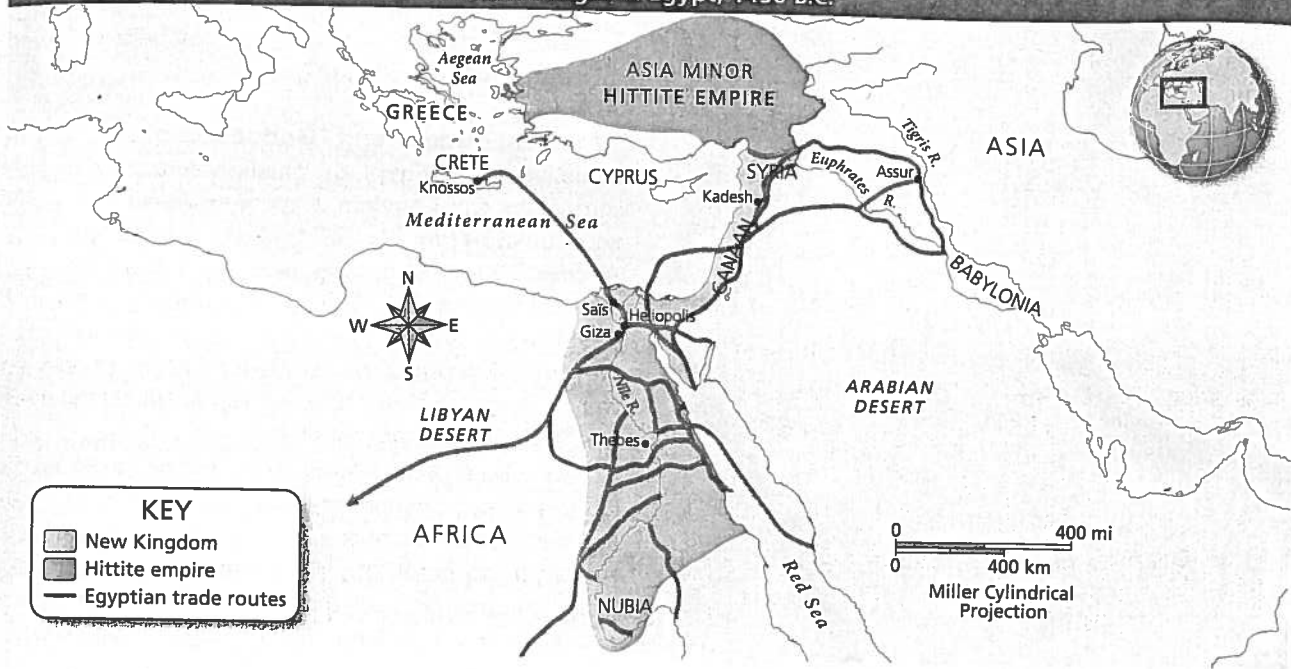
THE GREAT PYRAMID OF KHUFU

TYPE OF STONE	MOSTLY LIMESTONE AND SOME GRANITE
DISTANCE FROM LIMESTONE QUARRY TO GREAT PYRAMID	500 YARDS
NUMBER OF CUT STONES USED	2.3 MILLION
AVERAGE WEIGHT OF CUT STONES USED	2.5 TONS
WEIGHT OF LARGEST CUT STONE	40 TONS
LENGTH OF CONSTRUCTION	20 TO 30 YEARS
CONSTRUCTION STARTED	2584 B.C.
SIZE OF WORKFORCE	20,000 TO 30,000 WORKERS
TYPES OF WORKERS	CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, CARPENTERS, WATER CARRIERS, TOOLMAKERS, POTTERS, OVERSEERS, SCRIBES, COOKS, BAKERS, BUTCHERS, PHYSICIANS, PRIESTS

Sources: Encyclopedia Britannica Online; National Geographic Online; NOVA Online; Tim McNeese, The Pyramids of Giza

>> Analyze Data Pharaohs spent a great deal of resources and time building pyramids. Based on the information here, why do you think Giza pyramids built after Khufu's were not as large as his?

New Kingdom Egypt, 1450 B.C.



>> Analyze Maps During the New Kingdom, Egypt extended its trade routes and made peace with the Hittites to the north. How do you think the alliance with the Hittites helped Egypt reach its greatest extent?

 **Interactive Map**

mastered this new military technology. The Hyksos, in turn, were impressed by Egyptian civilization. They soon adopted Egyptian customs, beliefs, and even names. Finally, after more than 100 years of Hyksos rule, new Egyptian leaders arose and established the New Kingdom.

The New Kingdom During the years of the New Kingdom, a number of powerful and ambitious pharaohs created a large empire. At its height around 1450 B.C., the Egyptian empire reached as far north as Syria and the Euphrates River. The New Kingdom proved to be an age of conquest that brought Egyptians into greater contact with peoples in southwestern Asia as well as other parts of Africa.

In addition to expanding the empire and extending trade routes, New Kingdom pharaohs initiated large-scale building campaigns. They also brought prosperity to the land under a strong central government. The prosperity led to advances in medicine, hygiene, and dentistry, and craftsmanship reached new heights. During the years of the New Kingdom, Egypt was a great and powerful civilization.

Egypt's Powerful Rulers Egypt's first female ruler took charge during the New Kingdom. Her name was **Hatshepsut** (haht SHEP soot), and she exercised all

the rights of a pharaoh. From about 1472 B.C. to 1458 B.C., she encouraged trade with eastern Mediterranean lands and along the Red Sea coast of Africa. Her stepson, **Thutmose III** (thoot MOH suh), took over as pharaoh once he reached adulthood. A great military general, Thutmose III stretched Egypt's borders to their greatest extent ever.

Much later, **Ramses II** (RAM seez) became pharaoh of the New Kingdom. He ruled for 66 years, from 1279 B.C. to 1213 B.C., and during that time pushed Egyptian control northward again as far as Syria. He may be the best known of the Egyptian rulers because he boasted of his conquests on numerous temples and monuments, although his greatest reported victory may not actually have taken place.

Egypt Fights Its Neighbors During the reign of Ramses II, Egypt fought a number of fierce battles against the Hittites of Asia Minor. After years of fighting, the Egyptians and the Hittites signed a peace treaty, the first such document in history known to have survived. It declared that Egypt and the Hittites "shall be at peace and in brotherhood forever."

To the south of Egypt, Nubia had developed along the Nile. For centuries, Egyptians traded or fought with their southern neighbor. From Nubia, they acquired

ivory, cattle, and slaves. During the New Kingdom, Egypt conquered Nubia.

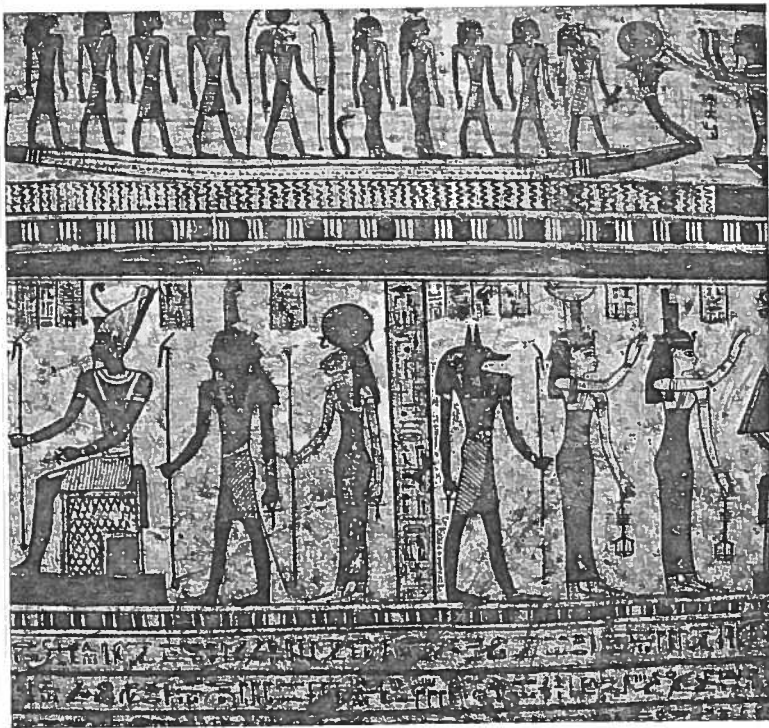
Ramses II used gold from Nubia to pay charioteers in his army. Nubians served in Egyptian armies and left their mark on Egyptian culture. Much Egyptian art of this period shows Nubian soldiers, musicians, or prisoners.

Egypt Declines After 1100 B.C., Egyptian power slowly declined. Invaders, such as the Assyrians and the Persians, conquered the Nile region. In 332 B.C., the last Egyptian dynasty ended as the Greeks took control. In 30 B.C., Roman armies displaced the Greeks. Each new conqueror was eager to add the fertile Nile Valley to a growing empire.

2 CHECK UNDERSTANDING In what ways was the Middle Kingdom turbulent?

Religion Shapes Ancient Egyptian Life

Religious beliefs about gods, values, and life after death affected the daily lives of ancient Egyptians. Today, much of what we know about Egyptian religion comes



>> The ancient Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses, each of whom had a role in maintaining peace and prosperity across Egypt.

from inscriptions on monuments and wall paintings in tombs. These inscriptions describe Egyptians appealing to the divine forces that they believed ruled this world and the afterlife.

Important Gods and Goddesses In the sun-drenched land of Egypt, the chief god was the sun god. During the Old Kingdom, Egyptians worshiped a sun god named Re (ray). By the Middle Kingdom, Egyptians associated Re with another god, Amon (AH mun), and called this great lord of the gods **Amon-Re**. Although Egypt was a monarchy, it had characteristics of a theocracy. Egyptians viewed their pharaohs as gods as well as kings, and they believed the pharaohs received their right to rule from Amon-Re.

Most Egyptians related more to the god **Osiris** (oh SY ris) and the goddess **Isis** (EYE sis), whose story touched human emotions such as love and jealousy. According to mythology, Osiris ruled Egypt until his jealous brother, Set, killed him. Set then cut Osiris into pieces, which he tossed all over Egypt. Osiris's wife, Isis, saved him. She reassembled his body and brought him back to life. Because Osiris could no longer rule over the living, he became god of the dead and judge of souls seeking admission to the afterlife.

To Egyptians, Osiris was especially important because, in addition to ruling over the underworld, he was also god of the Nile. In that role, he controlled the annual flood that made the land fertile. Isis had special appeal for women, who believed that she had first taught women to grind corn, spin flax, weave cloth, and care for children. Like Osiris, Isis promised the faithful that they would have life after death.

An Attempt to Reshape Religion About 1380 B.C., a young pharaoh named Amenhotep IV (ah mun HOH tep) challenged the powerful priests of Amon-Re. He devoted his life to the worship of Aton, a minor god. The pharaoh took the name **Akhenaton** (ah keh NAH tun), meaning "he who serves Aton." He ordered priests to worship only Aton and to remove the names of other gods from their temples.

Akhenaton's radical ideas had little success. Priests of Amon-Re and of other gods resisted such revolutionary changes. The people, too, were afraid to abandon their old gods in favor of Aton. Nobles also deserted the pharaoh because he neglected his duty of defending the empire. After Akhenaton's death, priests of the old gods reasserted their power.

Egyptian Views of the Afterlife As you have read, Egyptians believed that Osiris and Isis had promised them eternal life after death. Belief in the afterlife

affected all Egyptians, from the highest noble to the lowest peasant.

The Egyptians believed that each soul had to pass a test to win eternal life. First, the dead soul would be ferried across a lake of fire to the hall of Osiris. Then the dead person's heart would be weighed against the feather of truth. Those Osiris judged to be sinners would be fed to the crocodile-shaped Eater of the Dead. Worthy souls would enter the Happy Field of Food, where they would live forever in bliss. To survive the dangerous journey through the underworld, Egyptians relied on the *Book of the Dead*. It contained spells, charms, and formulas for the dead to use in the afterlife.

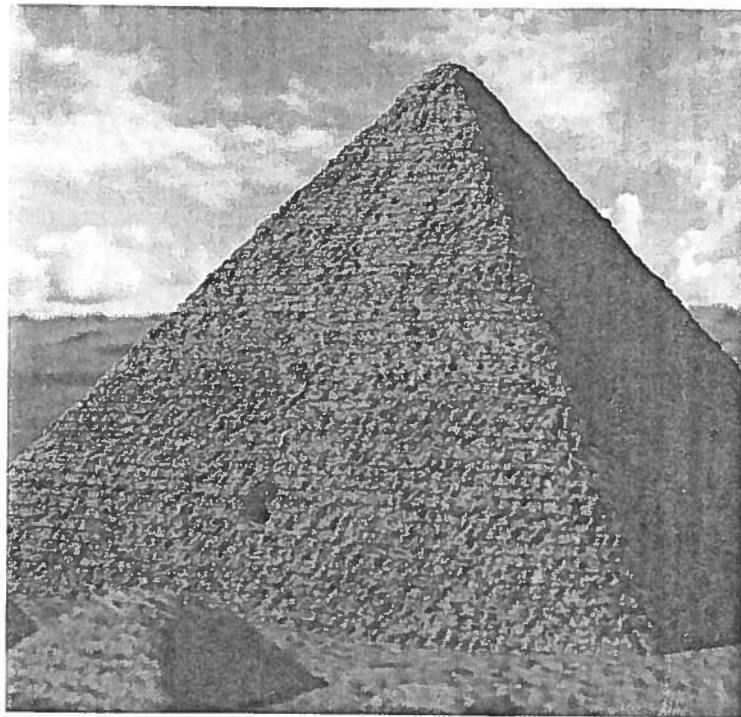
Mummification Egyptians believed that the afterlife would be much like life on Earth. As a result, they buried their dead with everything they would need for eternity.

To give a soul use of its body in the afterlife, Egyptians perfected scientific skills in **mummification** (mum uh fih KAY shun), the preservation of dead bodies by embalming them and wrapping them in cloth. At first, mummification was a privilege reserved for rulers and nobles. Eventually, ordinary Egyptians also won the right to mummify their dead, including beloved pets.


King Tutankhamen's Tomb During the New Kingdom, many pharaohs were buried in a desolate valley known as the Valley of the Kings. Their tombs, known to be filled with fantastic riches, were a temptation to robbers in ancient times. As a result, most royal tombs were stripped of their treasures long ago. In 1922, however, British archaeologist Howard Carter unearthed the tomb of the young pharaoh Tutankhamen (toot ahng KAH mun), who was the son-in-law of Akhenaton. The tomb had remained almost untouched for more than 3,000 years. Its treasures have provided scholars with a wealth of evidence about Egyptian civilization.

The body of the 18-year-old "King Tut" had been placed in a solid-gold coffin, nested within richly decorated outer coffins. Today, the dazzling array of objects found in the tomb fills several rooms in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The treasures include chariots, weapons, furniture, jewelry, toys, and games. Tutankhamen was a minor king. We can only imagine what treasures must have filled the tombs of great pharaohs like Thutmose III or Ramses II.

2 DRAW CONCLUSIONS How did mummification reflect Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife?



>> To complete a pyramid, workers quarried millions of huge limestone blocks. They transported the cut stones on barges along the Nile then pulled them up a ramp to build the pyramid.

 **Interactive 3-D Model**



>> Tutankhamen, or "King Tut," reigned for only eight or nine years. However, his tomb has unraveled many mysteries about his life and death. His solid gold funeral mask is shown here.

Organization of Egyptian Society

Like other early civilizations, Egypt had its own class system. As both a god and an earthly leader, the pharaoh stood at the top of society, along with the royal family. Directly under the pharaoh were government officials and the high priests and priestesses, who served the gods and goddesses. Next came a tiny class of merchants, scribes, and artisans. They provided for the needs of the rich and powerful. The bottom layer of society was the largest—made up of peasants who worked the land.

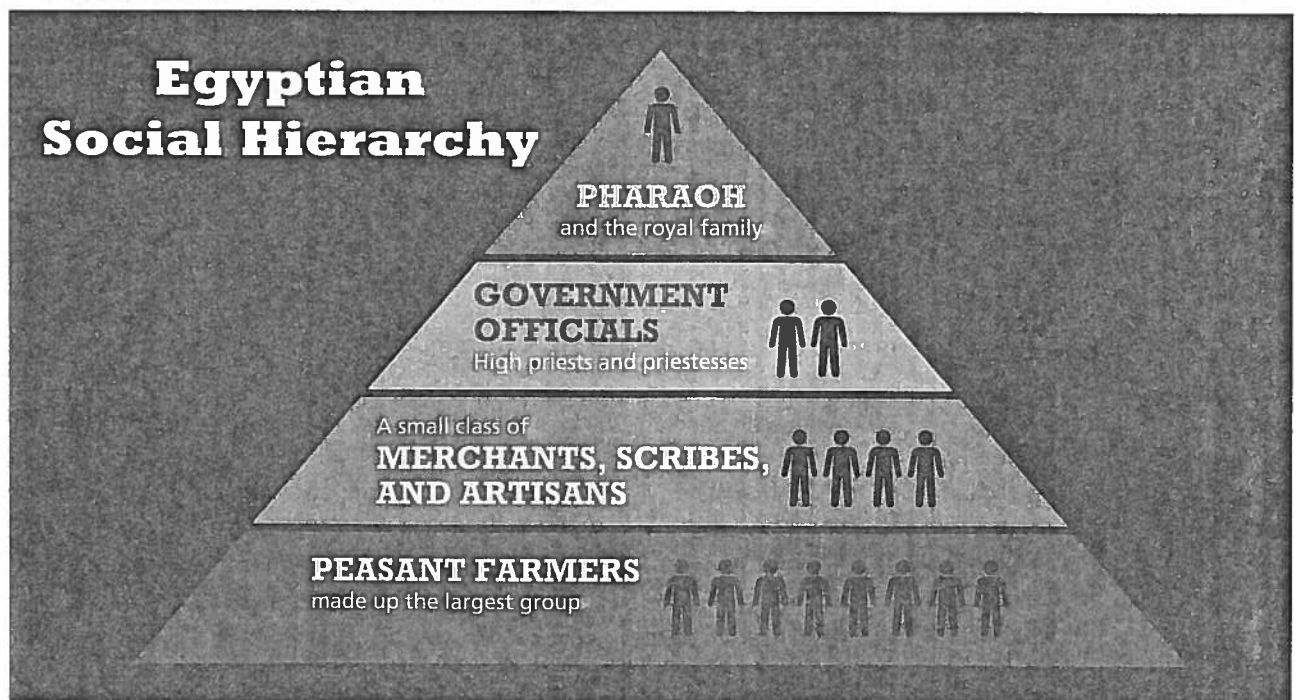
Peasant Farmers Most Numerous Most Egyptians were peasant farmers. Many were slaves. Men and women spent their days working the soil and repairing the dikes. One ancient record describes the life of a typical Egyptian peasant. "When the water is full he irrigates [the fields] and repairs his equipment. He spends the day cutting tools for cultivating barley, and the night twisting ropes."

In the off-season, peasant men were expected to serve the pharaoh, laboring to build palaces, temples, and tombs. Besides working in the fields, women also spent much time raising children, collecting water, and preparing food.

Changes to Social Structure During the New Kingdom, social classes became more fluid as trade and warfare increased. Trade offered new opportunities to the growing merchant class. Foreign conquests brought riches to Egypt, which in turn meant more business for artisans. These skilled craftworkers made fine jewelry, furniture, and fabrics for the palaces and tombs of pharaohs and nobles.

Higher Status for Egyptian Women Egyptian women generally enjoyed a higher status and greater independence than women elsewhere in the ancient world. For example, Ramses II declared, "The foot of an Egyptian woman may walk where it pleases her and no one may deny her." Under Egyptian law, women could inherit property, enter business deals, buy and sell goods, go to court, and obtain a divorce.

Although there were often clear distinctions between the occupations of women and men, women's work was not confined to the home. Women manufactured perfume and textiles, managed farming estates, and served as doctors. Women could also enter the priesthood, especially in the service of goddesses. Despite their many rights and opportunities, few women learned to read and write. Even if they did,



>> Analyze Information What does the structure of Egypt's class system tell you about the importance of religion in that society?

they were excluded from becoming scribes or holding government jobs.

? IDENTIFY Which social class grew in size as a result of trade and warfare?

Egyptian Learning Advances

Learned scribes played a central role in Egyptian society. Some kept records of ceremonies, taxes, and gifts. Others served government officials or the pharaoh. Scribes also acquired skills in mathematics, medicine, and engineering. With skill and luck, a scribe from a poor family might become rich and powerful.

Written Records Like people in other early civilizations, the ancient Egyptians developed writing. In fact, they developed multiple writing systems. The first was **hieroglyphics** (hy ur oh GLIF icks), a system in which symbols or pictures called hieroglyphs represent objects, concepts, or sounds. The Egyptians used hieroglyphs to record important economic, administrative, and royal information. Often, priests and scribes carved hieroglyphs in stone. Such inscriptions on temples and other monuments are records of Egyptian culture that have endured for thousands of years.

Around the time that hieroglyphics came into use, scribes also developed hieratic (hy ur AT ik) writing, a simpler script for everyday use. The hieratic script was a cursive form of writing created by simplifying the shapes of the hieroglyphs. Over time, hieratic script was replaced by a similar one called demotic.

The Egyptians also learned to make a paper-like writing material from **papyrus** (puh PY rus), a plant that grows along the banks of the Nile. (Paper would not be invented until about A.D. 100, in China.) Writing cursive scripts with reed pens and ink on the smooth surface of papyrus strips was much easier than chiseling words onto stone. When writing official histories, however, scribes continued to carve hieroglyphs. Invaders such as the Hyksos, along with an expanding Egyptian empire, helped spread the use of papyrus to other regions.

Greek scholars traveled to Egypt to learn about Egyptian civilization and took the use of papyrus, along with mathematics, medicine, engineering, and other knowledge, back to Greece with them.

The Rosetta Stone Unlocks Egyptian Writing

After ancient Egypt declined, the meanings of ancient hieroglyphs were lost. Not until the early 1800s did



>> Since hieroglyphs, seen here, took a lot of time and care to write, Egyptian scribes also developed the cursive hieratic and demotic scripts for quicker use.

Interactive Gallery

a French scholar, Jean Champollion (zhahn shahm poh LYOHN), unravel the then mysterious writings on Egypt's great monuments. Champollion did so by **deciphering**, or figuring out the meaning of, passages written on the **Rosetta Stone**. This flat, black stone presents the same passage carved in hieroglyphics, demotic script, and Greek. By comparing the three versions, Champollion worked out the meanings of many hieroglyphs. As a result of that breakthrough, scholars could begin to read the thousands of surviving records from ancient Egypt.

Egyptian Science and Mathematics The ancient Egyptians accumulated a vast store of knowledge in fields such as medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. Like most doctors until relatively recent times, Egyptian physicians believed in various kinds of magic. However, they learned a great deal about the human body through their knowledge of mummification. They also became skilled at observing symptoms, diagnosing illnesses, and finding cures.

Doctors also performed complex surgical operations, such as amputations, which we know about today because they are described on papyrus scrolls that survived through time. Many plant parts that Egyptian doctors prescribed as medicines—such as anise, castor beans, and saffron—are still used today for various

purposes. Egyptian medical ideas spread throughout the Middle East and Africa as traders, scholars, and conquerors adapted these ideas and techniques. Pharaohs also sent their personal physicians to serve other kings. For example, Ramses II sent physicians to the king of Hatti, and many rulers, including Persians, employed Egyptian doctors as medical staff. Egyptian medical theories influenced the Greeks, who, in turn often served as doctors in the Roman empire. Arab and European doctors then adapted Roman ideas about medicine and anatomy.

Egyptian priest-astronomers studied the heavens, mapping constellations and charting the movements of the planets. With this knowledge, they developed a calendar that included 12 months of 30 days each as well as 5 days added at the end of each year. With a few changes, this ancient Egyptian calendar became the basis for our modern calendar.

Egyptians developed mathematics partly in response to practical problems that they faced. Flooding Nile waters forced Egyptians to redraw the boundaries of their fields each year. To do this, scholars developed geometry in order to survey the land. Egyptian engineers also used geometry to calculate the exact size and location of each block of stone to be used in construction of a pyramid or temple. Huge projects

such as building pyramids required considerable skills in design and engineering. These skills were passed on to other cultures as a result of foreign invasions of the New Kingdom of Egypt. These invasions helped spread Egyptian learning to other regions.

Specifically, Egyptian ideas were spread rapidly through the invasion led by Greece's Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. Alexander allowed for scholars to visit Egypt and work side by side with Egyptian scholars. Even before Alexander's invasion, mathematical and other scientific knowledge spread through trade and commerce.

Egyptian Arts The Egyptians left behind them a rich legacy of art. Statues and paintings have given us a wealth of information about ancient Egyptian viewpoints and values.

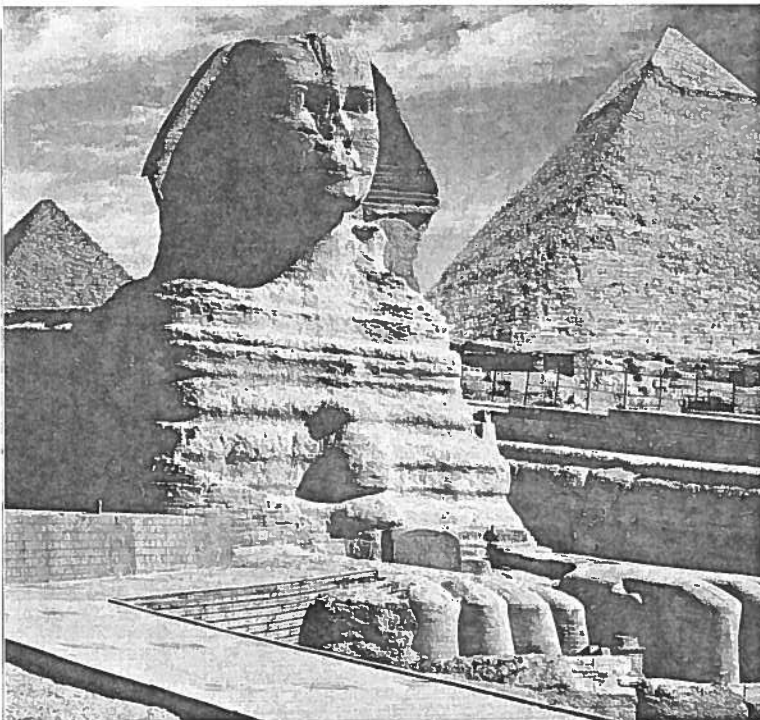
The arts of ancient Egypt included statues, wall paintings in tombs, and carvings on temples. Some show everyday scenes of trade, farming, family life, or religious ceremonies. Others boast of victories in battle. Ancient Egyptian art and architecture is one way Egyptian history is understood today. Egyptian art reflects the history, culture, and society in which it was created. Much Egyptian art reflects the importance of religion, portraying Egyptians' beliefs about death and the afterlife.

Painting and sculpture styles remained almost unchanged for thousands of years. Artists always presented gods and pharaohs as much larger than other figures—size indicated the subject's importance, not his or her real size. Also, artists usually depicted people with their heads and limbs in profile but their eyes and shoulders facing the viewer.

Statues often showed people in stiff, standard poses. Some human figures have animal heads that represent special qualities. The Sphinx that crouches near the Great Pyramids at Giza portrays an early pharaoh as a powerful lion-man. Egyptians also erected many stone buildings and monuments, mostly tombs and temples.

Egyptian Literature The oldest Egyptian literature includes hymns and prayers to gods, proverbs, and love poems and reflects Egyptian culture. Other writings tell of royal victories in battle or, like Ptah-hotep's book, give practical advice.

In Egypt, as in other early societies, folk tales were popular, especially *The Tale of Sinuhe*. It relates the wanderings of Sinuhe (SIN oo hay), an Egyptian official forced to flee into what is now Syria. He fights his way to fame among the desert people, whom the Egyptians considered uncivilized. As he gets older, Sinuhe longs to return home. The story ends happily when the pharaoh welcomes him back to court. *The Tale of Sinuhe* helps



>> The sphinx, shown here, is a mythical creature with the body of a lion and a human head. The Egyptians thought of sphinxes as guardians at the entrances of temples or pyramids.

us see how Egyptians viewed both themselves and the people of the surrounding desert.

? IDENTIFY What art forms were common in ancient Egypt?

ASSESSMENT

- 1. Summarize** How did the Nile play an important role in uniting Egypt and allowing Egypt to expand during the New Kingdom?
- 2. Draw Conclusions** Which details about the Egyptian gods show the importance of agriculture to Egyptian society?
- 3. Determine Relevance** What does mummification reveal about ancient Egyptian religious views?
- 4. Describe** Describe some of the main achievements of the ancient Egyptians.
- 5. Describe** Describe the organization of Egyptian society.