

Name: _____

Date: _____

Assignment

3A

THE PYRAMIDS

The Egyptians believed that their ruler, the pharaoh, was both a king and a god. The Egyptians believed they would not continue to benefit from the powerful sun and the mysterious Nile River unless their pharaoh made the successful journey to the afterlife as Osiris. Pharaohs were buried with food and their most treasured objects. The Egyptians believed the spiritual essence of the objects would comfort the pharaoh as he traveled through the underworld. In time, the Egyptians developed a special process called mummification to preserve the bodies of the pharaohs, and constructed huge pyramids to protect the pharaoh once he reached the afterlife.

The first pharaohs were buried in the Egyptian sand, but their bodies were easy prey for jackals. Jackals were wolf-like creatures that prowled the desert for decayed flesh. At first, the Egyptian people protected the bodies of the pharaohs by surrounding the pharaoh's graves with mud pits. Later pharaohs were preserved in an elaborate ritual known as mummification and their bodies were placed in great burial chambers called pyramids.

Only the pharaoh and his closest advisors were mummified, because the ancient Egyptians believed only gods could live in the afterlife. Everyone else would live in the underworld where they would be protected by Osiris. Egyptian mummification took about 70 days. The priests who preserved the mummies were required to perform special rituals or ceremonies during the process. The body was cut on the side to remove the intestines, liver, stomach, and lungs. The organs were then wrapped in linen and stored in jars. The Egyptians did not understand the importance of the brain, so priests removed it by inserting a special hook through the nostrils to the skull. The hook was swished around, turning the brain to liquid. The brain was then poured out of the skull through the nose.

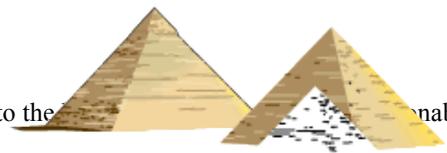
The body was stuffed for about forty days to drain any fluids. When the stuffing was removed, the body was very dry and smaller than in life. It was again stuffed with packing and covered in jewels. The body was then wrapped in about twenty layers of linen.

Many of the pharaohs were buried in a set of nesting mummy cases and elaborate stone coffins called sarcophagi. When a pharaoh's mummy was complete, a priest would touch the mouth of the mummy with a stick so that the pharaoh could breathe and speak in the afterlife.

The tombs of the early pharaohs were covered with a mud brick slab called a mastaba. The mastaba was a landmark that identified the burial place and allowed the Egyptian people a place to pay their respects to the body of the pharaoh. Imhotep was a brilliant architect who built an elaborate monument for his pharaoh, Zoser, more than 26 centuries before the Common Era. Imhotep placed six mastabas over Zoser's grave. Each mastaba was smaller than the one below it. Imhotep then covered the mastabas with polished white limestone. The result was the Step Pyramid of Zoser, a structure that rose 203 feet into the sky.

The Great Pyramid at Giza is the largest of the Egyptian pyramids, standing almost 500 feet tall, covering an area larger than ninety football fields and containing more than two million stones. The largest of the stones weigh 160,000 pounds and had to be transported more than 500 miles to Giza. Historians estimate that it took over 100,000 workers more than twenty years to build the Great Pyramid. The ancient Egyptians did not have large animals to help them carry the massive stones, and at the time of the construction of the Great Pyramid, the Egyptians had not yet discovered the wheel. The Great Pyramid was probably built by Egyptian farmers who were idle during the season when their farmland was flooded by the Nile River.

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the _____able answer will be graded as correct.



Name: _____
Period: _____

Assignment

3B



Fill in the Blanks

The ancient Egyptians believed that their prosperity depended upon the generosity of the p__a__a__h after he made a successful j__u__n__y to the a__t__r__i__e. It was necessary for the pharaoh to be *b__r__ed in Egyptian land and that the body of the pharaoh be intact. Many of the pharaohs were m__m__i__i__d, placed in s__r__o__h__gi, and buried in sophisticated tombs called p__r__m__ds.

The t__m__s of the early pharaohs were covered in a mud brick slab called a m__s__a__a. Imhotep was an a__c__i__e__t who placed one mastaba on top of another to create the first s_____ pyramid. Later pyramids were more *el__b__r__te. The G__e__t Pyramid at Giza stands as high as a building with fifty floors. This is particularly amazing because when the Great P__r__m__d was constructed, the people of ancient Egypt had not invented the w_____.

Answer in complete sentences

*1. How is the pharaoh an example of a polytheistic ruler?

*2. What objects would you take with you to the afterlife.

3. Why did the ancient Egyptians believe it was necessary to bury their pharaohs in elaborate tombs?

4. Explain how burial chambers changed over time for the pharaohs.

5. How do you think the Egyptians transported the heavy stones needed for the Great Pyramids without the technology of the wheel?

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.