



## Year 4

### Ancient Egyptians

#### NC Objective

The achievements of the earliest civilizations – an overview of where and when the first civilizations appeared and a depth study of one of the following: Ancient Sumer; The Indus Valley; Ancient Egypt; The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China

#### Visits/Visitors/Immersion days

Leeds City Museum

#### Focus areas

Overview of the earliest civilisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who</li><li>• When</li><li>• Where</li><li>• Main achievements</li></ul>
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farming and agriculture – seasons, River Nile, shaduf</li><li>• Language – Rosetta stone, papyrus</li><li>• Architecture and buildings – Pyramids, temples, tombs, sphinx</li><li>• Transport and trade – trading route around the Mediterranean, crops, deben</li></ul>

#### Enquiry Question

What were the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians?

#### Rationale for studying in Year 4

Having learnt about the achievements of the Stone Age in Y3, this provides the children with great opportunities for comparative work and to form judgements on the advancements of other societies and civilisations around the world. It also stretches their understanding of concurrence and that different people lived around the world at the same time. Providing an overview of the earliest civilisations before an in-depth study of Ancient Egypt will allow the children to place their learning into context and see how, geographically for the most part, Africa, the Middle East and Asia were the hub of human growth and development. Links can also be made to the Ancient Romans, studied previously in Y4, as there is an overlap in their history and relationships between Rome and Egypt were fairly pronounced.



## **Subject Knowledge**

Ancient Egypt can be thought of as an oasis in the desert of north eastern Africa, dependent on the annual inundation of the Nile River to support its agricultural population. The country's chief wealth came from the fertile floodplain of the Nile valley, where the river flows between bands of limestone hills, and the Nile delta, in which it fans into several branches north of present-day Cairo. Between the floodplain and the hills is a variable band of low desert that supported a certain amount of game. The Nile was Egypt's sole transportation artery.

At first, relatively little cultural contact came by way of the Mediterranean Sea, but from an early date Egypt maintained trading relations with the Lebanese port of Byblos (present-day Jbail). Egypt needed few imports to maintain basic standards of living, but good timber was essential and not available within the country, so it usually was obtained from Lebanon. Minerals such as obsidian and lapis lazuli were imported from as far afield as Anatolia and Afghanistan.

Agriculture centred on the cultivation of cereal crops, chiefly emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). The fertility of the land and general predictability of the inundation ensured very high productivity from a single annual crop. This productivity made it possible to store large surpluses against crop failures and also formed the chief basis of Egyptian wealth, which was, until the creation of the large empires of the 1st millennium BCE, the greatest of any state in the ancient Middle East.

In addition to grain crops, fruit and vegetables were important, the latter being irrigated year-round in small plots. Fish was also vital to the diet. Papyrus, which grew abundantly in marshes, was gathered wild and in later times was cultivated. It may have been used as a food crop, and it certainly was used to make rope, matting, and sandals. Above all, it provided the characteristic Egyptian writing material, which, with cereals, was the country's chief export in Late period Egyptian and then Greco-Roman times.

Writing was a major instrument in the centralization of the Egyptian state and its self-presentation. The two basic types of writing—hieroglyphs, which were used for monuments and display, and the cursive form known as hieratic—were invented at much the same time in late predynastic Egypt (c. 3000 BCE).

## **Previous learning in Year 3**

Invasion	The reasons that tribes went to war with each other in the Stone Age to Iron Age unit, enables the children to consider the importance of the crops that the Egyptians had and the position it gave them amongst other countries.
Transport and trade	The discovery of bronze was explored in Year 3. The children understand how it became an important element of trading.
Political and monarchy	

Social and cultural	Previous learning of the growth within societies during the Stone to Iron ages and in Victorian Ilkley, give the children wider cultural understanding and contexts to consider the growth and power of the Egyptians.
Comparisons and influences	The children have studied life before and after the Neolithic period, providing them with the skills needed to understand the vast timeline of the Egyptians and the progressions made within the historical period.

### **New learning within the topic**

Invasion	
Transport and trade	How people moved heavy objects used in building Trade opportunities The importance of trade for survival
Political and monarchy	Hierarchy Each civilisation had monarchs
Social and cultural	Farmers, landscape slaves, building pyramids Mummification – afterlife Hierarchy of society Life at a hill fort
Comparisons and influences	Treatment of rich and poor and how this might change when a person dies How writing has changed over time Progression of buildings and architecture

### **Historical Skills that will be covered**

<b>Historical Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe similarities and differences between people, events and artefacts studied.</li> <li>Describe how some of the things I have studied from the past affect/influence life today.</li> </ul>
<b>Historical Enquiry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use documents, printed sources (e.g. archive materials) the Internet, databases, pictures, photographs, music, artefacts, historic buildings, visits to museums or galleries and visits to sites to collect evidence about the past.</li> <li>Devise a range of historically valid questions from a series of different types of enquiry and answer them with substantiated responses.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can recognise possible uses of a range of sources for answering historical enquiries.</li></ul>
<b>Chronological Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand that a timeline can be divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini)</li></ul>
<b>Historical Interpretation</b>	

### Vocabulary

**Ancient** Something from a very long time ago.

**Artefacts** An object made by a human being, typically one of culture of historical interest.

**Civilisation** A human society with well-developed rules and government, often where technology and the arts are considered important.

**Embalming** The art and science of preserving human remains.

**Hierarchy** A system in which members of a society are ranked according to relative status or authority.

**Hieroglyphics** A system of writing that consists of pictures and symbols instead of letters.

**Irrigation** A system of canals or channels dug by the Egyptians to supply water to grow crops over a larger area than the water would naturally reach.

**The Nile** A river that runs through Egypt. It was essential to life in ancient Egypt.

**Papyrus** A material similar to thick paper that was used in ancient times as a writing surface.

**Pharaoh** A ruler of ancient Egypt.

**Prehistory** The period of time before written records.

**Society** A group of individuals involved in social interaction.

**Tomb** A sealed room where a person was placed after death.

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