

depth study 2: Investigating one ancient society (Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China)

optional topic

Ancient Egypt

About 30 000 years ago, the Sahara Desert of north Africa was a grassy plain. It began to dry out around 8000 BCE. This change in climate forced people in the region to move on. Many drifted towards the area next to the Nile River, where the land was more fertile and there was a good water supply. From this simple start developed one of the world's first civilisations – ancient Egypt. It lasted for nearly 3000 years. As the population grew, the society became more structured. Powerful rulers, called **pharaohs**, expanded Egypt's territory. Huge monuments, temples and **pyramids** were built that would last for thousands of years.



chapter

8

8A

How did geographical features influence the development of ancient Egypt?

- 1 The Nile provided the ancient Egyptians with many benefits which allowed their society to develop and prosper. What do you think some of these benefits were?

8B

What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient Egypt?

- 1 The temples at Abu Simbel contain many statues of the pharaoh Rameses II. Why do you think it was common practice in ancient Egypt for pharaohs to immortalise themselves in such ways?

8C

How did beliefs, values and practices influence ancient Egyptian lifestyles?

- 1 Many Egyptian temples were dedicated to various gods. What does this tell us about the importance of religious beliefs to the ancient Egyptians?

Source 1 A statue of the pharaoh Rameses II in one of the two temples built at Abu Simbel, in southern Egypt, in the 13th century BCE. The temples were a monument to Rameses II and his queen, Nefertari, as well as many Egyptian gods.

8.1 Ancient Egypt: a timeline

Egyptian hieroglyphs such as these have been essential in unlocking the history of ancient Egypt.



c. 8000 BCE
People start forming settlements in the Nile valley

c. 3200
Earliest known evidence of hieroglyphic writing

The Great Sphinx of Giza



c. 2500
Building of Great Sphinx and Great Pyramid at Giza. Egyptians start experimenting with mummifying dead bodies



Temple of the pharaoh Hatshepsut in the Valley of the Kings, near Luxor.

1479
Hatshepsut, a woman, becomes pharaoh

1274
Pharaoh Rameses II claims victory against his enemies, the Hittites, at the Battle of Kadesh

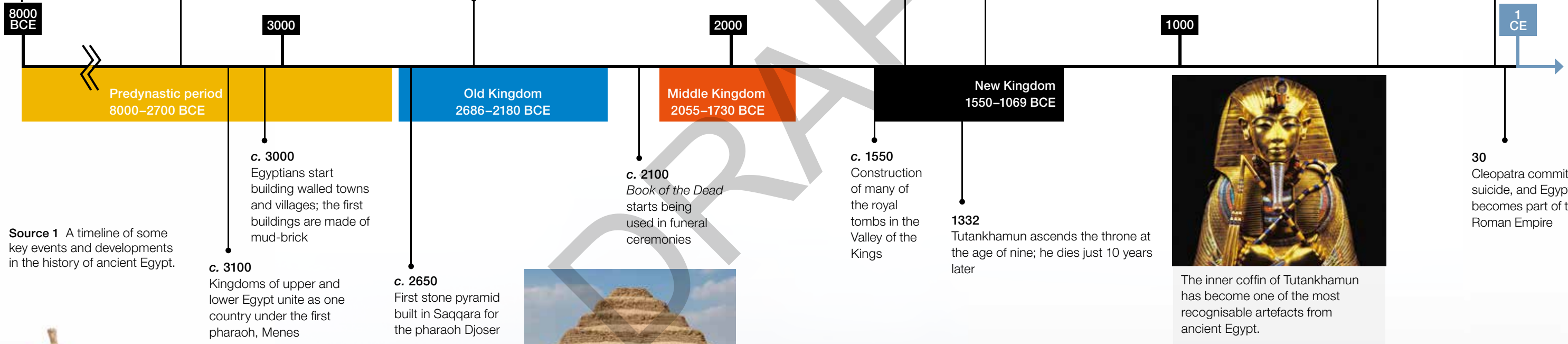


This bust of Cleopatra was created during the time of her rule as the last pharaoh of Egypt.

332
Egypt is invaded by Alexander the Great and made part of his empire

51
Cleopatra becomes pharaoh of Egypt and rules for 21 years

30
Cleopatra commits suicide, and Egypt becomes part of the Roman Empire



Source 1 A timeline of some key events and developments in the history of ancient Egypt.



The Djoser pyramid is the oldest building in the world made from cut blocks.

Check your learning 8.1

Remember and understand

- When did people first begin to settle in the Nile valley?
- When were the Great Sphinx and the Great Pyramid at Giza built?
- Who was Cleopatra? In what year did she die?

Apply and analyse

- Using the timeline, calculate the year in which Tutankhamun was born.

Evaluate and create

- The timeline shows that ancient Egyptian society began in approximately 8000 BCE and ended about 332 BCE. During this period, many historians identify four distinct eras, commonly known as:

a the Predynastic period	b the Old Kingdom
c the Middle Kingdom	d the New Kingdom.

 Conduct some Internet research to find out why these periods were named in this way.

8.2 The Nile

Ancient Egypt was a long, narrow country in north-eastern Africa. The world’s longest river, the Nile, ran the length of the country. Ancient Egyptian lands were also surrounded by a huge **desert**. Both of these geographical features played very important roles in the development of ancient Egyptian society.

The Nile begins in central Africa and flows north into the Mediterranean Sea. Ancient Egypt’s desert environment made the Nile a very important geographical feature. It was so essential for the society’s survival that the people worshipped it as a god. They called this god ‘Hapi’.

The Nile has three main sources – the White Nile, the Blue Nile and the Atbara River. The Blue Nile and the Atbara River begin in the highlands of central Africa. Every summer, they are flooded by melting snow and heavy rains. These waters gush into the Nile, carrying a load of dark mountain silt – soil that is rich in nutrients. Every year, this increase in water caused the Nile to burst its banks and flood parts of Egypt.

Today, dams have been built along the Nile to prevent it from flooding, but in the days of ancient Egypt, these dams did not exist. Every year in June, the Nile would flood its banks and leave a pile of dark, fertile soil all over the land nearby. This flooding season was known as the ‘inundation’. As soon as the floodwaters went back down, the farmers would plant crops such as barley and other grains. These crops would grow very quickly in this fertile soil.

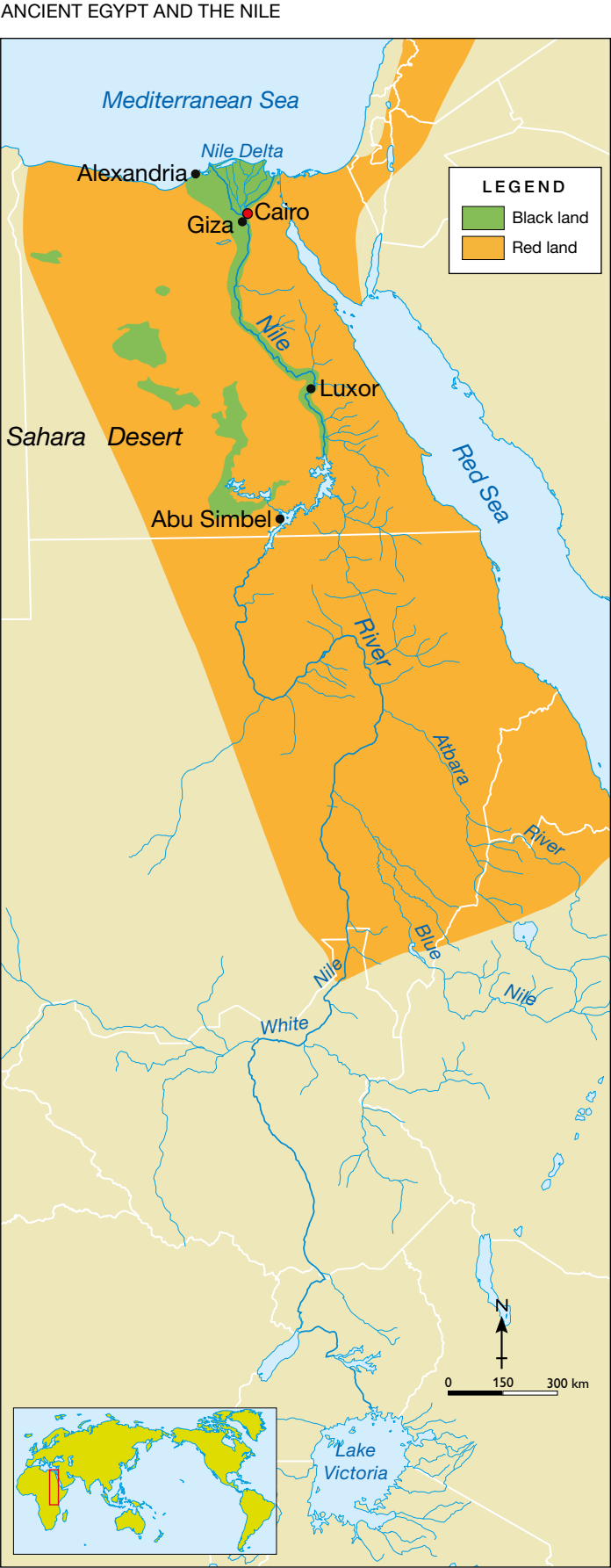
The ancient Egyptians called the fertile land around the river with rich dark soil the ‘Black Land’. This was where most people lived. On each side of the Nile, beyond the Black Land, were large areas of desert. The ancient Egyptians named these areas the ‘Red Land’. Hardly anyone lived in the Red Land.

The Nile was important for other reasons too. It provided fresh water for drinking and bathing. The ancient Egyptians used spears and nets to catch fish in the Nile. They also caught the birds, such as ducks and geese, that lived near it and used them for food. They picked wild reeds, called **papyrus**, which grew alongside the river. The ancient Egyptians used these reeds to make a type of paper and boats. The Nile also allowed the ancient Egyptians to travel quickly from place to place, so that they could trade with each other.

Source 2 An aerial photograph of the Nile showing the fertile valley (Black Land) and the bordering desert (Red Land)



Source 1 The boats and houses are modern, but this Nile scene is otherwise much as it would have been in the times of ancient Egypt.



Source 3

Source: Oxford University Press

The importance of the Nile

The Nile was the lifeblood of ancient Egyptian society. It provided water for drinking and bathing; fertile soil for growing crops; fish and water birds for eating; and a means of transporting goods. The Nile also played a central role in the spiritual and religious beliefs of the Egyptians.

Pleasure boats moved travellers up and down the river. Some boats were adapted as funeral boats to carry the bodies of pharaohs to their tombs.

The riverside papyrus plant was used to make a type of paper (also called papyrus), as well as boats, baskets and furniture.

River wildlife included fish, birds, frogs, crocodiles, eels, hippopotamuses and snakes. Ducks and geese were hunted with wooden sticks or caught in nets.

Crops included wheat, barley, lentils, beans, onions, cucumbers, grapes, figs and dates. Trained baboons were sometimes used to pick fruit growing too high for people to reach.

Bricks were made from river bank mud. It was sometimes mixed with straw for strength. The mudbricks were packed into moulds and left to dry hard in the sun.

Flax plants were turned into a cloth called linen to make clothing.

Farmers provided labour (during the inundation) to build structures such as the pyramids.

When the Nile flooded (known as the inundation) the river level rose around 8 metres. The silt it left behind on the floodplains fertilised the soil.

Villages were built on raised mounds above the usual flood line.

A network of canals (and later reservoirs) directed and stored river water for use in irrigation.

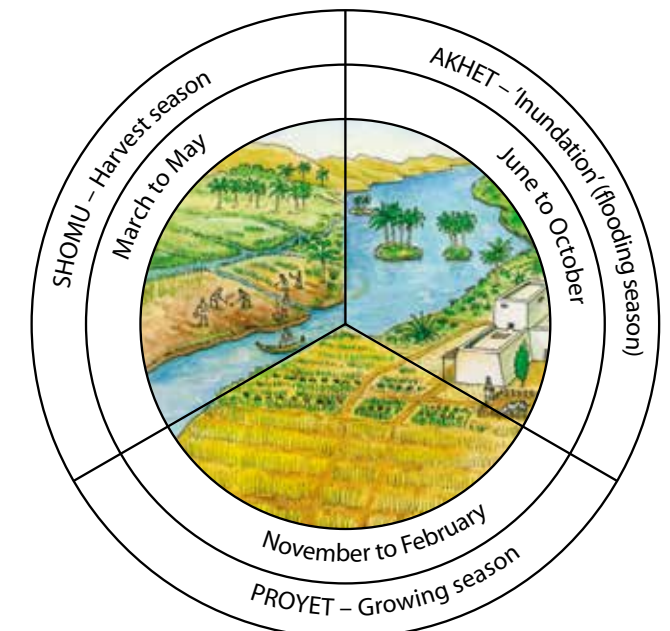
A *shaduf* was used to raise water from the river and direct it into irrigation canals.

Small fishing boats were made from bundles of strapped papyrus reeds.

Severe floods could wash away all traces of farm boundary lines (usually marked with stones). Officials known as 'rope stretchers' re-measured and re-marked any lines that had disappeared.

The river provided fresh water for drinking, beer making, cooking, washing and irrigation.

Merchant boats and barges moved trade goods to and from markets. Barges also transported the massive stone blocks used to construct the pyramids.



Source 5 The ancient Egyptian 'seasons'

Check your learning 8.2

Remember and understand

- 1 What are the three main sources of the Nile?
- 2 At what time of the year would the Nile flood? What caused it to flood? Why does the Nile no longer flood?
- 3 Why did the ancient Egyptians call the land along the banks of the Nile the 'Black Land'?
- 4 Study the illustration and labels in Source 4.
 - a What devices did the ancient Egyptians use or make to help store and distribute water to fields?
 - b For what different purposes were boats used?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Continue to study Source 4. How did the Nile influence the ways in which buildings were made and villages designed?
- 6 Look carefully at Source 5. If you had lived in ancient Egypt, what 'season' would it be now? What would be happening?

Evaluate and create

- 7 In groups, discuss how people would have built boats from reeds. Draw sketches and suggest likely design, tools, measurements and so on.
- 8 Use the Internet to discover how a *shaduf* worked. Suggest a modification or addition that would have made it work better.
- 9 You are providing the voiceover for a feature documentary on the Nile. Write the segment in which you explain why it flooded every year, and how this benefited the people of ancient Egypt. Make your report interesting – remember it is a speaking role.

Source 4 An artist's impression of the central role that the Nile played for ancient Egyptians

8.3 The climate of ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt was located within what is now the biggest desert in the world – the Sahara. This meant that the climate of Egypt was incredibly hot and dry.

The desert

Being surrounded by desert provided Egypt with some security against attacks. Any army that wanted to attack would have had a long, hot walk if invading from the east or the west.

The desert around ancient Egypt was inhabited by many different animals that were hunted by the ancient Egyptians for food. These animals included gazelles, hares and foxes. The desert was also the source of minerals, rocks and metals, which the Egyptians used for building houses, pyramids, statues and tombs, and making weapons and jewellery. The ancient Egyptians were able to trade many of these resources, as well as the products they made from them.

How the climate influenced lifestyle

Living in a very hot and dry climate, the ancient Egyptians mostly lived an outdoors lifestyle. Most of them worked outside as farmers, fishers, builders and merchants. People cooked and often slept outside their homes (frequently on the roof) because of the heat.

Houses

Rich or poor, most Egyptians lived in houses that were similar in design. They had flat roofs and were made from sun-dried mudbricks. Most houses were single-storey structures.

The one-room homes of poor farmers had dirt floors. In urban areas, houses were joined, a bit like apartments and terrace houses are today.

LOCATION OF ANCIENT EGYPT IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

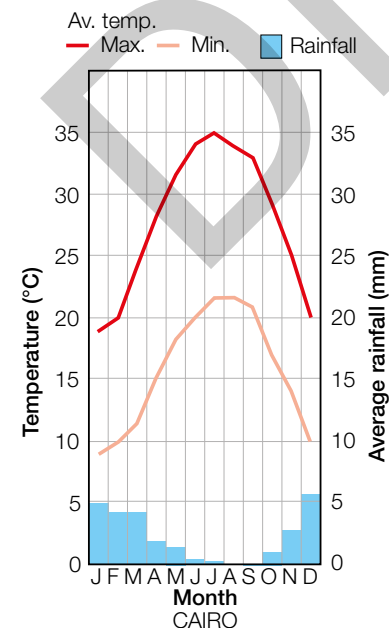


Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press



Source 2 A headrest used by the wealthy while sleeping. It allowed air to circulate around the head and neck.



Source 3 Climate graph for the city of Cairo (near the pyramids at Giza)

Fashion

Because of the heat the people of ancient Egypt dressed very lightly. Men (including the **pharaoh**) often went bare-chested and wore short linen tunics. Women usually wore long linen dresses. Linen is a natural fabric, made from the flax plant, that allows perspiration to evaporate more easily. Most clothing was white, which is cooler than darker colours because it reflects the heat. Leather or papyrus sandals were sometimes worn by the rich, but most people went barefoot. Children and slaves were usually completely naked.

Source 4 Papyrus sandals from ancient Egypt. These would have been very cool to wear.



keyconcept: evidence

Living with dust and glare

Because of the desert surrounding ancient Egypt, dust, glare and wind-blown sand were a fact of life. Eye infections were common. Stone carvings have been found in tombs that show groups of blind people. Ancient papyrus texts show that bat blood was one treatment for eye problems. Another treatment was to rub a paste of mashed human brain and honey over the affected eye. Both men and women wore heavy eye make-up, called kohl, to help protect their eyes from dust and glare.

Men and women would also wear wigs, usually over a shaved scalp. Shaving kept heads cool (when at home, without wigs) and allowed scalps to be kept clean. Sometimes, a cone of solid perfumed fat was worn on top of a wig on special occasions (see Source 5). As it slowly melted in the heat, sweet-smelling liquid dripped over the face and upper body, cooling the skin.

For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



Source 5 This detail from an Egyptian tomb shows a woman wearing heavy eye make-up and a cone of scented fat on top of her wig.

Check your learning 8.3

Remember and understand

- 1 Where did the people of ancient Egypt often cook and sleep? Why?
- 2 List three different resources provided by the deserts to the people of ancient Egypt.

Apply and analyse

- 3 If you lived in a location such as ancient Egypt, what might the advantages and disadvantages be in shaving your head and wearing a wig?
- 4 Examine Source 3.
 - a During which months, on average, is there no rain in Cairo? What is the average temperature for each of these months?
 - b Melbourne's highest rainfall occurs from September to December, with monthly rainfall averaging between 58 and 66 millimetres in those months. Write a few sentences describing some of the differences between average rainfall in Cairo and average rainfall in Melbourne.

Evaluate and create

- 5 A link to a video of Egypt and its desert environment is available on the [obook](#). Prepare a creative response to this experience by writing one of the following:
 - a short poem
 - a diary entry that you might have recorded if you had been there.

8A rich task

Irrigation in ancient Egypt

The annual inundation (flooding) of the Nile was so important to the ancient Egyptians that they based their lives around it. Flooding happened in a season the Egyptians called *akhet*. As the flood receded, the fertile silt left on the ground near the river ensured perfect conditions for *proyet*, the growing, which was when farmers would plant and grow their crops. The crops would continue to grow until they were picked in *shomu*, harvest season. During *proyet*, the growing season, the ancient Egyptians needed to irrigate (water) the crops they had planted. They experimented with many different kinds of irrigation over the course of their history.

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Interpreting primary sources

Primary sources are things that were created during the time being studied. They can be documents, objects, paintings and other sources that provide us with a firsthand account of what life was like in the past.

Because they are firsthand accounts, primary sources often convey the creator’s point of view, attitudes and values. It is important that you be able to identify and describe these elements in their work. Use the following steps:

Step 1 Ask yourself what factual information is conveyed in this source. (Be careful: sometimes things that are presented as fact are not always accurate, so you might need to think about whether the information can



Source 1 Canals were a very important form of irrigation in ancient Egypt. A simple Egyptian canal system is depicted in this painting, found in the tomb of a commoner by the name of Sennedjem.



Source 2 *Shadufs* were an important form of ancient Egyptian irrigation technology. This painting of a man drawing water from the Nile with a *shaduf* was found in the tomb of Ipuy, at Deir el-Medina, Egypt.



Source 3 Wooden waterwheels were another important irrigation technology in ancient Egypt. This traditional waterwheel near Luxor, Egypt, is similar in design to those used in ancient times. The water comes out of the well on a second wheel carrying clay water jugs (shown to the right). This water then supplies the irrigation network.

be verified. Where else might you look to check and make sure those ‘facts’ are accurate?)

Step 2 Think about how the world described or depicted in the source is different from the world you live in today. What do you already know about what the creator of the source and the people around him or her believed? How would you feel if you were in the creator’s shoes?

Step 3 Ask yourself what opinions are expressed in the source. If the source is written, ask yourself which specific words or phrases show how the writer feels about what he or she is describing.

Step 4 Ask yourself what is implied in the source. For instance, people do not always spell out what they are thinking when they write something. The reader needs to use clues in the text to ‘read between the lines’ and infer meanings that are not spelled out.

The following primary sources provide us with a range of evidence about the beliefs, values and attitudes of the ancient Egyptians towards the Nile and the annual inundation, as well as important types of irrigation technology that were developed at different times throughout ancient Egyptian civilisation. Use the steps described above to complete the tasks that follow.

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to pages xx–xx of ‘The history toolkit’.

Source 4

Hail to you, Nile River! You show yourself over this land, and come to give life to Egypt! Your source is mysterious, but we celebrate the day when you come to us! Watering the orchards created by Ra, to cause all the cattle to live, you give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one! ...

Lord of the fish: during the inundation, no bird lands on the crops. You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, you make sure the temples will last for eternity. If you stop your toil and your work, then all that exists in our world will be in trouble.

Extract from ‘Hymn to the Nile’, written c. 2100 BCE in ancient Egypt

Apply the skill

- 1 Read Source 4 carefully.
 - a What factual information is conveyed in this source?
 - b What does it tell you about the writer’s beliefs and attitudes regarding the annual cause of the inundation? (Remember to identify the specific words or phrases in the source that support your conclusion.)
 - c What can you infer about the writer’s values?

- 2 Use Sources 1, 2 and 3, together with information gathered on the Internet, to compare different irrigation methods in ancient Egypt. You should look at canals, *shadufs* and waterwheels.

	When was this form of irrigation technology invented?	How did it work?
Canals		
Shaduf		
Waterwheel		

Extend your understanding

Using the results of your research, write a short report on the history of irrigation technology in ancient Egypt. Make sure you:

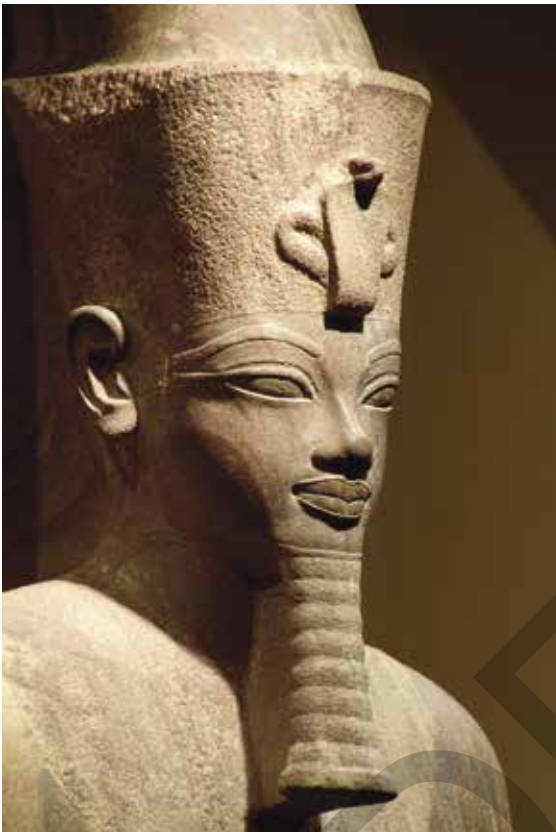
- include an introduction explaining why irrigation was so important in ancient Egypt
- include a main body, broken into sections (with subheadings) that describe each main type of ancient Egyptian irrigation technology (for example, ‘Canals’, ‘*Shadufs*’ and ‘*Waterwheels*’)
- explain within each section when this particular type of irrigation technology was invented and how it worked. Include diagrams if you wish.

8.4 Key groups in Egyptian society

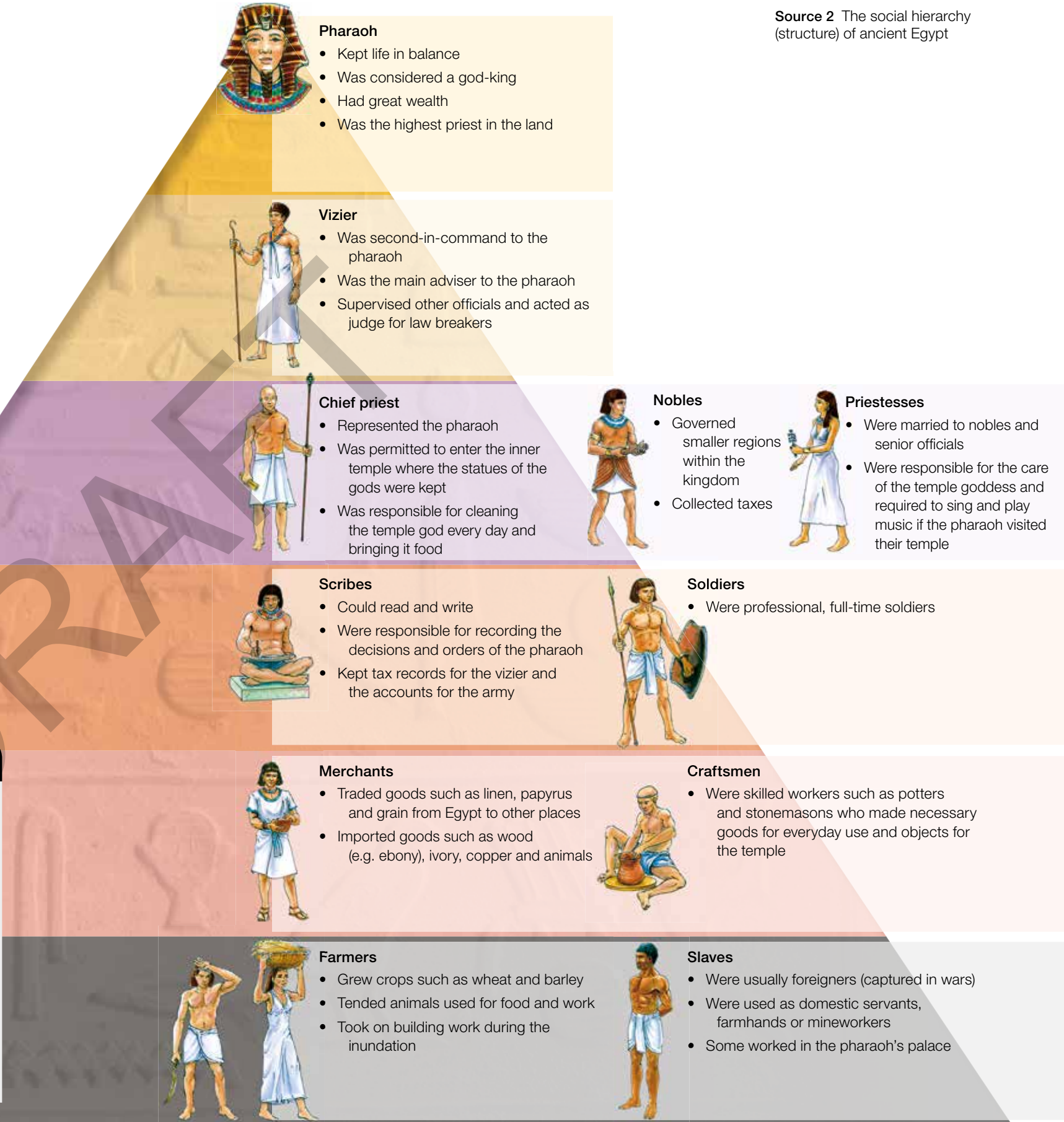
The society of ancient Egypt was well organised. Ancient Egyptians had a central government and, from the 15th century BCE, they also had a professional army. People knew what their social responsibilities were. Some of these roles were shaped by the society’s laws and traditions. Some were determined by religious beliefs. Other roles were determined by a person’s wealth and abilities (such as whether they could read and write).

The society of ancient Egypt was a **hierarchy**. At the top was the royal family: the pharaoh and his family. At the bottom were the slaves and the poorest of the poor farmers.

Men usually did the jobs their fathers did. They learned the skills a bit like apprentices learn trades today. Education was the key to improving a person’s position in society. A merchant, or even a farmer, could do this by learning to read and write.



Source 1 A stone head of pharaoh Amenhotep III, made in the early 14th century BCE. Pharaohs were at the top of the social hierarchy in ancient Egypt.



Check your learning 8.4

Remember and understand

- Place these social roles in order (from most to least important) according to the values of ancient Egyptian society: potter, merchant, pharaoh, farmer, priestess, vizier, scribe.
- How might a farmer’s social role and standing potentially change if he learned to read and write?
- Explain why almost all scribes in ancient Egypt were men.

Apply and analyse

- Compare and contrast the roles of a chief priest and the vizier in ancient Egypt.

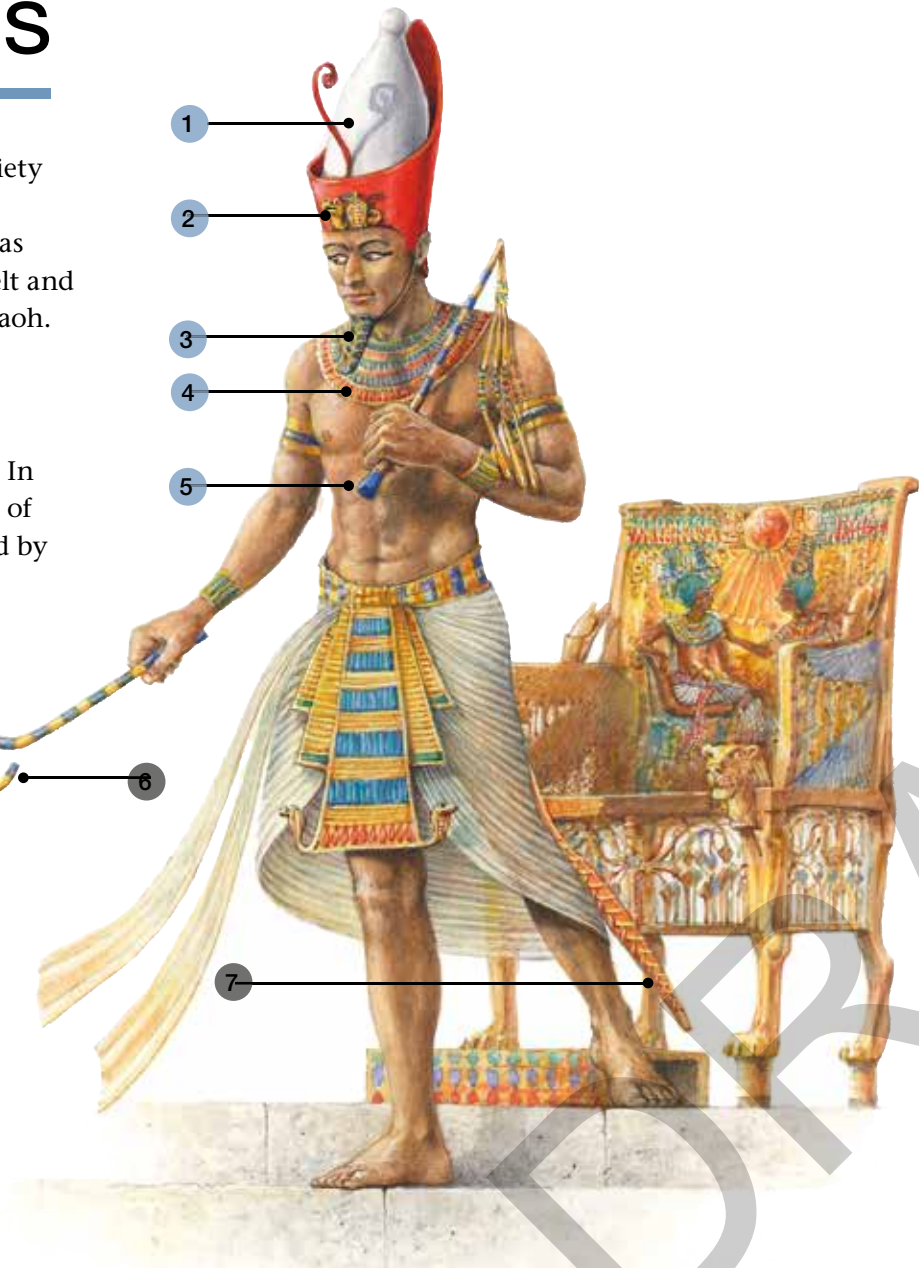
Evaluate and create

- In groups, use Source 2 as a guide to help you draw up what you think the social hierarchy in Australia today might look like.
 - Discuss your findings as a class. Decide to what extent your modern social hierarchies are an example of continuity and change when compared with the social hierarchy of ancient Egypt.

8.5 Pharaohs

The pharaoh was the head of Egyptian society and was almost always a man. Pharaohs were regarded as god-kings, and were seen as descendants of Ra, the sun god. People knelt and kissed the ground when they met the pharaoh.

Pharaohs were very wealthy, owning all the land and its resources. They demanded heavy taxes, which were usually paid to them in the form of grain and other crops. In addition to power, pharaohs had a number of responsibilities, some of which were shaped by law, others by religion (see Source 2).



- 1 A crown symbolised the pharaoh's position as chief ruler. The crown shown here was the official crown; its design is a combination of the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt that merged to form a united Egypt. Pharaohs also wore a range of other headgear depending on their duties.
- 2 The *uraeus* (gold headpiece shaped like an upright cobra) symbolised magical powers and a readiness to strike.
- 3 A false beard made from goat's hair symbolised the pharaoh's status as a god.
- 4 The heavy jewelled collar symbolised great wealth.
- 5 The flail (whip) symbolised total authority.
- 6 The crook symbolised the pharaoh's role as a shepherd of the people.
- 7 An animal tail (usually from a bull) symbolised strength and fertility.

Source 1 An artist's impression of a pharaoh with his symbols of power

Earthly responsibilities (shaped by the law)	Divine responsibilities (shaped by religion)
The pharaoh was responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">directing the governmentcommanding the army and leading them into battleprotecting the people and keeping peace and ordermaking all laws, and sometimes making decisions in the courtsmanaging building, mining, trade and irrigation.	The pharaoh was responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">acting as chief priestkeeping the gods happy so the Nile flooded every year and harvests were plentifulchoosing priestsoverseeing religious ceremonies and festivalsbuilding temples to honour the godsperforming religious duties.

Source 2 Responsibilities of the pharaoh as god-king

The rulers of ancient Egypt

By about 3300 BCE, the Nile settlements were grouped into two kingdoms: Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. These united in about 3100 BCE. For the next 2800 years, the unified kingdom of Egypt was ruled by pharaohs, thus creating the world's first national government.

Dynasties

The laws and traditions of ancient Egypt meant that a pharaoh passed on his power as ruler to the son (usually the eldest) of his main wife – in the ancient world, it was common for men to have more than one wife. If the main wife did not have a son, the son of a less important wife would become the new ruler, or **heir**. The period of time where members of the same family ruled was known as a **dynasty**. Sometimes, someone from outside the family seized power and became pharaoh. This meant the start of a new dynasty.

In 332 BCE, Egypt was conquered by the king of Macedon, known as Alexander the Great. He started what was to be the last dynasty in ancient Egypt, known as the Ptolemaic Dynasty. This dynasty lasted until 30 BCE when its last ruler, Cleopatra, committed suicide. After that, Egypt became part of the Roman Empire.

Hatshepsut – 18th-dynasty ruler

Hatshepsut was one of the only female pharaohs. She ruled between about 1473 and 1458 BCE. When she became pharaoh, she wore a false beard, men's clothing and a bull's tail, and changed her name to its male form. She was very ambitious. In her time as pharaoh, she ordered the construction of many buildings, paid for many trading expeditions, and rebuilt trade routes that had been damaged by former invaders.



Source 3 An ancient stone carving of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut

Check your learning 8.5

Remember and understand

- 1 Give two examples each of the pharaoh's divine role and earthly role.
- 2 What was a dynasty, and why did a dynasty usually change?
- 3 How did the Ptolemaic Dynasty end?
- 4 Look carefully at Source 1. Copy and complete this table in your notebook, adding as many entries as you can.

Item worn or carried by the pharaoh	What it symbolised

Apply and analyse

- 5 Pharaohs had religious, legal and political responsibilities. Explain how this would have influenced the way Egyptians behaved towards their ruler.
- 6 Think about some of the items the following people wear or carry to reflect their social position and/or role. For each item, indicate what it symbolises:
 - the Queen of England
 - the captain of the Australian cricket team
 - an Australian High Court judge
 - the principal of your school.

Evaluate and create

- 7 a How and why did Hatshepsut adjust her appearance to suit her role as pharaoh?
- b Do you think people today feel pressured to change their appearance and behaviour when they move into a public leadership role? Discuss with a partner. Give examples if possible.

8.6 Significant individual: Tutankhamun

Tutankhamun (c. 1342–1323 BCE) is the world’s best known pharaoh and one of the most studied figures in history. He was a boy when he became pharaoh in 1332 BCE and only ruled for 10 years, yet his story still captivates people all over the world.

Scientific analyses of his remains reveal that he was about 170 centimetres tall, with a slight bend in his spine. He had an overbite, a cleft palate, buck teeth and an elongated skull. He was only 19 when he died. He did not live long enough to do much that was remarkable. He did, however, change the command of his predecessor, Akhenaten, that the people only worship one god – Aten, the sun god. He also reversed Akhenaten’s decision to move the capital of ancient Egypt to Memphis. Tutankhamun declared that Egypt’s old gods could again be worshipped. He restored their temples, priests and festivals.



Source 1 The mummified head of Tutankhamun



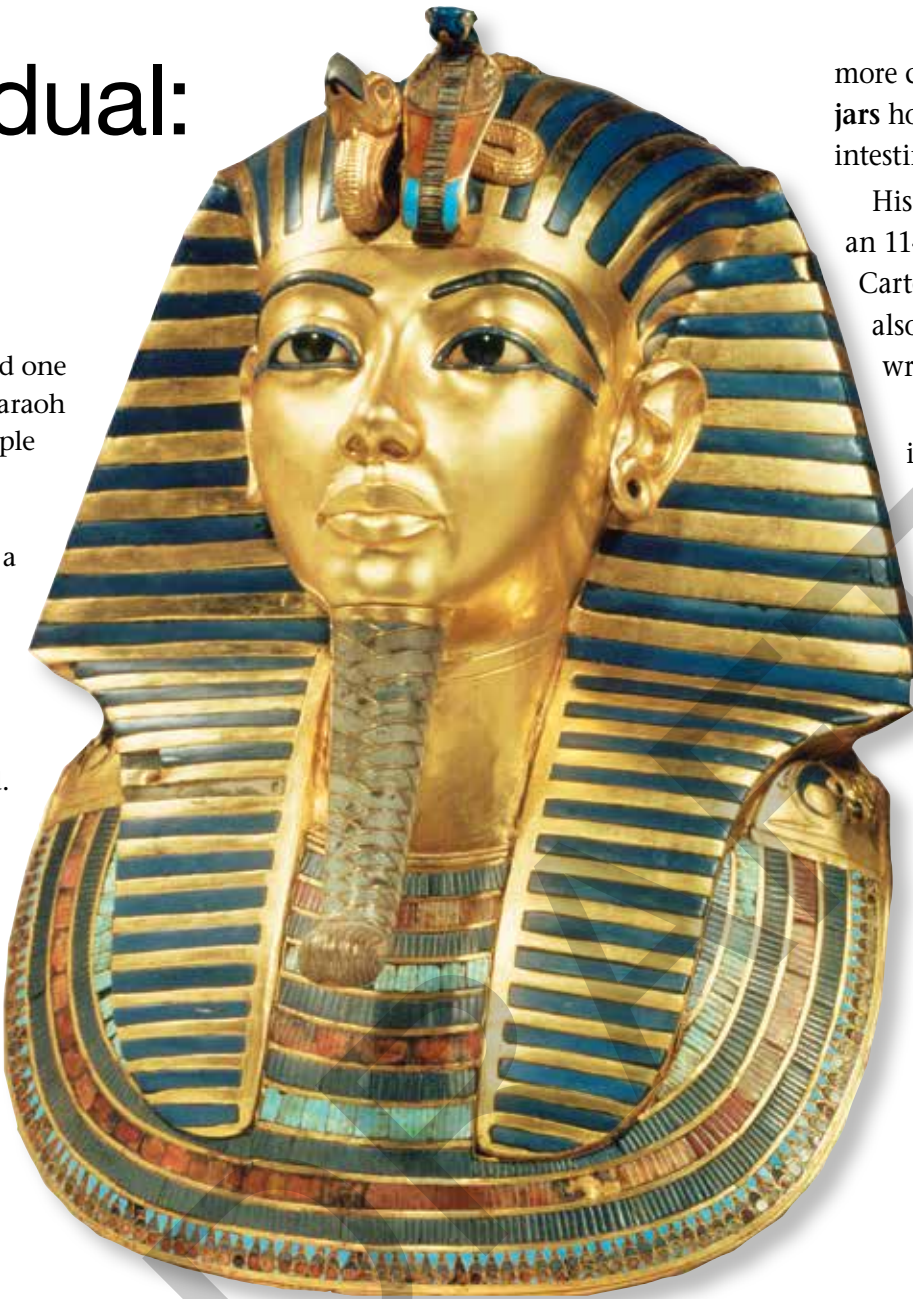
Source 2 The reconstructed head of Tutankhamun

Despite his short life, Tutankhamun is significant because his tomb is the only ancient tomb in Egypt so far found not to have been broken into by robbers. It contained over 5300 sources of evidence of his life and burial practices at the time. These sources include his decorated gold throne and his nest of coffins.

The discovery of Tutankhamun

The English archaeologist Howard Carter found the tomb in 1922. It was at the end of a long tunnel in the Valley of the Kings. This was a deep, rocky valley close to the Nile where many pharaohs were buried. Carter reported: ‘At first I could see nothing ... but as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues and gold – everywhere the glint of gold!’

Tutankhamun’s **mummy** lay within a solid gold body-shaped coffin (110 kilograms in weight) in the burial chamber. This coffin was enclosed by two



Source 3 The gold mask found fused to Tutankhamun’s head and upper body

more coffins. In the treasure chamber next door were four **canopic jars** holding the pharaoh’s mummified liver, lungs, stomach and intestines.

His body was covered in **amulets** and jewels, and he was wearing an 11-kilogram solid gold burial mask inlaid with precious stones. Carter and his team used hot knives to remove the mask. They also cut up the body to retrieve the jewels and amulets that were wrapped up in his bandages.

Since then, **conservators** (people responsible for preserving important historical sources) have been getting more and more worried about the damage being done to Tutankhamun’s mummy. When visitors entered the tomb, their breath and body heat caused damage to the mummy and other parts of the tomb. Tutankhamun’s remains stayed within his coffin until November 2007, when they were moved into a special, climate-controlled case within the tomb.



Source 4 This pectoral (piece of jewellery like a pendant) was found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. He wore it at his coronation as pharaoh.

keyconcept: contestability

How Tutankhamun died

To this day, historians cannot agree on how Tutankhamun died. Some historians used to think he was murdered, because there was a hole at the back of his skull and a floating piece of bone behind his eyes. This view has been contested in more recent years.

In 2005, an extensive number of CT scans (special X-rays) were taken of Tutankhamun’s remains. These scans led the Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass to conclude that he died of a complication from a broken leg – specifically, gangrene (which is the rotting away of living tissue). He thinks the break in the leg became infected. The hole in the skull, he thinks, might have been a mummification accident. Other historians have found evidence to suggest that Tutankhamun might have had malaria, which could have contributed to his death.

For more information on the key concept of contestability, refer to page xx of ‘The history toolkit’.

Check your learning 8.6

Remember and understand

- 1 In one paragraph, explain who Tutankhamun was.
- 2 Why is he regarded by historians as significant?

Apply and analyse

- 3 a Why were Tutankhamun’s uncovered remains at risk?
b What has been done to help conserve them?
- 4 Explain why the cause of Tutankhamun’s death has been contested by historians since his mummy was discovered in 1922.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Compose a letter that Howard Carter might have written to his family the day after discovering and entering Tutankhamun’s tomb. Check some websites to learn more about the discovery and the tomb’s contents.
- 6 Look at the coronation pectoral of Tutankhamun (Source 4). Use this image as inspiration to design a pendant suitable to be worn by the Australian Prime Minister. Use the Internet to research suitable images and icons to include on the pectoral.

8.7 Other key groups in ancient Egyptian society

To gain a more complete understanding of the ancient Egyptian civilisation, we also need to look at the roles of other key social groups, including women, slaves, scribes and craftsmen.

Women

The role of most women in ancient Egypt was to raise a family. Pregnancy was always a celebrated event. It was common for a woman to have lots of pregnancies, and many women died in childbirth. Girls were often married as young as 12, and were expected to have children quickly. Life expectancy was low. A poor woman might only live until she was 30.

Rich and poor women

Poorer women usually devoted their entire lives to raising their children, keeping house and helping their husbands with planting and harvesting crops.

Upper-class women, such as the wives of pharaohs and nobles, had a more pampered life. They had servants to wait on them, and fine clothing and jewellery to wear (see Source 2). If they were the eldest child, they inherited their father's wealth.

Rights and freedoms of women

The man was the head of the household in ancient Egypt. Yet Egyptian women had more freedom than in many other ancient societies, such as ancient Greece. This may partly be because of Egyptian religious beliefs. The ancient Egyptians saw their world as being controlled equally by male and female **deities** (gods and goddesses).

Women could own land and businesses, keep the children if there was a divorce, and openly breastfeed their children. They could make wills, testify in court and bring legal actions against men. Women could also hold down jobs. For poorer women, a job meant manual labour. They might work on farms, look after

animals or become weavers; some might have worked as singers or dancers. Wealthier women might work as priestesses.

Slaves

Many people think that slaves were used to build the pyramids. Actually, there is little evidence to support this. Records suggest that there were not many slaves during the Old Kingdom, when the pyramids were built. Rather, it is thought they were built by peasants and farmers who could not work on the land during the rainy season.

The number of slaves in ancient Egypt did increase during the Middle and New Kingdoms. Most were prisoners of war such as those shown in Source 1 from the Nubian kingdoms south of Egypt. Others were bought and sold at markets, or were unlucky travellers captured by slave traders.

The role of slaves

Most slaves in Egypt lived fairly pleasant lives. Their role often was to be a faithful servant in the households of pharaohs, nobles and priests. They could own land and hire servants. They could marry those who were not slaves. Some talented or beautiful slaves were able to get promoted to senior or privileged positions.

Less fortunate slaves were sent to work in the gold and copper mines of north Africa's deserts. They often died of thirst or heat exhaustion.

Source 1 A stone carving from a tomb at Saqqara, showing Nubian slaves, an Egyptian guard and an Egyptian scribe



Source 2 Tomb art, painted about 4500 years ago in Thebes, showing Egyptian women celebrating at a feast, attended by servants

Scribes

The **scribes** in ancient Egypt were usually men. They were an elite group, and their profession tended to be passed from father to son. Scribes had to attend a special school where they would learn how to read and write hieroglyphs and hieratic script (simplified text). This study would take a lot of hard work and time – four to five years. Scribes generally wrote on papyrus with reed brushes using red and black ink made from ground minerals.

The role of scribes

Scribes kept detailed records of administrative and economic activities. They also supervised the building of monuments and infrastructure projects, and could write wills and other documents for illiterate people. Much of what we know about ancient Egyptian civilisation comes from the records of scribes.



Source 3 This limestone painting from the 19th Dynasty shows an Egyptian carpenter at work.

Craftsmen

This group of ancient Egyptian society included skilled labourers such as carpenters (see Source 3), stonemasons, sculptors, painters, potters, metalworkers and jewellers. Craftsmen had their own hierarchy depending on their skills. The most talented craftsmen were employed in royal or temple workshops. They were highly respected and generally lived quite comfortable lives. Many other craftsmen set up their own small workshops to make objects for ordinary people, which earned them a more modest livelihood. Like scribes, a craftsman's skills and profession were usually passed down within the family.

Check your learning 8.7

Remember and understand

- 1 Explain some of the ways in which religious beliefs in ancient Egypt shaped the role of women.
- 2 What were the main differences in work opportunities for wealthy women compared to poorer women?
- 3 What type of lives could most slaves in ancient Egypt expect to live? What types of duties were they expected to carry out?
- 4 What types of duties were less fortunate slaves expected to carry out?
- 5 Name three important responsibilities that scribes would have had in ancient Egyptian society.
- 6 Why has the work of scribes been so important to the development of our knowledge about the society of ancient Egypt?

Apply and analyse

- 7 List the physical or mental qualities or skills that you think would have made a slave an ideal person for each of the following:
 - a the pharaoh's household
 - b working in the desert mines
 - c working in a local temple.

Evaluate and create

- 8 The powerful roles in ancient Egyptian society were those of people who were wealthy, had political power or had religious authority. Discuss as a class to what extent this represents the situation in Australia today.

8B rich task

Farming in ancient Egypt

Farmers in ancient Egypt prospered because of the fertile land along the banks of the Nile. Farming was so central to the success of ancient Egypt that many aspects of society were shaped by it, such as their calendar, the design of their houses, even the class system. Most of the pharaoh's wealth came from the taxes paid in grain by farmers. This grain was stored in plentiful years for use when food was in short supply.

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Using primary sources as evidence

Historians focus their research on sources that are relevant to their inquiry. After locating a range of sources that they think might be useful, historians need to analyse them to discover if they contain evidence that will be relevant to the particular question they are investigating. The evidence is the information contained in or gathered from the source. A source becomes evidence if it can be used to answer a particular question about the past.

The first step you must undertake before attempting to locate, compare, select and use a range of sources as evidence is to be very clear about the historical questions you are investigating. In this skill drill, your inquiry questions are:

- What were farming practices like in ancient Egypt?
- What role did farmers have in the social hierarchy?



You need to keep these questions in mind as you work through the following steps:

Step 1 Look at the source carefully and note the obvious things that it is telling you.

Step 2 Look beyond the obvious and see what you can infer; that is, what can you work out from what you see in the source, even though it may not be immediately obvious?

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

Source 1, a wall painting from the tomb of an important official called Menna, provides a lot of information about ancient Egyptian farming, including crops, tools and farming methods. It is a very useful primary source.

Source 1 This is a detail from a wall painting in the tomb of Menna, an important official from ancient Egypt. The painting (c. 1400–1390 BCE) contains detailed information about farming practices in ancient Egypt.

Apply the skill

- Each farming activity listed below has an identifying letter beside it. Locate the section of the painting that you think best corresponds to each activity and match the corresponding letter and number in your notebook.
 - Cutting down grain with scythes (metal cutting tools)
 - Threshing (beating) the grain
 - The arrival of a noble to check grain stores
 - Picking fruit
 - Preparing for planting
 - Stopping for a rest
 - Measuring the size of the field
 - Recording details of the harvest
 - Separating the husks from the grains
 - Transporting the crop
- Who is involved in the activities? List as many different classes, genders and ages as you can.
- What tools and animals can you identify in the painting? Can you suggest what the tools are made from?
- How does this painting help you to understand why farmers were at the bottom of the social hierarchy? Think about how many workers there are and the tasks they are performing.

Extend your understanding

- Work in small groups to prepare a two-minute role play between one of the farmers in Source 1 and a noble who has come to check grain stores. Your dialogue should reflect the differences between these social roles as you understand them. Once finished, perform your role play for the class.
- Brainstorm three other types of primary sources that might provide useful evidence in our inquiry into what farming practices were like in ancient Egypt and the role of farmers in the social hierarchy.

8.8 Religious beliefs and practices

Religious beliefs dominated the lives of the ancient Egyptians. Nearly everything in their world was seen as being controlled by hundreds of **deities** (gods and goddesses). Their beliefs greatly influenced how they lived, what they built and how they waged war. These beliefs also shaped their views about death and how they prepared for it.

Beliefs and values in ancient Egypt

The ancient Egyptians believed that one group of gods created the world and its living things, while another group controlled the forces of nature. There also were gods of fertility, wisdom, love, music and dance, death, health and childbirth. The Sun god Ra (or Re) was the most important god. The Egyptians believed he rode across the sky each day in a boat. Ra is the central figure shown sitting in a boat in Source 2. He has the Sun symbol on his head. Arched over him is Nut, the universal mother. Her curved body represents the curve of the sky. Endlessly, she swallows the Sun at night and gives birth to it again next morning. Geb, the Earth god, is stretched out underneath Nut. His angled limbs suggest the mountains and valleys of the land.

Traditions and ceremonies

The ancient Egyptians built many temples where priests and priestesses served the gods and goddesses they believed lived there. The priests burned incense, made offerings and held festivals.

Ordinary people made shrines within their homes where they said prayers and left offerings. People played instruments such as **sistra** (metal rattles; see Source 2 on page XX) to keep away evil spirits. They also wore **amulets** to attract the protection or goodwill of the gods.

Source 1 Detail of a statue showing the god of water, Sobek, alongside pharaoh Amenhotep III. Sobek is shown with the features of a crocodile.



Source 3 Many animals in ancient Egypt were mummified as a sign of respect, or as offerings to the gods. Cats, such as this one, were mummified in large numbers.



Source 2 An ancient painting on papyrus showing some of the most important gods of ancient Egypt

Animal gods

Many gods throughout ancient Egypt were represented with the heads or bodies of animals. For example, the goddess of war, Sekhmet, was shown as a lion, and the god of water, Sobek, was represented as a crocodile. As a result, many priests and priestesses kept crocodiles as pets and spoilt them with offerings of food.

The Egyptian goddess Bastet, the protector of homes, was shown as a cat. The ancient Egyptians valued cats highly, not only out of respect for Bastet, but also because they protected their grain stores by killing vermin such as mice and rats. Households treated cats very well; harming or killing a cat was often punished by death. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that when a cat in ancient Egypt died, the occupants of the house would mourn and often shave their eyebrows to show their loss.

Check your learning 8.8

Remember and understand

- 1 Which Egyptian god was the most significant? Why?
- 2 Name one way in which ordinary people tried to keep evil spirits away.
- 3 How did ordinary people try to attract protection from the gods?
- 4 How were gods worshipped in ancient Egypt?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Through research, find out how some of the Egyptian deities were depicted. Look particularly at their heads. Draw sketches to show how you would depict each of the following: god of peace, god of greed and god of courage.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Create a new deity for ancient Egypt. Sketch his or her appearance (use labels and stick figures if you cannot draw). Describe this deity's role. List the different ways in which your deity would have affected the lives of the ancient Egyptians.

8.9 Everyday life

Ancient Egypt was a highly organised civilisation that was deeply influenced by its people’s beliefs, **values** and practices. This influence was evident in various aspects of the ancient Egyptians’ daily lives.

Marriage, love and childbirth

Egyptians married as teenagers. Marriage was usually a business matter, arranged by the parents when the partners were young. This is why a man might, for example, marry his sister – to keep the money in the family. It seems not much fuss was made about weddings – the woman simply left home to live with her new husband. Yet marriage was seen (by law and religious belief) as a serious commitment and, as Source 1 indicates, some marriages would also have involved mutual love and respect apart from economic arrangement.

Childbirth was a risky business. There was a high loss of life of both babies and mothers. Some women gave birth in special ‘birthing houses’ in temples. People often called on deities for help. For example, they might ask for support from Hathor, the goddess of women (represented as a cow). Or they would ask Ra, the main Egyptian deity, to send a wind to cool the mother.



Source 2 These musical instruments, known as sistra, made a loud clanging sound when shaken as the moving metal parts banged into each other.



Source 1 This sculpture comes from the tomb of a couple buried together at Saqqara, near Cairo. The level of affection shown here (the woman’s arm behind the man) is uncommon among Egyptian paintings and carvings.

Music and dance

The ancient Egyptians had a range of musical instruments, including harps, drums and sistra (see Source 2). Music and dance were always part of funerals. They were also seen as ways to communicate with deities such as Sekhmet. People who had done the wrong thing were very scared of this goddess, because they believed she would destroy the wicked. Dancing was a way to appeal to her mercy. The ancient Egyptians also believed that the sistrum both honoured the god Hathor and frightened off the desert god Set (the god of chaos).

Communication

Only around one per cent of people in ancient Egypt learned to read and write. These people, almost always men, were highly respected. They were called scribes (see ‘Other key groups in Egyptian society’).

During the period of the Old Kingdom, the ancient Egyptians used a script called hieroglyphs. This script contained over 750 symbols. As time passed, the ancient Egyptians developed simpler scripts – the **demotic** and **hieratic** scripts. These could be written more quickly, and were used for everyday writing.

Health and hygiene

The ancient Egyptians valued cleanliness. The wealthy bathed often. Priests used to shave their entire bodies regularly, and wash up to four times a day, so that they were completely clean when performing their religious duties. Slaves, on the other hand, washed rarely and so could be smelly and sticky. Records describe how one pharaoh, Pepy II, used to surround himself with naked slaves who were smeared with honey, so that flies would annoy them instead of him.

Health problems

Despite Egyptians’ love of cleanliness, ancient Egypt was not a healthy place to live. Malnutrition was common, especially among the poor, and there were other problems. These included:

- lots of mosquitoes that bred in the Nile, spreading diseases such as malaria, which causes flu-like symptoms including fever
- rubbish and human waste that were often dumped in the Nile and other canals, leading to regular outbreaks of diseases such as dysentery, which causes severe diarrhoea
- breathing in sand blown in from the deserts which often led to a lung disease called silicosis
- fragments of rock left in flour from the stones used to grind the grain which caused tooth damage and decay.

Medicine and healing

The ancient Egyptians discovered a lot about the human body through their practice of **mummification**. For example, they knew how to use hot knives during surgery to seal blood vessels



Source 3 Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs in the Temple of the Dead of Rameses III, Luxor

in order to stop uncontrolled bleeding. However, healing and medicine also relied heavily on magic and the influence of the gods. Priests were often involved in medical treatments, reciting spells and performing magic rituals.

Check your learning 8.9

Remember and understand

- 1 In what ways did ancient Egyptians show that they valued cleanliness and their physical appearance?
- 2 Explain why ancient Egyptians often suffered from each of the following: bacterial infections, bad teeth and silicosis.
- 3 Why were scribes so highly valued?

Apply and analyse

- 4 What practice of the ancient Egyptians helped to advance their knowledge of anatomy?
- 5 What gods might a woman giving birth in ancient Egypt call on? Why?
- 6 In which ways did written forms of communication develop and change over time in ancient Egypt? Why were these changes necessary?

8.10 Warfare

Ancient Egypt had a fairly peaceful early history, mainly because the physical features that surrounded ancient Egypt, such as mountains and deserts, acted as natural barriers against invasion. During the Old Kingdom Egypt had only a small army. During the Middle and New Kingdoms, however, the army grew into a large, well-organised group because the pharaoh’s rule was often threatened.

The army and the pharaoh’s military role

Ancient Egypt’s army was similar to a loosely organised police force. It kept law and order in Egypt, protected the pharaoh and the pharaoh’s palace, and guarded borders. The head of Egypt’s army was the pharaoh – only he led troops into battle.

One of the pharaoh’s main responsibilities was to protect the Egyptian people from attack. Because he was considered to be a god, he had to make his people believe that he was strong enough to protect them. This was one of the reasons why many pharaohs built huge and impressive statues of themselves.

The army included both foot soldiers (those who walked and fought on the ground) and charioteers (soldiers who drove and fought from horse-drawn chariots like the one shown in Source 1). Usually, there were two charioteers in each chariot. One man steered the horses and the other used the weapons (usually a bow and arrow, and a spear). It cost a lot of money to buy a chariot (and horses). Because of this, only wealthy men could become charioteers. Successful charioteers were looked on as heroes.

Life of a soldier

Evidence from ancient Egyptian sources shows that army life was tough. Soldiers had to participate in a very challenging program of weapons training and physical exercise. Soldiers who did anything wrong might be whipped. Often, soldiers had to go on long marches through the desert.



Source 1 The remains of a wall painting showing pharaoh Ramses II charging into battle. The horse-drawn chariot was an important weapon in ancient Egypt.



Source 2 A model of Egyptian foot soldiers from the tomb of Mesehti, an important official in Egypt during the 11th Dynasty (c. 2134–1991 BCE)

Treatment of enemies

Ancient Egyptians could be very harsh in their treatment of enemies they fought and conquered. There are accounts of corpses being mutilated, with body parts such as arms and heads chopped off to present to the pharaoh or the gods. But there were also many occasions of mercy. For example, conquered leaders were sometimes allowed to continue to rule their local region as long as they acknowledged the pharaoh as supreme ruler.

Weapons and armour

Soldiers did not wear much clothing, mainly because of the heat. They would usually wear a belt and loincloth, or a short tunic. They did not wear headgear. Some charioteers wore a type of armour on their upper body, made from a series of leather straps. It seems that only the pharaohs wore metal armour, but not all the time. This armour was made from a series of overlapping bronze pieces. Pharaohs would also wear a special headpiece during battle, known as the *khepresh* or blue crown. It was usually made of cloth or leather stained blue and covered with small gold or bronze discs (see Source 1).

Many weapons also served as farming tools. For example, axes might chop down palms as well as enemy bodies. Spears might kill creatures such as lions as well as men. Throwing sticks were useful for hunting birds. Many weapons, such as the mace, had religious importance (see Source 3). Archaeologists have often found weapons in graves alongside the remains of ancient Egyptian bodies.

Weapons used in ancient Egypt

- Flint and bronze knives
- Swords and daggers (made of bronze, and later iron)
- Bows and arrows
- Spears
- Maces (heavy clubs with stone or copper ‘heads’)
- Battleaxes
- Shields
- Battering rams and scaling ladders (for attacking buildings with high walls)

Source 3 Some weapons used by soldiers in ancient Egypt

keyconcept: perspectives

Army life

Many men in ancient Egypt chose to join the army as a way to become rich. Wealth would give talented soldiers a chance to improve their social position. After a battle, goods from the defeated army would often be taken and given to officers, priests and worthy soldiers. There are papyrus texts that describe soldiers being given items of gold jewellery. There was also a commonly held belief that the memory and name of a war hero would live forever.

However, not everybody had the same perspective on life as a soldier. Scribes, who often travelled with the army, saw it as an awful existence. Many encouraged young Egyptians not to join the army.

Source 4

Come, let me tell you the woes of the soldier ... He is awakened at any hour ... He is hungry, his belly hurts; he is dead while yet alive ... He may not rest. There are no clothes, no sandals ... His march is uphill through mountains. He drinks water every third day; it is smelly and tastes of salt. His body is ravaged by illness ...

Translated extract from the writing of the scribe Wenemdiamun, in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976, vol. 1

For more information on the key concept of perspectives, refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.

Check your learning 8.10

Remember and understand

- 1 Why did the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt only need a small army?
- 2 The army of ancient Egypt had two main types of soldiers. Name them and describe how they fought.

Apply and analyse

- 3 After some battles, ancient Egyptian soldiers cut off parts of people they had killed in battle and presented them to the pharaoh or as offerings to the gods. Why do you think they might have done this?

Evaluate and create

- 4 With a partner, write and perform a role play that demonstrates the different perspectives that might be held about army life by an ambitious young Egyptian soldier and the scribe Wenemdiamun (see Source 4).

8.11 Death and funeral customs

Religion played a major part in the life and death of ancient Egyptians. For those who were worthy, death was not seen as the end. Instead it was regarded as the start of a different sort of existence. To be worthy, each person had to live a good life.

In addition to living a good and honest life, there were a number of rituals that needed to be performed in order to ensure a smooth journey into the afterlife. These included:

- preserving the body after death through a process known as mummification
- reciting the appropriate magic spells to ensure the person’s safe passage into the afterlife
- making sure that the dead person had access to what he or she would need in the afterlife. These items needed to be placed in the person’s tomb.

The mummification process

To the ancient Egyptians, reaching the afterlife was a complicated business. It was not enough for a person simply to be worthy, they also had to be prepared for the journey according to a number of rituals, and be supplied with the necessary provisions and protections. Their bodies were preserved through the process of mummification (or embalming), which involved removing vital organs and placing charms and spells in specific areas (see Source 1 on page XX).

Journey to the afterlife

Once a person’s body was ready for burial, a procession including family, priests and professional mourners would take the body to its tomb. At the entrance of the tomb, the priests performed various rituals, including the ‘opening of the mouth’ ceremony. A priest touched all the head openings of the mummified body with an axe-like tool. This was believed to awaken the dead person’s senses. The coffin was then sealed up and placed in the stone **sarcophagus**. The dead person was now ready to start the journey into the afterlife.

The Book of the Dead

In order to reach the afterlife, the ancient Egyptians believed that the dead person would need magic spells and special prayers to support them through any dangers and further rituals on their journey. These spells and prayers were recorded in a special text known as the *Book of the Dead*. A copy of the *Book of the Dead* was often buried with dead people.

One of the important rituals the dead person must undergo before being allowed into the afterlife was the ‘weighing of the heart’. In ancient Egypt, it was believed that the heart contained the soul, so the weighing of the heart was a kind of final judgement. The ritual is explained in Source 2.

Tombs

The earliest tombs were often graves in the desert. The hot, dry sand soon sucked all moisture from the corpse, preserving it. The poor continued to be buried this way even after burial practices had changed.

The first above-ground tombs were called mastabas. These were large, box-like structures. Many mastabas had detailed designs, with stones in patterns decorating the walls. Perhaps the best-known above-ground tombs were the **pyramids**. Today, more than 160 pyramids have been found.

When grave robbers started becoming a problem, tombs for important people such as pharaohs were dug underground in places such as the **Valley of the Kings**. This began to happen from about 1500 BCE.

Source 1 This person was buried in a pit in the Egyptian desert 5400 years ago, along with some possessions. The well-preserved body had a number of broken bones.



Source 2 An ancient Egyptian painting showing the ‘weighing of the heart’ ritual

Burial goods

Egyptians buried their dead with goods they believed would be needed in the afterlife – clothing, jewellery, pots, furniture, wigs, tools, chariots, boats, food and even servants! Later, small models of servants were used instead of the real servants.



Source 3 This boat was found in the Great Pyramid at Giza, burial place of the pharaoh Khufu, who ruled from 2551 BCE to 2528 BCE. A boat was needed so that the pharaoh could sail across the sky with the god Ra.

- 1 Anubis, god of embalming and the dead, leads the dead person to judgement.
- 2 A row of judges sit watching.
- 3 Anubis weighs the dead person’s heart against a feather from the headdress of Ma’at, the goddess of truth and justice. If the heart is lighter than the feather, it means the person has led a good life and will be admitted to the afterlife.
- 4 Ammit, a female demon with the head of a crocodile, will eat the dead person’s heart if it is heavier than the feather.
- 5 Thoth, god of writing and knowledge, records the result of the weigh-in.
- 6 Horus, god of the sky and ruler of the world of the living, leads the dead person (who has passed the test) to Osiris.
- 7 Osiris, god of the dead and the underworld, allows the person into the afterlife.

Check your learning 8.11

Remember and understand

- 1 Explain why the corpse shown in Source 1 is surrounded with goods. Why is it so well preserved?
- 2 What were mastabas and pyramids?
- 3 What was the *Book of the Dead* and what role did it play in Egyptian funeral customs?
- 4 Why was it so important to ancient Egyptians to preserve the body when someone died?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Look at Source 2. Why do you think ‘having a heavy heart’ might indicate that the life a person has led has not been a good one?

Evaluate and create

- 6 Source 3 shows a boat (now reassembled) that was found in the Great Pyramid. Write a statement that might have been read by the priest speaking at Khufu’s funeral. Include reference to this boat.

8.12 How Egyptian mummies were made



3 The liver, lungs, stomach and intestines are removed through a cut on the left side of the abdomen. A hook, pushed up through the nostrils, removes the brain (thought to be a useless organ that produces only mucus). The heart is left in the body.

2 The body is thoroughly washed. Prayers are read from the *Book of the Dead* by a priest.

1 The dead body is brought for mummification, followed by mourners.

4 The internal organs are dried in natron (a natural powder, a bit like salt), rubbed with fragrant oils and put into four canopic jars. Each jar's lid is shaped like the head of a different god, who acts as the guardian of the organ within: the liver has a lid like a man's head; the lungs, a baboon's head; the stomach, a jackal's head; and the intestines, a falcon's head.

5 The body is then covered with salt for 70 days. This, and the dry air, sucks out any moisture. The body is washed again in water and smeared with fragrant oil.

6 Once the body has been embalmed, it is wrapped with rolls of fine linen (similar to bandages), starting with the head and neck. Toes and fingers are wrapped separately, and sometimes covered with gold caps. Sacred amulets such as the **scarab** are wound into the bandaging. During the wrapping, prayers from the *Book of the Dead* are said over the body.

7 The fully bandaged mummy is painted with sticky **resin**, and then more cloth is wrapped around it.

8 The mummy is put into a body-shaped coffin. Often more than one coffin is used, each one sitting inside the next. For important people like pharaohs, the nest of coffins is placed inside a stone box, called a sarcophagus.

Check your learning 8.12

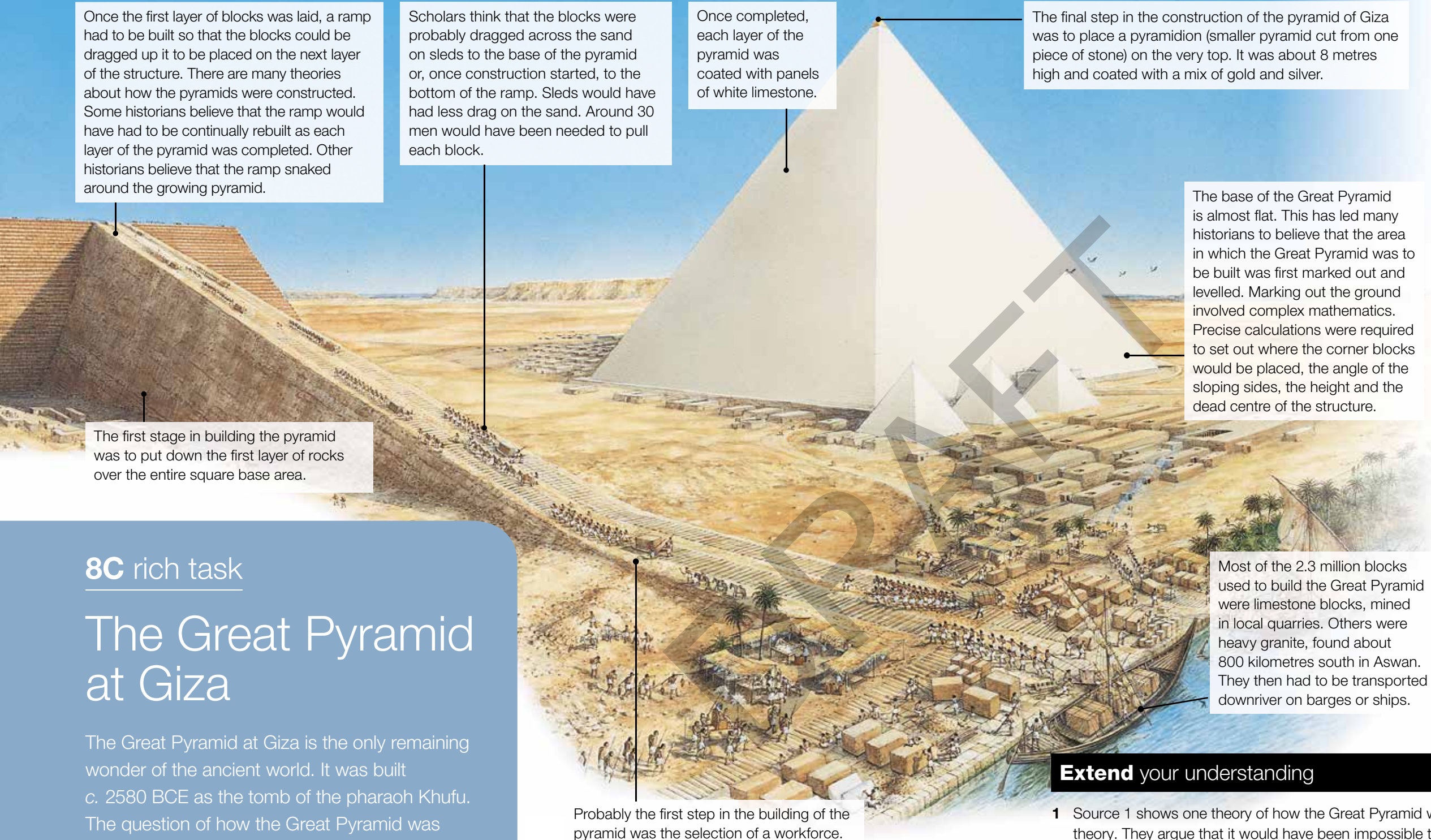
Remember and understand

- 1 What was done with a dead person's internal organs during the mummification process?
- 2 Why were bodies covered with salt for 70 days?
- 3 What religious ritual was conducted as the bodies were wrapped in cloth?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Study the various elements illustrated in Source 1. What evidence does this source provide about ancient Egyptian beliefs and values, and their impact on people's lives?

Source 1. The steps followed during the mummification process



Once the first layer of blocks was laid, a ramp had to be built so that the blocks could be dragged up it to be placed on the next layer of the structure. There are many theories about how the pyramids were constructed. Some historians believe that the ramp would have had to be continually rebuilt as each layer of the pyramid was completed. Other historians believe that the ramp snaked around the growing pyramid.

Scholars think that the blocks were probably dragged across the sand on sleds to the base of the pyramid or, once construction started, to the bottom of the ramp. Sleds would have had less drag on the sand. Around 30 men would have been needed to pull each block.

Once completed, each layer of the pyramid was coated with panels of white limestone.

The final step in the construction of the pyramid of Giza was to place a pyramidion (smaller pyramid cut from one piece of stone) on the very top. It was about 8 metres high and coated with a mix of gold and silver.

The base of the Great Pyramid is almost flat. This has led many historians to believe that the area in which the Great Pyramid was to be built was first marked out and levelled. Marking out the ground involved complex mathematics. Precise calculations were required to set out where the corner blocks would be placed, the angle of the sloping sides, the height and the dead centre of the structure.

The first stage in building the pyramid was to put down the first layer of rocks over the entire square base area.

Most of the 2.3 million blocks used to build the Great Pyramid were limestone blocks, mined in local quarries. Others were heavy granite, found about 800 kilometres south in Aswan. They then had to be transported downriver on barges or ships.

Probably the first step in the building of the pyramid was the selection of a workforce. It is believed that, during the inundation of the Nile, most of the workforce was made up of farmers who could not work on their farms because of the floodwaters.

Source 1 Historians believe the building of the Great Pyramid at Giza took about 20 years, using 100 000 workers.

8C rich task

The Great Pyramid at Giza

The Great Pyramid at Giza is the only remaining wonder of the ancient world. It was built c. 2580 BCE as the tomb of the pharaoh Khufu. The question of how the Great Pyramid was constructed with such accuracy has mystified many historians. These historians have come up with many different hypotheses about how it was built. The illustration on these pages highlights what many historians today agree must have been the main steps in the pyramid's construction.

skilldrill: Chronology

Creating a flow chart

After conducting their inquiries, historians need to be able to express and communicate their findings in a range of ways and using different forms. Sometimes, historians communicate their findings orally or in writing. At other times, historians use particular graphic organisers, such as flow charts, to communicate information.

Flow charts are a very useful tool for communicating steps in a process. To create a flow chart, you need to think carefully about the steps involved in a process, as well as the order in which these steps would have been performed. A good flow chart should include:

- written descriptions of each step
- a small drawing or visual representation of each step
- arrows between each step to show the order in which they were performed.

Apply the skill

- 1 Look carefully at Source 1. Identify what the key steps would have been in the building of the Great Pyramid, as well as the order in which these steps would have been performed. Create a flow chart that outlines these steps, using the guidelines above.

Extend your understanding

- 1 Source 1 shows one theory of how the Great Pyramid was built, but many historians now contest this theory. They argue that it would have been impossible to drag stone blocks to the top of the pyramid up such a steep ramp.
 - a Conduct some online research on theories that try to explain how the pyramids were built. For example:
 - a ramp that winds around the pyramid
 - a series of cranes that lifted stones up the side of the pyramid
 - a combination of all of these theories
 - b Describe each theory and draw a simple picture to illustrate how each may have worked.
 - c Which theory do you think is most likely to be correct? Give reasons for your answer.

8.13 Change through trade

Ancient Egypt’s location offered it many advantages in terms of trade. For example, the Nile allowed merchants easy access to the Mediterranean Sea and beyond. The trade contacts they made with new markets helped Egypt to develop and prosper. So did the lands Egypt acquired through their military conquests during a period known as the New Kingdom.

There is evidence to suggest that Egyptian traders were making contact with other countries almost from the start of their history. There were early expeditions up and down the Nile, down the Red Sea and across the deserts.

Egypt had plenty of grain and dates, **papyrus**, flax (a plant used to make linen), stone, fish, oxen and salt. The ancient Egyptians bartered plentiful goods such as these for other goods that they had little of. Bartering was a way to exchange or swap goods without using money. For example, they would trade with their southern neighbour Nubia (modern-day northern Sudan), swapping their own supplies of grain for exotic goods such as ivory (elephant tusk) and ebony (a rare timber). They would also buy goods such as silver, iron, horses, copper, cattle, leopard skins and spices.

One of the more famous trade expeditions in ancient Egypt was when Queen Hatshepsut sent an expedition down the Red Sea, where they obtained trees, elephant tusks, gold, ebony, spices and foreign animals such as panthers. Sailors on the trading ships were paid in grain.

Egyptian traders would often travel on land with camel caravans through deserts. Alternatively, they would travel by boat or barge.

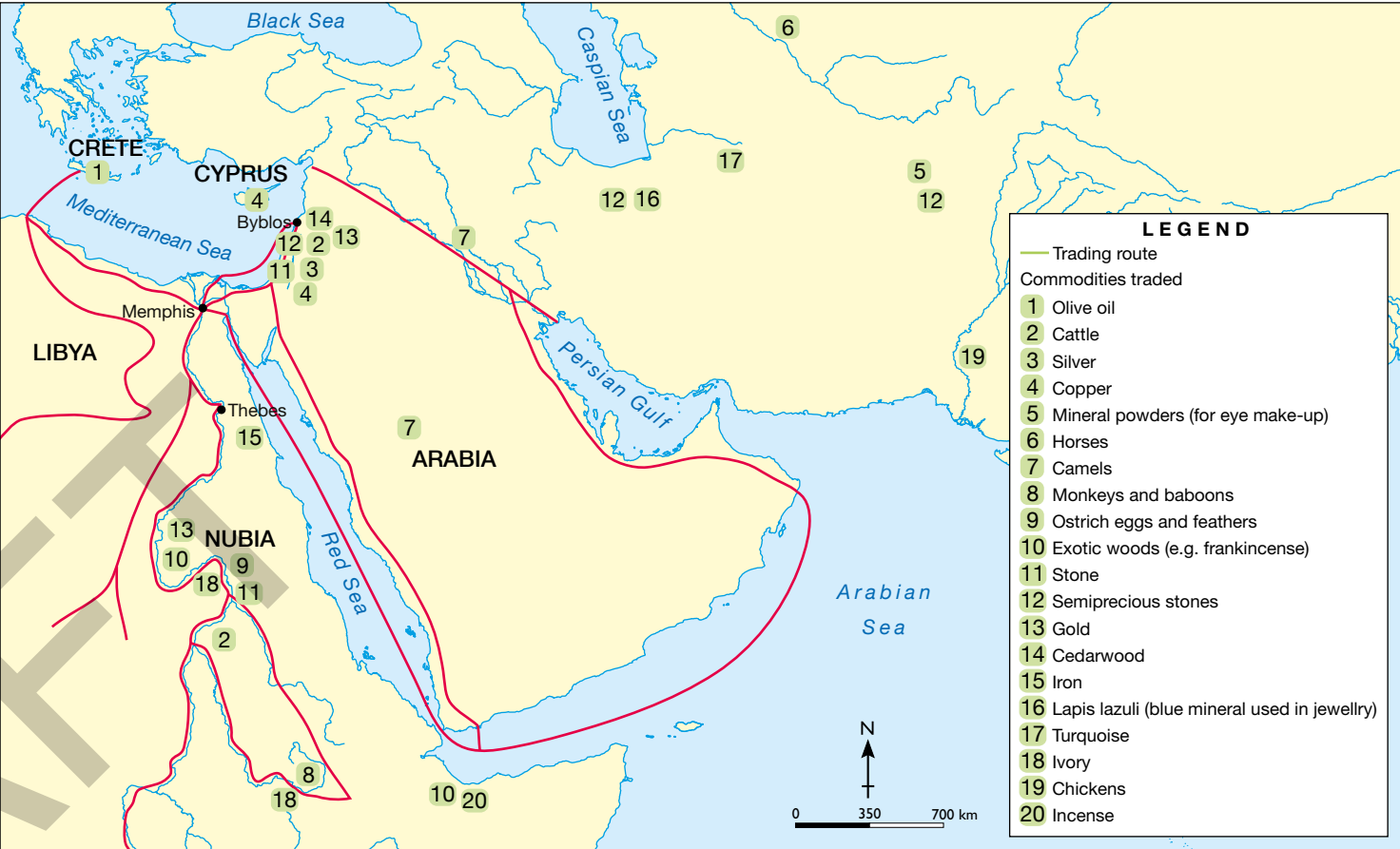


Source 1 An artist’s impression of an ancient Egyptian river boat. Egyptian traders would have used boats like these to transport goods along the Nile.



Source 2 An Egyptian tomb painting showing Nubians carrying goods. Some exchanges were ‘gift giving’ rather than trade. What was given reflected the power balance – a ruler who respected the power of Egypt might give ‘better’ (or more) goods than they received.

KEY TRADE ROUTES OF ANCIENT EGYPTIANS



Source 3

Source: Oxford University Press

Check your learning 8.13

Remember and understand

- 1 What type of goods did ancient Egypt have plenty of to trade?
- 2 What does the word ‘barter’ mean? What goods did the ancient Egyptians barter with the Nubians?
- 3 Examine Source 3.
 - a List some of the goods Egypt obtained from Nubia, from other parts of Africa and from Retenu (what Egyptians called the region then known as Canaan and Syria).
 - b Using your atlas, work out the modern names of the countries that the ancient Egyptians traded with to obtain chickens, lapis lazuli and incense.

Apply and analyse

- 4 Explain how the exchange of goods was sometimes a way to reinforce how rulers perceived the power of other countries.
- 5 Look at Source 2. List the goods in this image you are familiar with. With a partner, try to work out what the other items might be.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Draw a concept map to show how imported goods listed in Source 3 might have helped to change the society of ancient Egypt.
- 7 Imagine that because of some terrible circumstances Australia is cut off from all contact with the rest of the world. As a class, brainstorm how you think this would influence our society in both the short term and the long term. What does your discussion reveal about the impact of trade on societies?

8.14 Change through conflict

At the start of the New Kingdom in 1550 BCE, Egypt's army was more professional than it had ever been. Its soldiers had better military equipment and were better trained. This meant that Egypt was in a strong position to conquer territories beyond its borders.

The pharaoh Thutmose III and his army were particularly successful at this. Their efforts meant that a large part of southern Syria was brought under Egypt's control.

A growing threat to Egypt around this time were the Hittites. The Hittites were a group of people keen to build their empire. From about the 14th century BCE, the Hittites started to push south from the area that is today known as Turkey, down through the coastal regions of the western Mediterranean Sea. Egypt had maintained a trade interest in this region for a long time.

Campaigns of Seti I and Rameses II

The 19th-dynasty pharaoh Seti I used Egypt's growing military strength to further expand Egypt's influence. He fought conflicts in Canaan, Syria, Libya and Nubia in an attempt to increase Egypt's power and prestige.

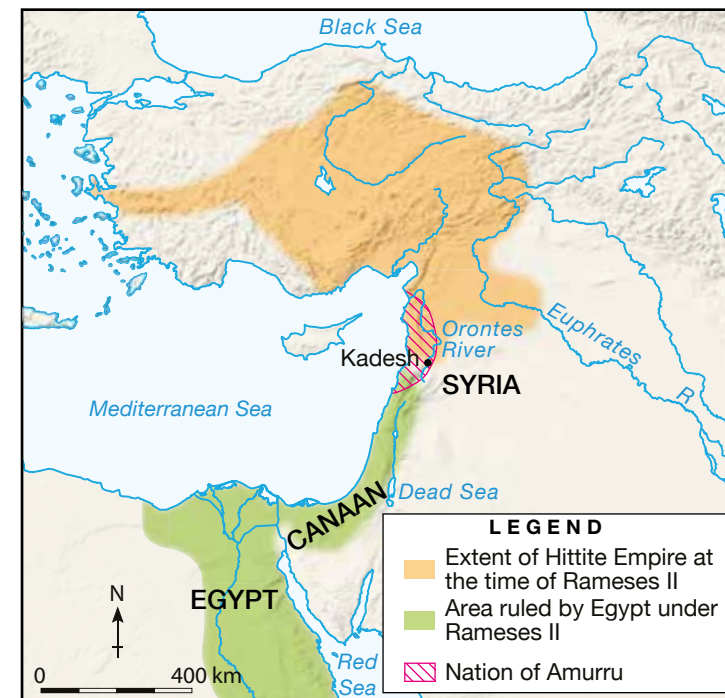
Kadesh was a city in Syria that had been taken from the Egyptians by the Hittites. Seti I led a very bloody battle against the Hittites and was able to reclaim Kadesh for a short time.

Rameses II became the pharaoh after his father, Seti I. He was in power for a long time, from c. 1279 to 1213 BCE. Under his rule, Egypt's economy boomed. Rameses was also a remarkable soldier, and he was determined that Egypt would take over Kadesh permanently.

The Battle of Kadesh

The Battle of Kadesh (1274 BCE) is thought to be the biggest chariot battle in history. It is also the first battle in history where there are records from both sides, and it led to the world's first peace treaty. For all these reasons, the Battle of Kadesh is seen as historically significant.

EGYPT'S TERRITORIAL EXPANSION DURING THE NEW KINGDOM



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press

Source 2 Rameses II celebrated what he claimed to be a great victory at Kadesh with many texts and stone artworks. This stone carving at the Abu Simbel temple shows him on the attack.



keyconcept: cause and effect

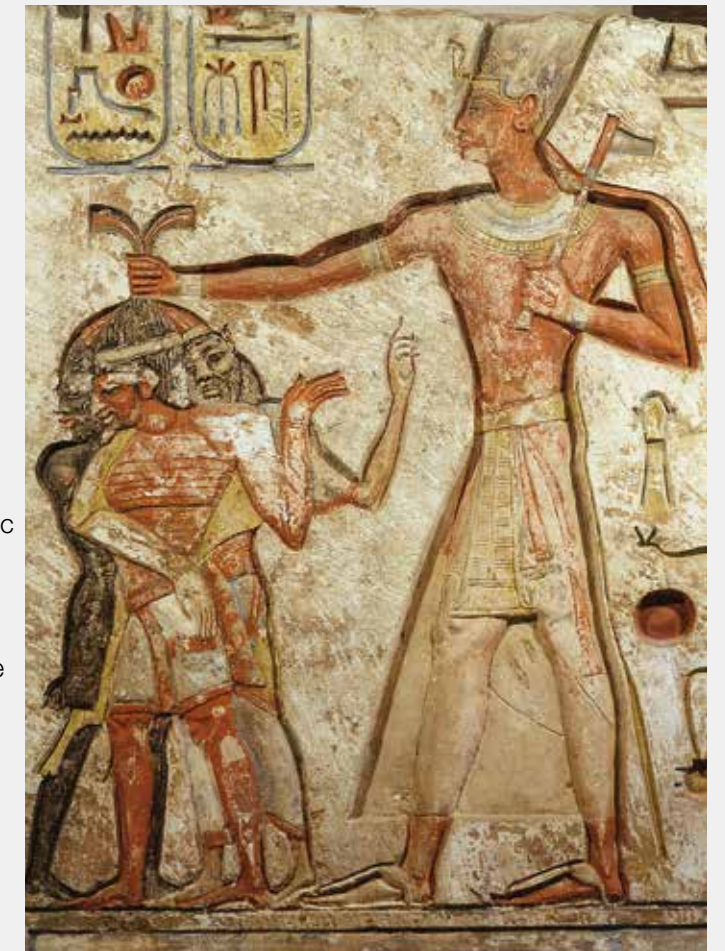
The Battle of Kadesh

The ancient city of Kadesh lay on the trade route that linked the Mediterranean Sea to the northern part of ancient Syria. Egypt lost its influence over Kadesh to the Hittites during the time that the pharaoh Akhenaten was in power (around the mid 14th century BCE). The main reason for the battle was that Egypt wanted Kadesh back. Amurru, a nation near Kadesh, had also been taken over by the Hittites. The battle was started because Amurru asked for help from Rameses II to free itself from Hittite rule.

In the end, neither side actually won, although Rameses tried to say that he was the victor for some time. The longer term effect of this battle was the historic treaty that Egypt signed with the Hittites in 1269 BCE. The treaty set out their agreement that Egypt would not invade Hittite territory and the Hittites would not invade Egyptian territory. The effect of this treaty was that there were 70 years of peace for the region.

For more information on the key concept of cause and effect, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

Source 3 This tomb painting shows Rameses II at the Battle of Kadesh. It is only one of a great many monuments and paintings he had made as propaganda for his achievements.



Check your learning 8.14

Remember and understand

- 1 Why was Kadesh important to Rameses II?
- 2 Who did the Egyptians fight at the Battle of Kadesh?
- 3 What triggered the Battle of Kadesh?
- 4 Why was this battle so significant?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Look at Source 3. Given what you know about Rameses II and the Battle of Kadesh, explain why this tomb painting is a good example of propaganda. How do you think the Hittites might have reacted to this?

8D rich task

The Battle of Kadesh

In this battle, the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II and his army fought the Hittites to regain control over the ancient city of Kadesh. Rameses II's plan of attack was to divide his troops into four groups or 'divisions': Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth. Each group would march from their starting point in the forest, north through the desert into Kadesh, one day apart, in the order mentioned. Rameses II led one of the groups – the Amun. They set up camp in a swampy area south of Kadesh. Two Hittite spies told Rameses II that the Hittites were far away, so Rameses II was very confident that he and his army would be able to take Kadesh. Unknown to him, the Hittite army was hidden and waiting. While the Amun group camped near the swamp, the Hittites sneaked out and attacked the Re group, killing nearly all of them. Then, the Hittites turned north to finish off the Amun group. Luckily for Rameses II, the Ptah group arrived to help the Amun group at the scene of battle. It was a tough battle and Rameses II was forced to fight for his life.

Source 1 A stone carving of the battle of Kadesh showing the army of pharaoh Rameses II fighting Hittite soldiers



skilldrill: Chronology

Creating a visual representation of a historical event

Historians often read information provided by a secondary source (such as the paragraph here about how the Battle of Kadesh unfolded), identify the key ideas or events described in this information, and create a visual representation of these key ideas or events (for example, in the form of maps or labelled diagrams). Going through this process can be very helpful for forming a better understanding or building a clearer picture of events. The resulting visual representation also makes it easier to explain events to others.



To create a good visual representation of a historical event, you need to:

- read the information carefully
- identify the key players in the event/s
- re-read the information, this time making sure you visualise each stage of the event/s being described
- choose symbols and colours to represent key players, locations and events; for example, you might use arrows to show movement
- include a legend.

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

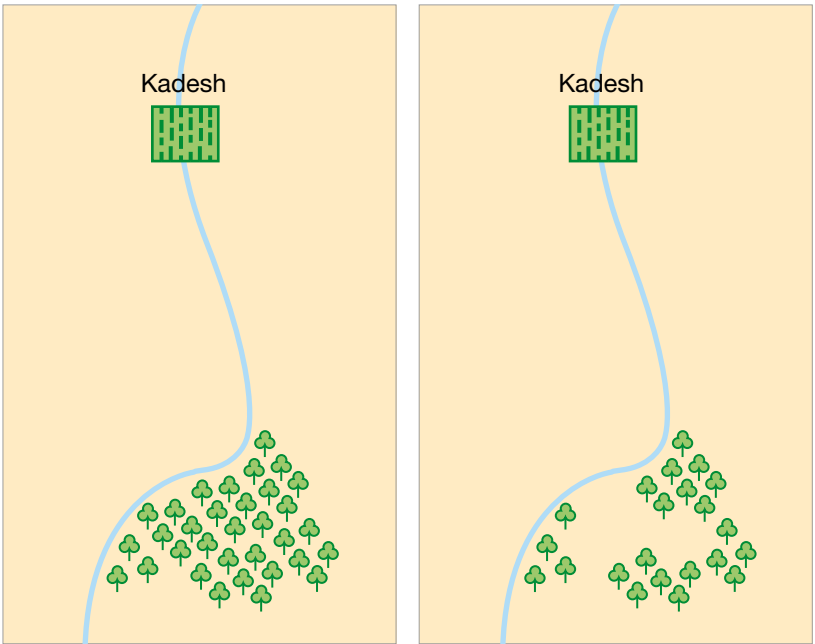
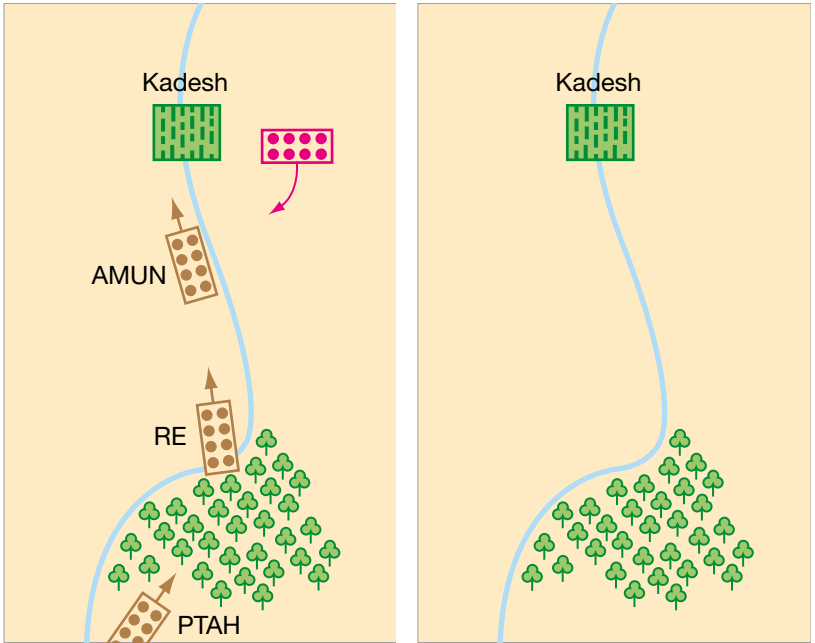
Apply the skill

- 1 Copy the maps on the right into your notebook and use them to create a graphic representation of how the Battle of Kadesh unfolded. The first one has been done for you. Don't forget to complete the legend.

Extend your understanding

- 1 What advice would you have given to Rameses II that might have reduced his troop losses and allowed him to win the battle?
- 2 How do you think propaganda about the godlike achievements of Rameses II would have been received in Europe? How do you think it influenced the perceptions of ordinary Egyptians?
- 3 Write a poem about the battle from the point of view of Rameses II.
- 4 Design a stone relief or wall painting to commemorate the victory of Rameses II.

How the Battle of Kadesh unfolded



LEGEND