

Ancient Egypt Trivia Questions

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1. What does the word hieroglyphs mean?

Sacred writing

People were unable to decipher hieroglyphs until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone which contained a message from Pharaoh Ptolemy V.

2. Ancient Egypt was responsible for the earliest known peace treaty which was between Egypt and what group of people?

The Hittites

The Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty is the only ancient Near Eastern treaty in which both side's versions have survived. A copy of the treaty is displayed on a wall in the United Nations headquarters in New York.

3. What was the first pyramid to be built called?

The Pyramid of Djoser

Also known as The Step Pyramid, it was built during the Third Dynasty for the Pharaoh Djoser. It is surrounded by a wall of limestone 10.5 meters high. The wall has 15 doors, but only one opens. The others are for the pharaoh's spirit to use in the afterlife.

4. What is the oldest known monumental sculpture in Egypt? (Hint: Riddle me this.)

The Sphinx

No, it's not the Riddler. Also known as the Great Sphinx of Giza, it was built during the reign of Pharaoh Khafre around 2558-2531 BC. The idea of the Sphinx asking a riddle to travelers before letting them pass is based on a Greek legend called "The Riddle of the Sphinx".

5. What is the name of the funerary figurine placed in tombs to serve as servants for the deceased in the afterlife.

Shabti dolls

They are also known as ushabti dolls. They frequently have hoes on their shoulders or baskets on their backs. The figurines were produced in huge numbers, and along with scarabs, they are the most numerous of all ancient Egyptian antiquities to survive.

6. The Great Pyramids of Giza consists of how many pyramids?

Three

The three pyramids were built for the pharaohs Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure. The oldest and largest of the three is known as the Great Pyramid of Giza or the Pyramid of Khufu. It is the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and it is estimated that it took 10-20 years to build. The pyramids were 481 ft, 447.5 ft, and 228 ft tall respectively.

Pharaoh Trivia

7. Which ancient Egyptian dynasty was Ramses III the pharaoh of?

The Twentieth Dynasty

Ramses III was the second pharaoh of the Twentieth Dynasty and ruled for over 30 years from 1186-1155 BC. He was murdered during a harem conspiracy plot led by one of his wives Tiye who wanted her son to have the throne. A photograph of Ramses III was used as the model for the evil mummy Kharis in a series of 1940s horror films: The Mummy's Hand, The Mummy's Tomb, The Mummy's Ghost, and The Mummy's Curse.

8. Which pharaoh was the father of Ramses III? (Hint: It's not Ramses II)

Setnakhte

Pharaoh Setnakhte was the first pharaoh of the Twentieth Dynasty of ancient Egypt and ruled from 1180-1186 BC. It is possible that he was a usurper who seized the throne due to the fact that he was not a direct descendant of the two preceding pharaohs.

9. Which pharaoh was the first historically confirmed female pharaoh?

Sobekneferu

While there may have been other female rulers Sobekneferu is the first female ruler for which we have known proof. She became pharaoh after the death of her brother Amenemhat IV, and she reigned from 1806-1802 BC. Sobekneferu was the last ruler of the Twelfth Dynasty.

10. Which female pharaoh had the longest reign?

Hatshepsut

She was the second historically confirmed female pharaoh, and she is widely regarded as one of the most successful pharaohs. Pharaoh Hatshepsut reigned longer than any other woman of an indigenous Egyptian dynasty. She ruled from 1507-1458 BC and was the fifth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Her name means “foremost of noble ladies”. She was known for wearing a false beard and even having her likeness depicted as a male in order to establish her authority.

11. The month of August is the eighth month of the year due to which pharaoh?

Cleopatra

Cleopatra VII, known simply as Cleopatra, was the last active pharaoh of Egypt who was survived briefly by her son Caesarion. She is an icon and is well known for her love affairs with Caesar and Mark Antony. After her defeat by Augustus, the Roman Senate decided he should have a month named after him. Instead of choosing September, the month of his birth, he chose the eighth month. This was the month that Cleopatra died, and he wanted to create a yearly reminder of his victory.

12. Which pharaoh has the most surviving statues?

Amenhotep III

Also known as Amenhotep the Magnificent, the pharaoh has over 250 statues that have survived. The statues span his entire life and show a portrait of his entire reign. He was the 9th pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. His reign was a period of unprecedented prosperity, and during this time Egypt reached the peak of its artistic and international power.

13. Which pharaoh covered slaves in honey to attract flies away from him?

Pharaoh Pepi II

Pharaoh Pepi II despised flies so much that he would cover his slaves in honey so that they would go to them instead of himself. He became pharaoh at age six and ruled during the Sixth Dynasty.

14. The first known labor strike in recorded history occurred under which pharaoh?

Ramesses III

During the 29th year of his reign he was unable to provide food rations to tomb-builders and artisans of the town that is now known as Deir el-Medina. The workers were not given their ration of wheat and as a result had a sit-down labor strike. They wrote a letter to the officials stating their case and their rations were delivered. They went back to work the next day, but would continue to have strikes due to low provisions. Egypt would go through almost two decades of arrested tree growth and trouble producing grain.

King Tut Trivia

15. How many years did King Tut rule?

10 years

He ruled from 1332-1323 BC during the Eighteenth Dynasty.

16. How old was King Tut when he became pharaoh?

9 years old

Given how young he was King Tut had many advisors. The most noted being General Horemheb and Grand Vizier Ay (who later succeeded him).

17. What was the name of King Tut's wife?

Ankhesenamun

She was his half-sister, and he married her at age nine when he first took the throne. She is believed to have been married first to her own father which was not uncommon for Egyptian royal families.

18. How many children did King Tut have?

Two

He and his wife had two daughters, but both were stillborn from an unknown cause. It is believed that the two fetuses found in King Tut's tomb are more than likely his daughters.

19. What does Tutankhamun mean?

Living Image of Amun

King Tut is the only pharaoh to have a nickname in popular culture. His original name was Tutankhaten meaning "Living Image of Aten". He changed it when he became pharaoh to disassociate himself from his father's reign.

20. During his lifetime King Tut contracted multiple infections of what disease?

Malaria

After DNA tests were done on King Tut's mummy scientists found DNA from the mosquito-borne parasites that cause malaria. This was a common affliction during ancient Egypt due to the Nile river. The DNA found in his tomb is currently the oldest known genetic proof of the disease. Since more than one strain was found it was known that he contracted multiple malaria infections.

21. What year was King Tut's tomb discovered?

1922

It was discovered by Howard Carter on November 4, 1922 and sparked wide media coverage and a renewed interest in Egyptian artifacts. In 2007, 85 years to the day after the discovery, King Tut was moved to an underground tomb at Luxor. He was removed from his golden sarcophagus to a climate-controlled glass box. This was to prevent the heightened rate of decomposition caused by the humidity and warmth from tourists visiting his tomb.

22. How many times was King Tut's tomb robbed?

2 times

His tomb was robbed twice, and it is known that perishable oils and perfumes were taken. Based on the restoration of the tomb after the robberies archaeologists believe that the robberies took place within several months of his initial burial. King Tut's tomb was unusually small considering his status. Most likely due to the fact that his death was probably unexpected.

23. How many items were found in King Tut's tomb? (Count it if you get plus or minus 200 items)

5,398

King Tut's tomb is among the best preserved and the artifacts found there are the most exhibited and traveled. Among the items were a solid gold coffin, the iconic face mask, a meteorite dagger, and fresh linen underwear. Even pharaohs need clean undies in the afterlife. Howard Carter took ten years to catalog all the items found in King Tut's tomb.

24. How many sarcophagi was King Tut buried in?

Three

While King Tut's tomb might not be as extravagant as other pharaohs, his sarcophagi certainly are. The first sarcophagus is made of solid stone. The second is made of wood and covered with gold and semi-precious stones. The third is solid gold and weighs approximately 110 kilograms (242.5 pounds).

25. Who was the first person to die from King Tut's curse?

Lord Carnarvon

He died five months after the opening of King Tut's tomb. At the time media fueled the curse of the pharaoh for sales. It is now believed that he died from an infected mosquito bite. The infamous curse has largely been discredited. One study showed that of the 58 people who were present when the tomb and sarcophagus were opened, only eight died within the next twelve years.

Bonus Question

What 1994 sci-fi film is based on ancient Egyptian mythology and centers around an Egyptian structure in Giza that is covered in hieroglyphs?

Stargate

The film explores the theory of extraterrestrial beings having influenced ancient human civilization and spawned a television series. The television series became a cult favorite and ran for 17 years.

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