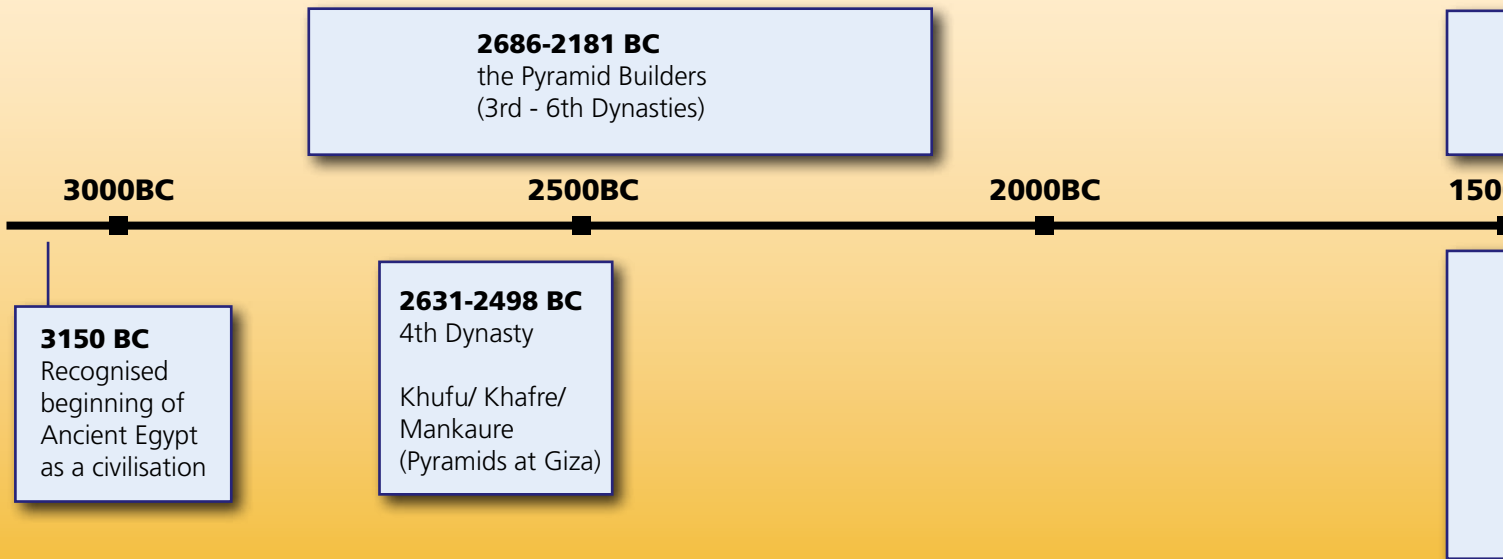


Ancient Egypt time-line



Teaching Ancient Egypt

Karin Doull

[**editorial note** The paper has two sections: a background briefing about Ancient Egypt with a time-line and map that introduces the second section's three teaching activities on: 1. building the Great Pyramid of Giza, 2. Hatshepsut, Egypt's great woman pharaoh and 3. Akhenaten and his attempt to revolutionise Egyptian religion.]

Briefing: 'The Splendour That Was Egypt' – Section 1

'Hail to thee, O Nile! Who manifests thyself over this land, and comes to give life to Egypt!'

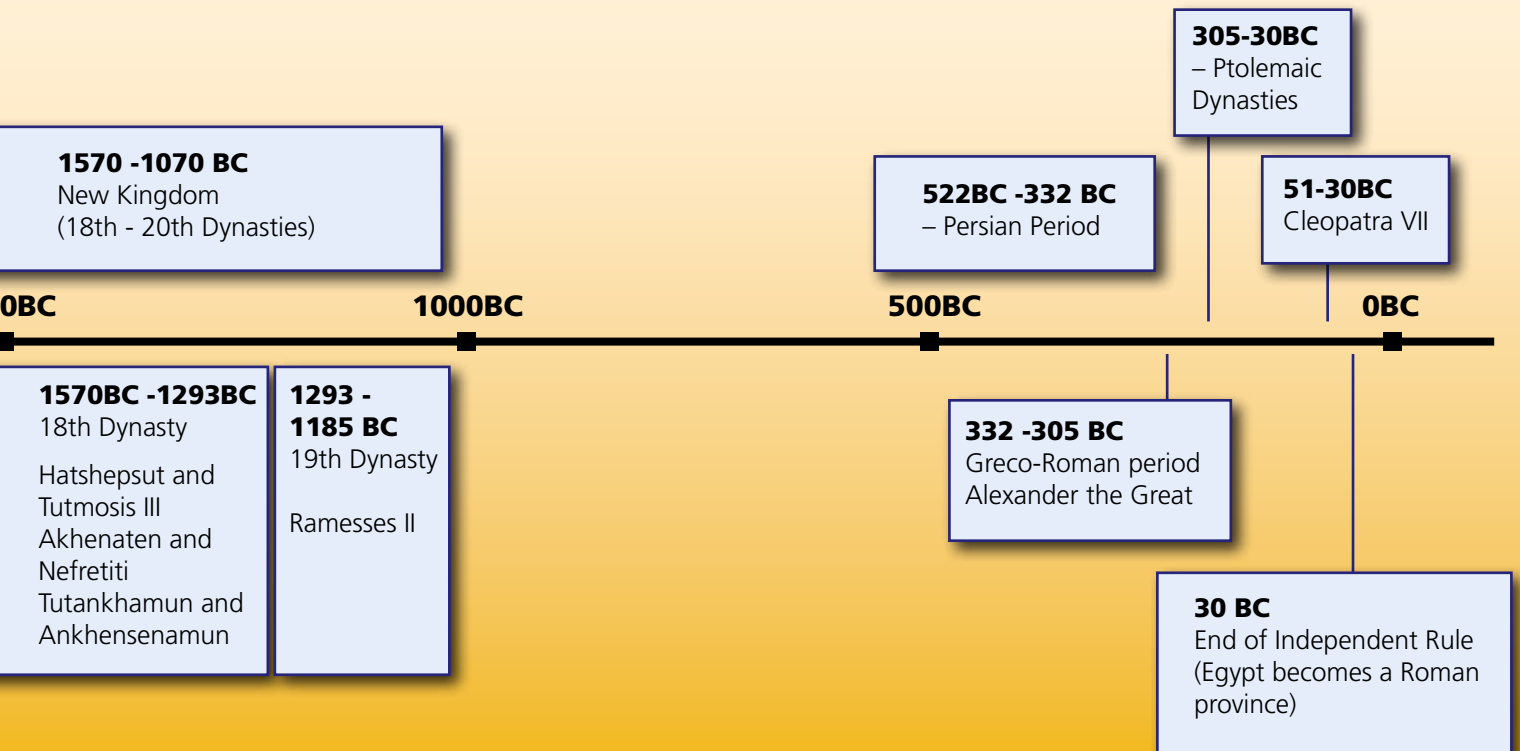
The ancient and enduring civilisation of Egypt owed its prosperity to the Nile and its regular inundations that provided fertility and stability, (see Figure 1). The Nile, with its prevailing winds in one direction and currents in the other, also facilitated

communication and trade. The river provided the fertile black silt that allowed agriculture to flourish and so provided for the growing population. The desert contained mineral riches as well as copious durable building material for the monumental construction projects. It is through these massive stone relics that we principally know of this civilisation today. The work of archaeologists such as Sir Flinders Petrie, Howard Carter and Margaret Murray reconstructed some of the splendour that so captivated public interest. Egypt has exerted a mysterious fascination for tourists since Greeks such as Herodotus, www.gutenberg.org/files/2131/2131-h/2131-h.htm started visiting in the fifth century BC. Even today many still flock to see some of the ancient wonders that remain.

The civilisation of Egypt spanned 3,000 years, (see time-line above).

How then to introduce such a spread of history to children within a possibly tight time-frame? As always subject knowledge is key. Without a sound understanding of the different facets of this vast empire it is impossible to select what is significant. It is vital to put themes and activities into an historical context. Investigating the process of mummification without considering what it tells us about Egyptian beliefs, hopes and fears is superficial at best. We should seek to challenge some of the misconceptions that persist about this civilisation, such as that it did not change over the 3,000 years or that the pyramids were built by slaves.

In order to navigate through this mass of information it makes sense to either focus on a particular character (pharaoh or Egyptologist) or select different events or themes



across the period. Life in Egypt was not static; the empire waxed and waned. In the middle of the period, around 1350BC, the pharaoh Amenhotep III changed his name to Akhenaten, changed his capital from Thebes to Akhetaten and changed the gods of Egypt from a pantheon of many to a single sun god. He also created a new vibrant style of art (Amarna period). Tutankhamun married Akhenaten's daughter and inherited a land divided by these new beliefs but as all know he was to die young after returning Egypt to the old gods. His belongings show evidence of the Amarna style however and we are still left with mysteries around his sudden death. This central period makes an excellent focus for a study.

Another strategy for investigating the period is to consider some of the themes that shape the period and use specific individuals to illustrate them. Our starting point could be to ask what Egypt was about and how we might visualise this civilisation. Monumental building works is clearly one aspect with the pyramids at Giza providing a classic example. Trade was the life blood of the empire and Hatshepsut's trading expedition a useful illustration of this. Religion and art have shaped our image of this period and the lives of Akhenaten and Tutankhamun, respectively, can be used to investigate these aspects. Finally with Cleopatra we have the decline of Egypt as an individual culture. Alongside all of these ancient individuals we have the work and lives of the archaeologists who brought us the fragments of their stories.

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Figure 1: Ancient Egypt



Activity 1: The age of the pyramids

Key question

Who built the Great Pyramid at Giza?

Learning intention

Select and combine information from different sources

Assessment criteria

Can the children use information from a variety of sources to explain how the pyramids came to be built?

Can the children evaluate the usefulness of Herodotus as a source?

Cross-curricular opportunities

possible follow up option:

Geography – The role of tourism today in Egypt

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwiic6BoleQ The Road to Giza



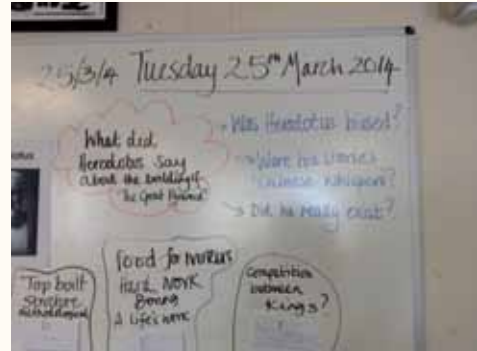
Activity

1	Read Herodotus' account of who had the great pyramid built and who built it – what key points does he bring out? Is this a valid account of what happened? Who does he say built the pyramids? Task = to see if Herodotus's account was reliable
2	Split class into six groups – give each class a segment of video to watch from BBC Building the Great Pyramid (available on YouTube in six nine-minute segments) www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwiic6BoleQ While watching take notes to answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the workers do? • How did the workers live? • Why did they do it?
3	Label children within group with a-d/ a-e depending on numbers. Put all the children with the individual letters together e.g. all 'a's together in one group.
4	Give out information packs with different themes to research (taken from the following websites) The galleries: www.aeraweb.org/projects/lost-city/ The Royal Administrative Bureau: www.aeraweb.org/projects/lost-city/ Eastern Town and Western town: www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/who-built-the-pyramids.html Feeding the workers: www.livescience.com/28961-ancient-giza-pyramid-builders-camp-unearthed.html Gangs and Graffiti: www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/lehner-giza.html
5	Together ask them to pool information about the organisation of the pyramid-builders using images and simple information as well as the notes from the video. They also need to focus on their given area.
6	Each group contributes to a class poster – must include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An image with caption • Three key facts about their focus area • A reason why the workers wanted to be involved
7	Post individual response 'I think Herodotus was wrong/right about the building of the pyramid because... ' into class box. See what the class as a whole thinks about Herodotus.
8	Finish by showing the image of the 'Solar Barque' of Khufu. Question 'What do you think this was for?' http://egyptsites.wordpress.com/2009/02/25/the-solar-boat-museum/

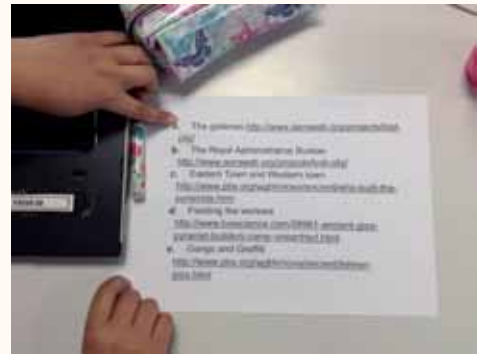
Herodotus's account of building the Great Pyramid

How can we find out about the building of the *great pyramid of Giza*? One clue comes from Herodotus, an ancient Greek who travelled around Egypt some 2000 years after the Egyptians constructed the *great pyramid*.

On his journey Herodotus visited the great pyramid and tried to find out all he could about it from studying it closely and the people he talked to. Herodotus tells us what he found out in his book, *An Account of Egypt*. Herodotus said the pyramid's builder was the pharaoh or king Cheops: we now know his name was Khifu.



Cheops [Khifu]... ordered all the Egyptians to work for him. So some were told to drag stones from the stone-quarries in the Arabian mountains to the Nile, and others he ordered to receive the stones after they had been carried down the river in boats, and to drag them towards the pyramid's site. A hundred thousand men for three months at a time worked on this for ten years. [A]



Building the pyramid took twenty years. The pyramid's base is square, each side is 250 metres long... It is built of stone smoothed and fitted together in the most perfect manner, not one of the stones being less than 10 metres, in length. This pyramid was made after the manner of steps which some call "stages". [B]

When they had made the base, they raised the remaining stones with machines made of short pieces of timber, raising them first from the ground to the first stage of the steps. When a stone got up to this it was placed upon another machine standing on the first stage, and so from this it was drawn to the second stage upon another machine. For each stage there were as many machines as needed to carry up the stones... [C]

The workmen finished off the highest part of the pyramid first, and then went on to finish the next one down. Lastly, they finished the parts of it nearest the ground and the lower levels. [D]

On the pyramid is told in Egyptian writing how much was spent on radishes and onions and leeks for the workmen. If I rightly remember what the interpreter said in reading to me this inscription, was a sum of one thousand six hundred talents of silver. If this is so, how much time besides is likely to have been spent upon the iron with which they worked, and upon bread and clothing for the workmen as they were building the pyramid for the time already mentioned? Besides, they were busy for a long time in cutting and bringing the stones and in working at the underground diggings. [E]

This pharaoh, the Egyptians said, reigned fifty years; and after he was dead his brother Chephren succeeded to the kingdom. This king ... also made a pyramid, not as big as the former (this I know, having myself also measured it). [F]

Activity 2: Trade and the woman pharaoh

Key question

Why did Hatshepsut send an expedition to Punt?

Learning intention

Children give reasons for and results of main events in the period studied

Assessment criteria

Can the children create a board game that illustrates why Egyptians traded?

Cross-curricular opportunities

Possible follow up option:

English – Story scroll or drama to retell the story of the shipwrecked sailor c 2200BC

www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/the_shipwrecked_sailor.htm

Activity

1	Collect a range of images of different types of Ancient Egyptian boats – useful sites are: http://egyptsites.wordpress.com/2009/02/25/the-solar-boat-museum/ www.phouka.com/tr/egypt/photos/giza/solarBoat-01.html www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/timelines/topics/navigation.htm www.britishmuseum.org/PDF/Ward.pdf www.touregypt.net/featurestories/aboard.htm www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/punt-ship.html	5	Whole-class teacher led discussion Look at map with trade routes – explain why Egypt was trading = giving surplus resources/goods for things it needs from Egypt: Gold/gold with silver in it (electrum)/ papyrus/linen/grain/glass/artefacts to Egypt: cedar (Lebanon)/ebony and ivory/ leopard skins/ ostrich feathers (African interior)/ Frankincense & myrrh/cinnamon/baboons/monkeys (Punt) raw lapis lazuli (Afghanistan) copper (Cyprus) and gold and electrum from Nubia until Egypt invaded Nubia Gather examples of these raw materials – smell frankincense and myrrh – look and feel lapis/smell cedar/ feel ostrich feather/linen and papyrus http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/trade/ Look at image of Hatshepsut's trading expedition Teacher info on: http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/edwards/pharaohs/pharaohs-8.html Interactive images on: www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/expedition-punt.html What can they see? Why might there be soldiers with the expedition?
2	Give children selection of images of boats – complete table as group or pair Give children categories e.g wood/metal/rope. Grade for amount (traffic lights, triangles or icons) Leave possibility for children to add their own category. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are boats made of?• How do they move?• Where might they be sailing?• Why are they travelling? Key points to be aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not much metal used – rope used to connect• wood – not long straight planks like Vikings – jigsaw pieces together• only wind and people power• papyrus bundles not liable to be recognised• carrying people/good/blocks of stone – link to previous session	6	Group task Design a board game related to trade in Egypt – design board and rules – make up board and counters in DT or art session (prepare information packs with images, and written accounts – see reshafim site for sources) Demonstrate and model a board game if possible to ensure pupils know that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• must have rules;• must have title;• must have clear purpose;• must include at least five trade items;• must have hazards.
3	As whole class draw conclusions from group/pair task. 'We think boats were mainly made of ... because...'	7	End with letter from Suppiluliuma to Akhenaten about trade
4	Give children pictures /icons of the three different types of craft (river/sea and personal) and place icons on map showing where they might travel. http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_Gtno7TdEu4s/TUraqD7WG9I/AAAAAAAAAh0/qHAWYX3VTvQ/s1600/AncientEgyptMap.jpg		

Activity 3: The age of the pyramids

Key question

What did Akhenaten do that made him so hated?

Learning intention

Understand that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways

Assessment criteria

Can the children demonstrate that they recognise that there will be different viewpoints of Akhenaten's actions?



Activity

- 1 Individual research of gods and goddesses from pantheon of gods.
Ensure each child has a different god or goddess.
Draw and colour using stylised form and traditional colours (see www.pyramidofman.com/Proportions.htm).
Present to class 'I am the God ... and I watch over ...'

- 2 **Teacher with mask** (www.historywiz.com/galleries/akhenaten.htm)
'I am the pharaoh Amenhotep IV [meaning "Amun is content"]
I have had a revelation. There are not lots of gods, there is only one, the Aten!
Change mask (www.touregypt.net/featuresstories/picture09152003.htm)
'I am now called Akhenaten [meaning "The living spirit of the Aten"] I am the high priest for the Aten – there is only one god in Egypt. I have changed life across Egypt:
I have closed the temples and chased out the priests
I have used the army to enforce my will
I have changed how we worship from dark to light
I have changed how pharaohs are depicted – I show you me as I really am!
I have moved my capital city and built a new one in the desert
I will no longer use Thebes and Memphis
I have found the horizon of the Aten as I was led there by the God
My beautiful queen and I are high priest, the royal family is touched by the Aten, you worship us.'

- 3 Sort statements into new and old system:
 - Many gods – one god
 - Household deities – royal family
 - Worship led by priests – worship led by pharaoh
 - Stylised representation – naturalistic art
 - Religious capital and administrative capital separate – one capital focused around pharaoh
 - Dark secret centre to temple – temple open to light and sun

- 4 Group activity: discuss implications for different people of this change – priest, artist, everyday family, soldier, princess. Try to consider positives and negatives

- 5 Individual: Give out images of different characters – speech bubble thoughts around changes