

Tutankhamun



Egypt

Egypt is a nation of Egypt in the northeast of Africa. It is located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and Nile (the largest population of over 100 million people is **fertile**, whereas the rest of the country is largely desert.



Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt was one of the most powerful civilisations in the history of the world. They made discoveries and improvements in a range of areas. Some of their impressive monuments still stand today as evidence of their achievements in architecture and engineering. Additionally, they were one of the first civilisations to use writing, recording information on papyrus reeds (which were flattened, dried and stuck together to make pages) or carving/painting them onto stone walls. This Egyptian writing, referred to as hieroglyphics, used pictures to represent different ideas or objects.



The Three Kingdoms

Lasting around 3000 years (from 3150 BC to 30 BC), the ancient Egyptian civilisation is often grouped into three main periods: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom. There were also gaps between these kingdoms, known as the intermediate periods. Kingdoms in ancient Egypt were ruled by pharaohs, who were both the political and religious leaders of the Egyptian people.

One of the most famous pharaohs, a boy named Tutankhamun, ruled during the New Kingdom period.



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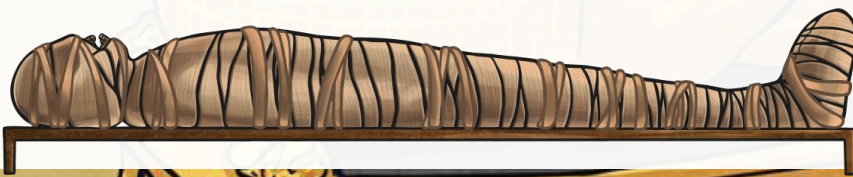
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Parents

Although Tutankhamun is a well-known individual, there are still many things that are uncertain about him. The exact names of his parents, for example, remain unconfirmed.

A female mummy has been proven to be Tutankhamun's mother through [DNA testing](#). This mummy is referred to as 'the younger lady' but her exact identity has not yet been revealed. Many believe that a pharaoh named Akhenaten was Tutankhamun's father.

[Egyptologists](#) discovered artefacts inside Akhenaten's tomb that suggest he had many wives, including Nefertiti and Kiya. One of these may be 'the younger lady' but it could be someone else entirely.



Tutankhamun Becomes Pharaoh

Tutankhamun is often referred to as 'the boy king', as he came to the throne when he was about eight or nine years old. Due to his age, he had people to help him rule the country - a general, named Horemheb and a vizier, named Ay.

A prior pharaoh (Arkenhaten) had made large changes to ancient Egyptian society. Previously, many gods had been worshipped by the ancient Egyptians but Arkenhaten changed this, insisting that all people worship only the sun god, Aten. He also built a new capital city in honour of Aten - Amarna.



Tutankhamun Makes Changes

The changes made by Arkenhaten had proved to be unpopular with many people. When Tutankhamun became pharaoh (a few years after Arkenhaten died), he decided to undo many of the changes that had been made. He moved the capital city back to Memphis, repaired many temples and allowed people to worship other gods.

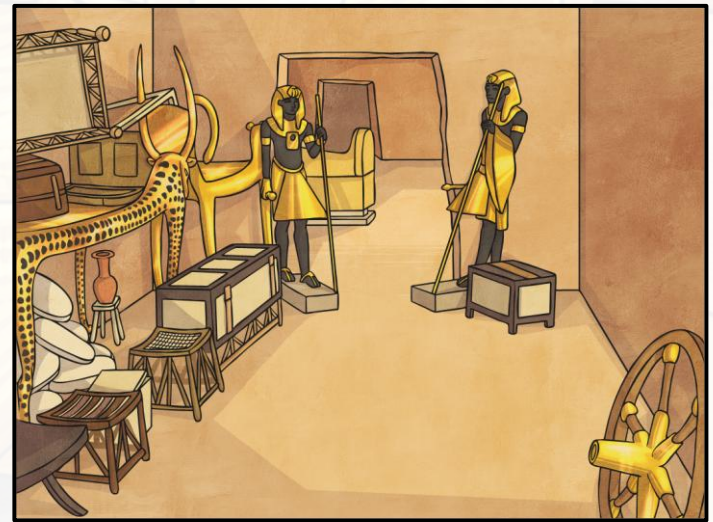
He also changed his name. The young pharaoh was originally called Tutankaten, meaning the image of Aten. He changed his name to honour Amun, an important Egyptian god and to signal a return to the old ways.



How Long Did He Rule For?

Tutankhamun ruled for approximately ten years. It is thought that he died in 1323 BC, making him around 18 or 19 years old. The exact cause of his death is unknown, although there are a variety of theories. Studies of his mummy revealed a leg fracture and some believe that he died from an infection linked to this wound. It has been suggested that he was injured during a chariot accident or attacked by a hippo. Others believe that he was assassinated.

Ancient Egyptians believed in life after death and thought that they needed to preserve their bodies so they could use them in the afterlife. The process used to preserve the bodies was called mummification. After his death, Tutankhamun's body was mummified and placed in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings. Ancient Egyptians also believed that they would need all the things that they had used in this life for their next life. Consequently, tombs were filled with belongings that might be useful after their journey to the new world.



Discovery of His Tomb

Tutankhamun's tomb remained sealed and undisturbed for more than 3000 years. It was not discovered again until 1922, when it was found by a group of British archaeologists, led by Howard Carter. Royal tombs that had previously been discovered had been raided and looted for their treasure before they were uncovered by archaeologists.

Tutankhamun's tomb was a very exciting and important find, as the treasures and mummy were still present and in good condition.



Inside Tutankhamun's Tomb

The tomb had several rooms, including a burial chamber. In the rooms, there were over 5000 **artefacts** (many made from or covered in gold) and it took eight years to remove and catalogue them all. In the burial chamber, there was a **sarcophagus** and a golden burial mask, which is now a very famous artefact.

Only the burial chamber was decorated. This was unusual for a pharaoh's tomb and made people question whether the tomb was initially meant for Tutankhamun, or whether he was placed there due to his unexpected death.



Glossary

artefacts – Objects made by a human being, that have cultural or historical interest.

assassinated – Killed for religious or political reasons.

civilisation – A community of people with its own social organisation and culture.

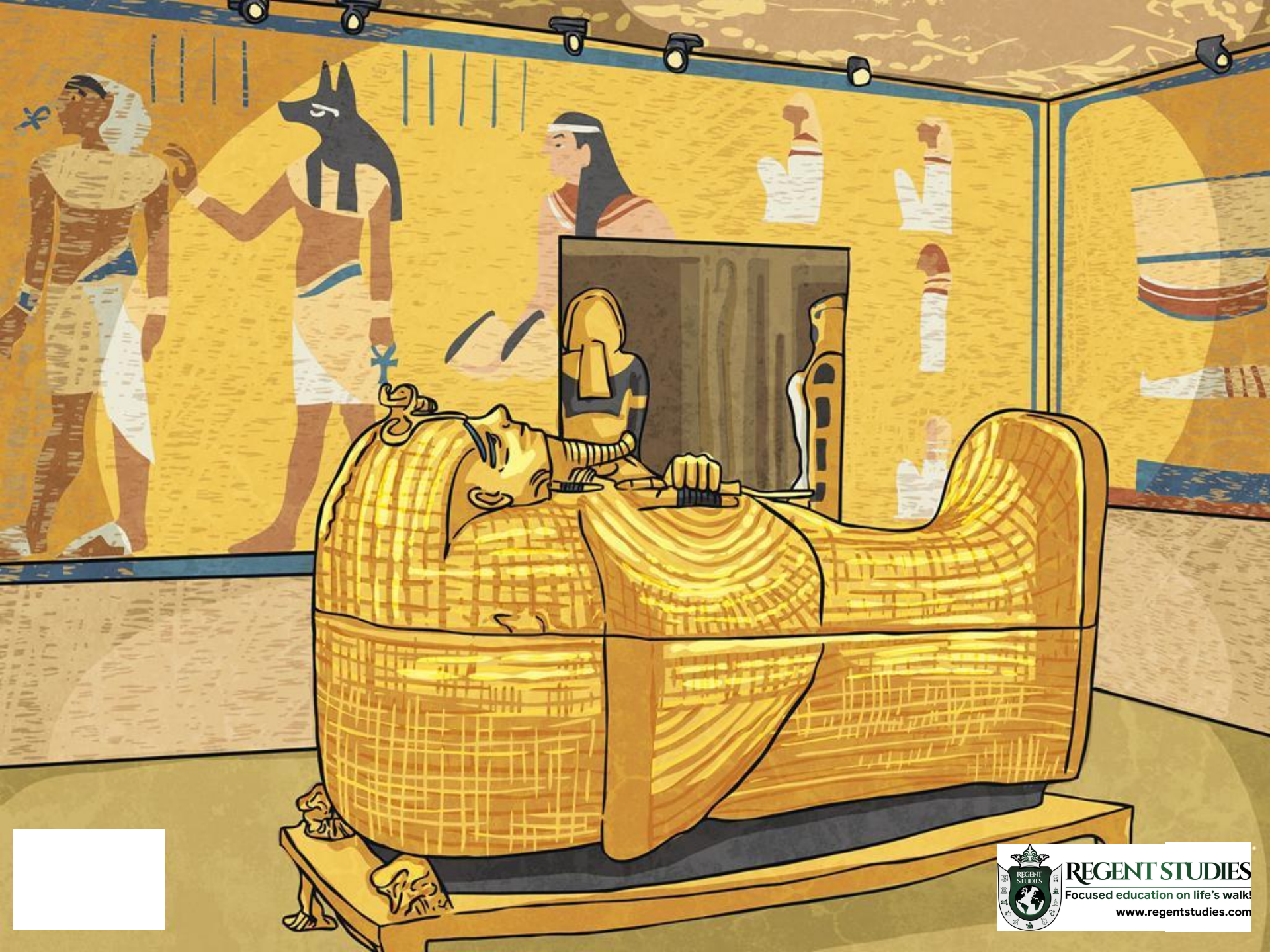
DNA testing – This tests a person's genes and can be used to determine whether people are related.

Egyptologists – A person who studies the language, history and culture of ancient Egypt.

fertile – Land that is capable of producing lots of crops.

sarcophagus – A stone coffin often associated with ancient Egypt.





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