

Chapter Summary

Ancient Egypt and Kush

Lesson 1 *The Nile River*

- Around 5000 B.C., early Egyptians settled in the Nile River valley because of its fertile soil. Nearby desert lands provided protection from invaders.
- The Nile River provided resources and protection. The river kept out invaders but allowed Egyptians to travel and trade with one another.
- Regular flooding of the Nile River brought fertile soil from the mountains to the valley. Egyptians farmed during the dry season by irrigating their crops. They dug basins to hold water and canals to carry water directly to the crops.
- The Egyptians developed their own form of writing, called hieroglyphics.
- By 4000 B.C., Egypt was made up of two kingdoms, Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.
- In 3100 B.C., King Narmer united the two kingdoms and established a system of rule called a dynasty. In a dynasty, power is handed down through the family, usually from father to son.

Lesson 2 *Life in Ancient Egypt*

- Egypt's Old Kingdom began around 2600 B.C. The ruler of Egypt was called a pharaoh. The pharaoh was the political and religious leader of the people.
- Ancient Egyptians worshiped gods that controlled nature, including gods of the sun and the Nile River. Ancient Egyptians also believed in an afterlife.
- The Egyptians believed that after death, a person's soul took a long journey to a better place. They preserved the bodies through embalming, which taught the Egyptians about the human body and medical treatments.
- Pharaohs were buried in magnificent stone pyramids. Their possessions were buried with them.
- Thousands of workers were needed to plan and build pyramids. Over time, this helped the Egyptians develop skills in mathematics, geometry, and engineering.

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- Egyptian society was made up of several classes or groups. The upper class included the pharaoh and his family, his army generals, nobles, and priests. The middle class was made up of merchants and artisans. The largest class included unskilled workers, such as farmers and laborers.

Lesson 3 *Egypt's Empire*

- During the Middle Kingdom (c. 2055-1650 B.C.), Egypt took over nearby lands. The additional farmland and wealth helped Egypt's population to grow.
- The arts became important during the Middle Kingdom, as pharaohs ordered the building of new temples, tombs, and other structures.
- Egypt declined in the 1600s B.C. when it fell under the rule of the Hyksos. Egyptians learned new fighting technology from the Hyksos and later overthrew them.
- During the New Kingdom, Queen Hatshepsut expanded Egypt's boundaries peacefully through trade, and King Thutmose III expanded it through war.
- In the late 1300s B.C., King Amenhotep IV decided to change the Egyptian religion. The people did not like the change, and Egypt grew weak.
- King Tutankhamen restored the traditional religion, but he died young. He is famous today because of the treasures found in his tomb during the early twentieth century.
- Ramses II returned Egypt to greatness by conquering Syria and signing a peace treaty with the Hittites. He rebuilt temples, which helped Egypt's economy.
- After the death of Ramses, Egypt declined and was conquered by the Libyans. The Kush people from the south also ruled Egypt for 60 years before the Assyrians took over in 670 B.C.

Lesson 4 *The Kingdom of Kush*

- The Nubians lived in an area later known as Kush, which is located to the south of Egypt, along the Nile River. The

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Nubians did not have to rely on the Nile River for their water; their lands were fertile and contained gold.

- Egypt conquered Nubia in the 1400s B.C. and ruled it for 700 years. Nubians adopted Egyptian traditions such as building tombs and using hieroglyphics.
- During Egyptian rule, the kingdom of Kush rose to power. Around 750 B.C., the Kushites conquered Egypt, and in the 720s B.C. Piye established a new dynasty.
- The Kushites were overthrown by the Assyrians in 671 B.C., but they learned to make iron from their new rulers, which made their tools and weapons stronger.
- In 540 B.C., the Kushites established the city of Meroë. For centuries, the city was a major center for trade and iron production.
- In A.D. 350 the armies of Axum invaded Kush and destroyed Meroë. Axum was an important trading center located in the present-day country of Ethiopia.