EGYPT

HISTORY

Egypt's story is one of the oldest in the world. For thousands of years, people have farmed beside the Nile and built great cities along it.



Farmers of the Nile

More than 7,000 years ago, people began to farm along the Nile. Each summer the river flooded and left rich black mud on its banks. Farmers grew wheat and barley in it. Villages grew into two kingdoms, Upper Egypt in the south and Lower Egypt in the north. Upper Egypt is in the south because the Nile flows north. About 3100 BC, a king joined them into one country.



Pharaohs and Pyramids

Egypt's kings were called **pharaohs**. People believed in a life after death, so pharaohs built pyramids and hidden tombs filled with treasures. Writers called scribes used **hieroglyphs**, picture signs, on papyrus and stone. Pharaohs led armies south into Nubia and east toward Asia. Ramses II fought the Hittites and later signed a peace treaty with them.

Greeks and Romans

In 332 BC, Alexander the Great, a Greek-speaking king, took Egypt from the Persians. He founded the city of Alexandria. Greek rulers led Egypt for about 300 years. In 196 BC, one message was carved on a stone in hieroglyphs and in Greek. In 30 BC, Rome took control of Egypt. Much later, in 1799, French soldiers found that stone, the Rosetta Stone. It helped people learn to read hieroglyphs again.

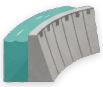
Arabic and Islam

In 639, Arab armies came to Egypt and took it from the Byzantine Empire. Over many years, Arabic became the main language and most people became Muslim. Some Egyptians stayed Christian, and their churches, called Coptic, are still there today. In 969, rulers called the Fatimids founded Cairo. Al-Azhar, a mosque and school they built there, still teaches students today. In 1517, the Ottoman **Empire** took control of Egypt.



A Canal and Independence

In the 1800s, Egypt's rulers built factories, schools and canals. The Suez Canal opened in 1869 after ten years of digging by Egyptian workers and a French company. In 1882, British troops took control of Egypt. Many Egyptians called for their freedom. On February 28, 1922, Britain declared Egypt independent.



Modern Egypt

In 1953, Egypt became a **republic**, a country led by a president instead of a king. The Aswan High Dam was finished in 1970. It stopped the yearly floods and made electricity. Before the lake behind it filled, workers cut the temples of Abu Simbel into blocks and moved them up to higher ground. Today Egypt has more people than any other Arab country.

EGYPT THROUGH TIME

3100 BC	2560 BC	332 BC	639	969	1799	1869	1922	1970
Upper and Lower Egypt unite	The Great Pyramid is built	Alexander takes Egypt	Arab armies come to Egypt	Cairo is founded	The Rosetta Stone is found	The Suez Canal opens	Egypt becomes independent	The Aswan High Dam is finished

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Khufu	Pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid
Hatshepsut	Woman who ruled Egypt as pharaoh
Tutankhamun	Boy king whose tomb was found in 1922
Cleopatra VII	Last Greek ruler of ancient Egypt
Naguib Mahfouz	Cairo writer who won a Nobel Prize

WORDS TO KNOW

pharaoh	a king of ancient Egypt
hieroglyphs	picture signs used for writing in ancient Egypt
empire	many lands and peoples ruled by one government
republic	a country led by a president instead of a king