

Ancient Egyptians

Learning Objective:

To find out how society in ancient Egypt was organised.

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Do you know who the most important and least important people in ancient Egypt were?

Think, pair, share your ideas.

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This pyramid shows the different sections of society and ranges from the most important and powerful at the top to the least powerful at the bottom.

The pharaoh owned and controlled everything in Egypt whereas slaves had no rights or property of their own.



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Pharaoh

The pharaoh was the king or queen of Egypt. The pharaoh owned everything in Egypt and had control over how the country was run and what happened to the people in it. Pharaohs were the most rich and powerful people in Egypt.



Vizier

Viziers were the most powerful people in Egypt after the pharaohs. They helped the pharaoh run the country and also acted as the judges of the high court. All the other officials of the country reported to the viziers who then reported to the pharaoh.

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Nobles

Nobles ran the different provinces (Nomes) of ancient Egypt. They made the local laws and made sure that people obeyed them. Being a noble was hereditary. This means that the position was passed down between families.

Priests

The priests of ancient Egypt were responsible for keeping the gods happy. They spent their time performing rituals and ceremonies in the temples. They also performed funeral rites. Unlike priests today, they had little contact with the public and did not preach to people.

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Scribes

Scribes were important because they were the only people in Egypt who could read and write. They kept records about the produce of harvest, the army, what a person had been buried with and lots of other things. Scribes used three scripts: Hieroglyphics, Demotic and Hieratic.

Soldiers

Soldiers were responsible for guarding and protecting Egypt from enemies. Being a soldier was seen as a heroic and brave profession. Soldiers were often given land and riches for their services to the country.

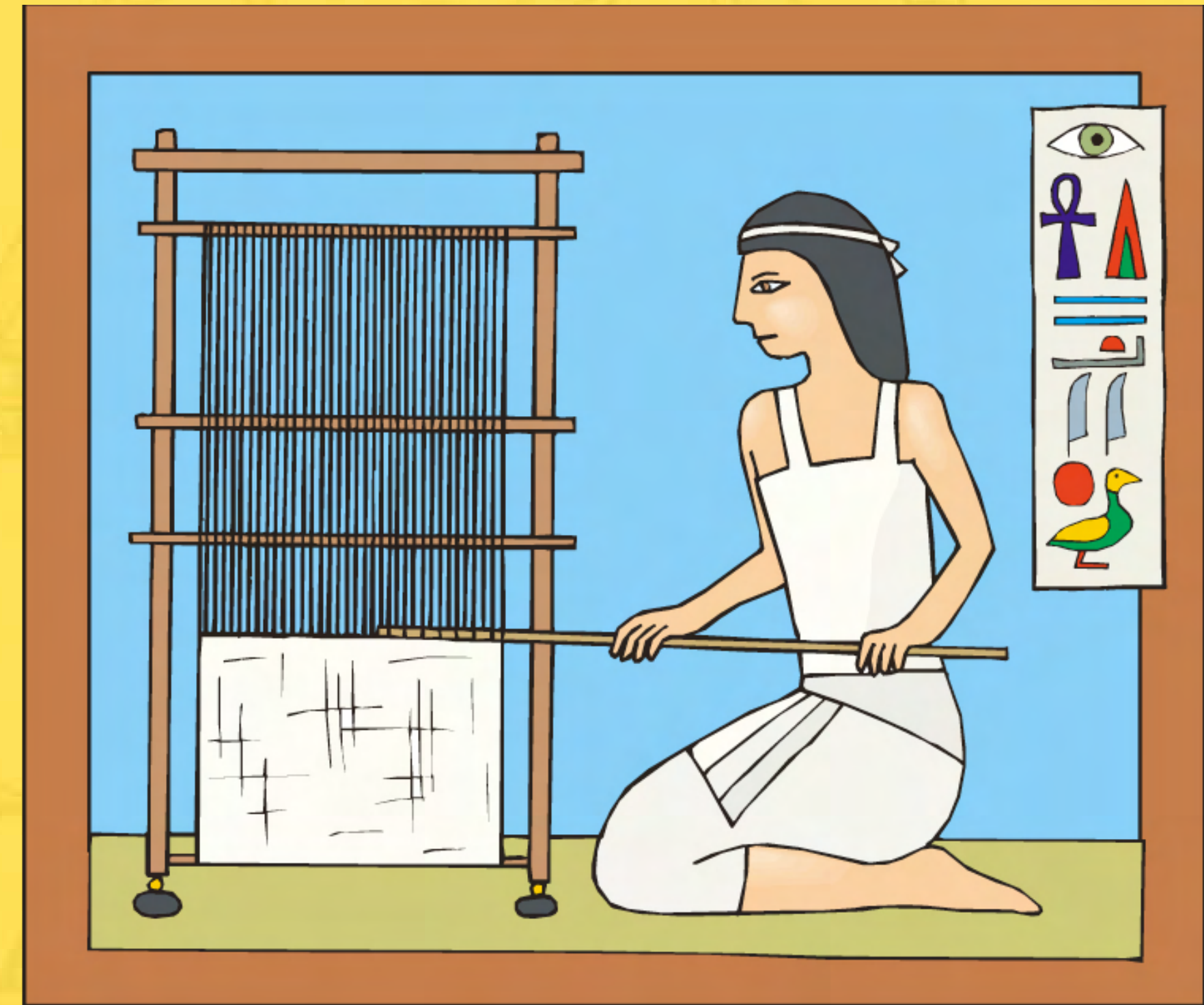


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Craftsmen

Craftsmen were skilled labourers, such as pottery makers, weavers, jewellery makers, shoe makers, tailors, sculptors and leather workers. Craftsmen who worked for the royal family were often buried in rich tombs.



Farmers

Farmers didn't own their own land in ancient Egypt. Farmers farmed the land of the pharaoh, nobles and other rich people in return for food, clothes and a place to live. Sometimes they would pay the rent of the land with a percentage of their crops. Most of the ordinary people of Egypt were farmers.

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Slaves

Slaves were usually people who had been captured during wars. They worked in the houses of the pharaoh and rich noble families. Sometimes they were given to priests to help them perform rituals for the gods. There was no slave market in ancient Egypt. When a pharaoh died, his slaves would often be killed so that they could accompany their master in the afterlife. Slaves had no property of their own and were not allowed to marry.



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If you had lived in ancient Egypt, which group of people would you have liked to belong to and why?



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