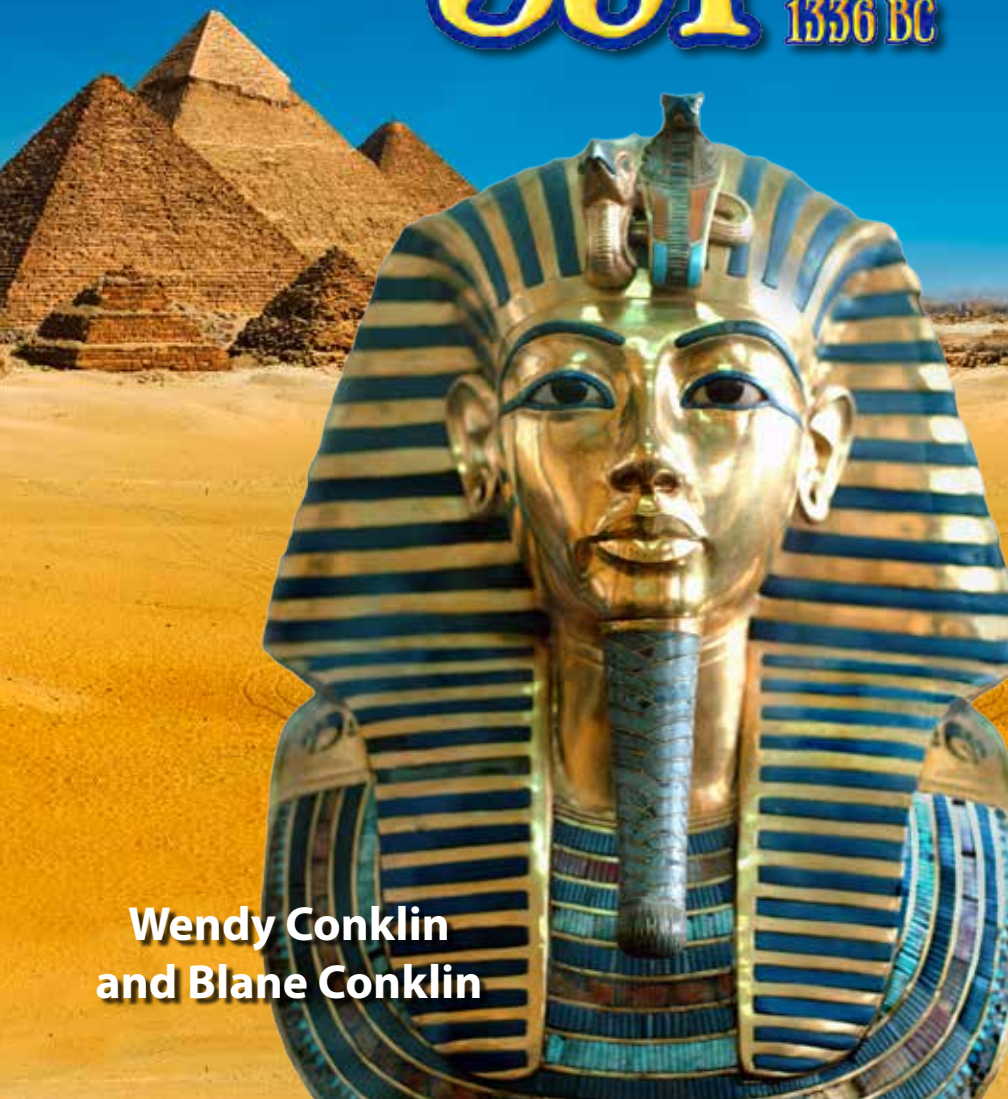
TIME

You Are There!

Ancient Egypt

1336 BC



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and Blane Conklin

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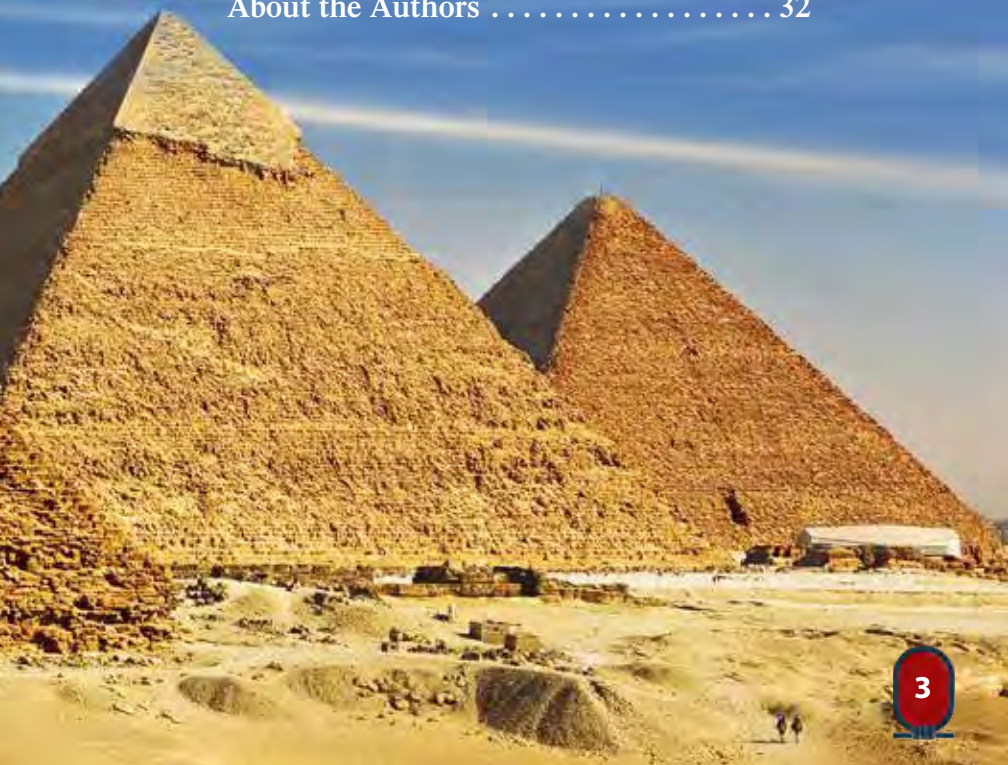
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Welcome to 1336 BC!

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Imagine waking up to find your father has died and you are now the king of Egypt—at only nine years old. It doesn't take long for you to realize that the priests hated your father, Akhenaton, for his extreme religious views. (What was your father thinking when he closed down most of the temples and took away the priests' riches?) Your **advisor**, Ay—who, by the way, was also Akhenaton's right-hand man—is determined to undo your father's hard work. Ay whisks you off to a new home in the city called Memphis. This is where he will rule the ancient land of Egypt through you. And to top off this great news, you will marry your half-sister who is just a few years older than you. Since you are just a kid, you go along with whatever your advisor says. After all, what do you really know about running a country?



Switching Headquarters

Akhenaton had moved the government from Memphis to the new city of Amarna. After Akhenaton died, the advisor Ay moved the government back to its original location in Memphis.

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Akhenaton and Queen Nefertiti make an offering

The Sun God

Akhenaton, also known as Aton, declared that the Egyptians should only worship the sun god, Aton. (Notice how they share the same name!) He didn't deny there were other gods. But this action led to closing temples dedicated to other gods. Many priests were suddenly out of jobs and money.

Talking Politics and Religion

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There is an unspoken rule that people should never talk about politics or religion. (People have strong opinions about these topics—beware the fights and arguments likely to occur!) But, politics and religion are what make Egypt so interesting. So, let's talk!

Getting into Politics

You might be wondering … who has the power in your kingdom? As king, or **pharaoh**, you have the most power. Your people believe you are half god and can speak directly to the gods—especially about crops—but you turn over many of these duties to the chief priest and other priests. Next to you, your **vizier**, Ay, helps keep an eye on business and what is going on in your kingdom. Ay collects taxes, makes property deals, keeps a running record of your riches, and gives you advice according to what he has learned. Even though you have the right to lead your own army, you rely on Horemheb as your **commander in chief**. Along with Ay, he served your father well, and you have every reason to trust him.

Governors, or **nomarchs**, help maintain order in the smaller counties throughout the kingdom. The nomarchs report to Ay. You trust these rulers because many of them are your relatives. Under the nomarchs are mayors who govern the smallest towns and make sure the rules of society are followed. Village elders serve under the mayors to keep the peace.



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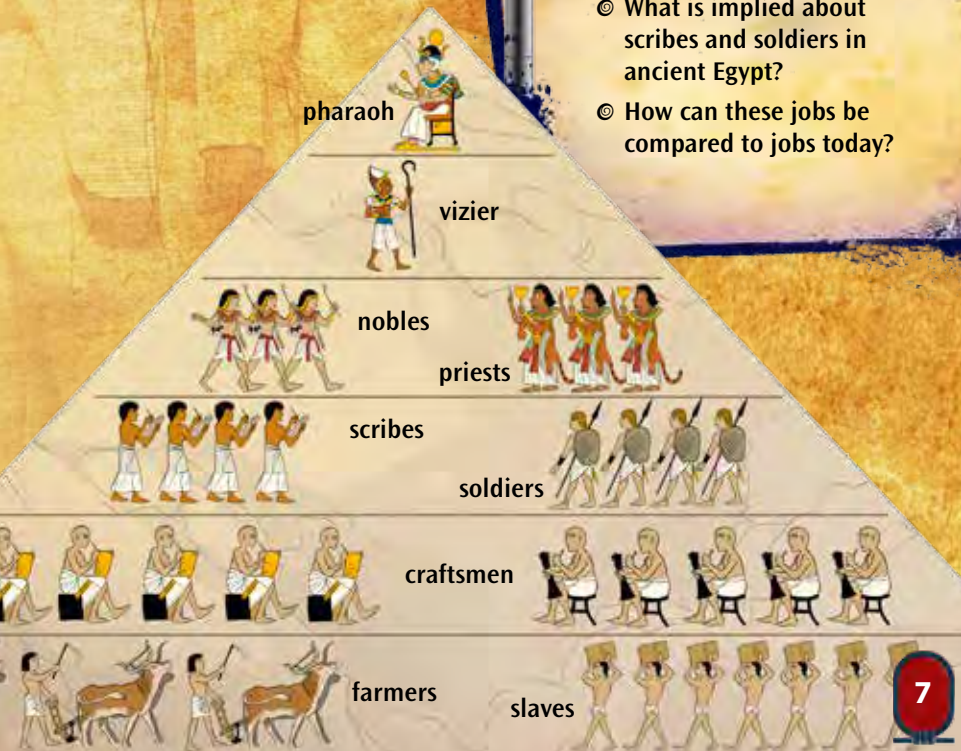
The Bottom of the Barrel

At the very bottom of society was the largest group of people, the peasants. They included the men who professionally washed dusty clothes and the fowler who hunted birds eaten for meals. They also included reed cutters, who sold **papyrus** to sandal designers, boat builders, and paper makers. Peasants paid taxes and did jobs that kept Egypt going strong.



STOP! THINK...

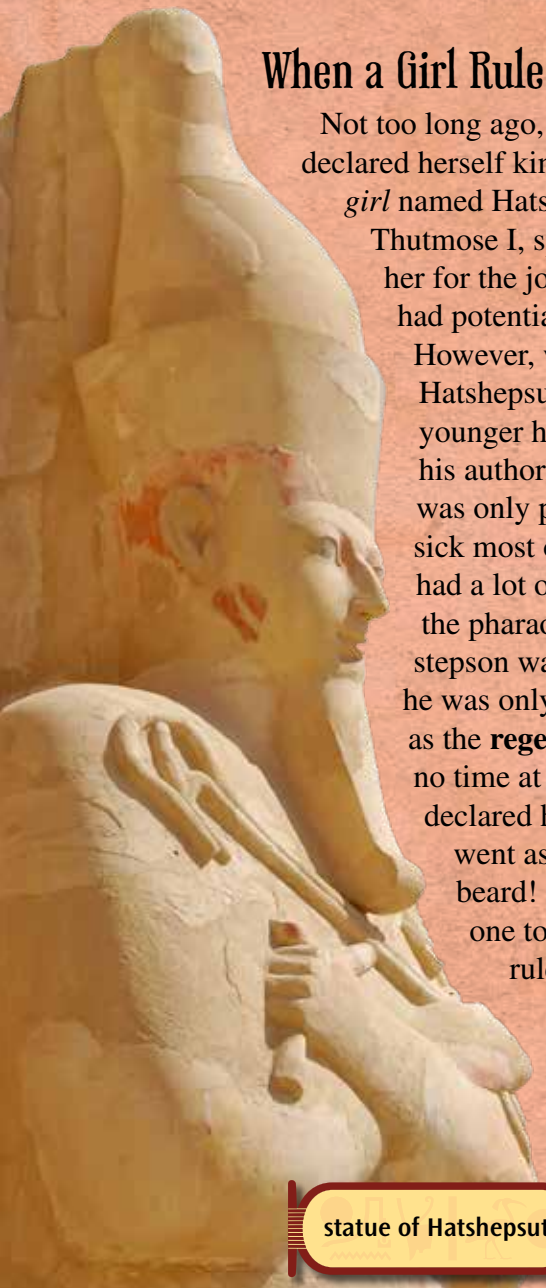
- How does the diagram organize jobs from ancient Egypt?
- What is implied about scribes and soldiers in ancient Egypt?
- How can these jobs be compared to jobs today?



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When a Girl Ruled Egypt

Not too long ago, one of your relatives declared herself king … that's right, a *girl* named Hatshepsut. Her father, Thutmose I, spent time training her for the job, since he knew she had potential to be a strong ruler. However, when Thutmose I died, Hatshepsut had to marry her younger half-brother to legitimize his authority as pharaoh because he was only part royal. Her brother was sick most of the time, so Hatshepsut had a lot of say in governing. When the pharaoh died, Hatshepsut's stepson was crowned king—but as he was only a toddler, she served as the **regent** and ruled for him. In no time at all, she took control and declared herself king. She even went as far as to wear a fake beard! She was not the only one to wear a fake beard. All rulers do it, and you will too. Egyptians hate facial hair, but wearing a fake beard is a sign that you, the ruler, identify with the gods.



statue of Hatshepsut

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Once Hatshepsut took over, she created **propaganda** to establish her position as king. She had stories carved into the temples that told of her right to rule Egypt; for example, the gods had overseen her divine birth and education. The stories were a great political move on her part, and her leadership was accepted. That's a good thing because during her reign she was responsible for groundbreaking trade agreements with other countries.

The Catfish King

Around 3100 BC, the lower part of Egypt united with the upper part of Egypt. Historians believe the new ruler of this combined Egypt was named Narmer. He is sometimes referred to as the Catfish King because the **hieroglyph** of his name is a picture of a catfish. This began the first dynasty of kings. Other rulers of ancient Egypt include:

Khufu, a fourth dynasty king, was in charge of building the Great Pyramid at Giza.

Pepi II of the sixth dynasty died when he was 100 and was the oldest Egyptian ruler.

Ramses I was a handpicked soldier who ascended to be pharaoh. He only ruled for two years, but there were many more rulers named Ramses after him!

Ramses II is better known as Ramses the Great. He is the most well-known Ramses.



hieroglyph of Narmer's name

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Reader's Guide

1. How did the role of a leader in ancient Egypt differ from the average person's life?
2. Why did the author use a tone of surprise about Hatshepsut becoming ruler of ancient Egypt? What might that tell you about how ancient Egyptians felt about women?
3. If you lived in ancient Egypt, what type of job would you want, and why?
4. How can we be sure that what we think we know about ancient life is, in fact, true?