

**Teachers' Notes**  
**New Kingdom Egypt**

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the DVD in Word or pdf files.**

## **New Kingdom Egypt**

### **Introduction/Geography/ Historical Background**

Egypt was nurtured by the Nile which originated in the highlands of central Africa. It went over the cataracts in Nubia to the fertile valley of Upper Egypt where it fanned out to form the lush delta of Lower Egypt. The ancient distinction between Upper and Lower Egypt was symbolised by the red and white crowns of the pharaoh, who also wore the double crown in his capacity as Lord of the Two Lands. Rulers of the Old Kingdom made their capital at Memphis, where Upper and Lower Egypt met. Eventually chiefs of eastern origin known as the Hyskos, came to power in the delta and extracted tribute from the lords of Upper Egypt, based at Thebes. This era, known as the Second Intermediate Period, was regarded as a time of degeneration and disgrace. However, the Hyskos introduced new technology to the land, including bronze weapons and chariots, both of which made Egypt more formidable in years to come.

Theban rulers irritated by the Hyskos domination sought to regain control of Egypt. Egyptian resistance came from the Egyptian king Sequenra Tao II and his son Kamose. Forces from the south marched on the delta and were able to once again unite the country. Kamose did not live to see the Hyskos expelled, but his brother Ahmose claimed the final victory over the Hyskos and ushered in the New Kingdom. During the New Kingdom, Thebes became an important centre, with religious festivals, royal residences, temples and tombs. The Egyptian empire reached its height at this time, extending to Nubia and Syria.

The New Kingdom refers to the period in Egypt from about 1550 BC to about 1070 BC. It comprises the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth dynasties.

*Understanding the issues:*

1. Explanation of terms: Cataracts, Hyskos, inundation, tribute.
2. Map study: On a map of Egypt locate Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt, the delta, First Cataract, Memphis, Thebes, Syria, Nubia, Mediterranean Sea
3. Research: The positive and negative features of Hyskos rule.
4. Outline the power and influence of Sequenra Tao II and Kamose.
5. Discussion: The significance of the Nile for Egyptians.
6. Film Study: What does the film reveal about the Second Intermediate Period?

### **The early New Kingdom: Ahmose to Thutmose II**

The four pharaohs of this period were expansionists and transformed the Egyptian state. Ahmose was important not only in that he defeated the Hyskos and founded a new ruling dynasty, but that he founded a militaristic, outward looking Egypt that re-established the borders.

Ahmose gained control over sections of Nubia, advanced into Syria and perhaps ventured as far north as the Euphrates River. He moved quickly to establish a centralised government and removed any opposition. The army adopted new weapons, such as chariots, javelins, the composite bow, sickle swords and shields.

Many of these weapons were copied from the Hyskos. Ahmose became a model for the warrior pharaoh.

Ahmose and his mother Ahhotep were co-regents and he married his full sister Ahmose Nefertari, who as queen held an esteemed position in Egypt. She was the first queen to be shown equal in size to the god-king on temple walls throughout the empire. The pharaoh was no ordinary mortal and this is emphasised by the royal titles, symbols and dress. Pharaohs gave legitimacy to their rule by identifying with Amun-Re. The pharaoh in assuming the role of ruler, warrior, builder and priest recreated divine order, which is an offering of *Maat* to the gods. The pharaoh was at the pinnacle of every aspect of life in Egypt. The upper classes at this time were made up of nobles in priestly, courtly or military service. Nobles, tradesmen, merchants, artisans and a growing number of lesser officials formed a middle class. Egyptians at the lower end of the socio-political ladder had fewer privileges particularly in religious ceremonies and festivals.

Ahmose ruled for 25 years. After his death, Ahmose Nefertari became queen regent for her son Amenhotep I, until he came of age. Although not a great deal is known about his reign of over 20 years, it is believed that art and architecture began to flourish. He restored damaged and neglected monuments such as at Abydos and Elephantine Island and erected monuments to Amun-Re. He developed Thebes as a new capital city and began developing the west bank at Thebes as a necropolis, with a workforce for the tombs who lived at Deir el-Medina. He also began the process of reconquering Nubia and consolidating control over it. Egyptian trade was largely directed towards the lands of the Upper Nile and the Sudan.

The next pharaoh Thutmose I was a middle aged general who came to power unexpectedly following the death of Amenhotep's son. In his six year reign, Amenhotep expanded Egypt's influence and borders. During the early part of his reign, he led two important military campaigns to Nubia and western Asia, where he displayed exceptional abilities as a military leader. In recognition of his great victory against the Mitannian army in this second campaign, Thutmose erected a commemorative stela on the banks of the Euphrates. To glorify Amun Re, Thutmose made extensions to the Temple of Amun at Karnak.

Thutmose II was a young man and probably in poor health. He was the son of Thutmose I and married to his half sister Hatshepsut. At the beginning of his reign he had to crush a rebellion in Nubia. It is possible that he also had campaigns in Palestine and Syria. Little is known about his military exploits and the brief reign of Thutmose is usually depicted as less effective than his predecessors.

The policies of the first four pharaohs set the foundations for the Eighteenth Dynasty. The effectiveness of the army allowed them to secure Egypt and extend her frontiers. Wealth in the form of tribute and trade poured into Egypt from Nubia and Africa.

#### *Understanding the issues*

1. Explanation of terms: Composite bow, co-regent, vizier, *maat*, necropolis, stela.
2. Map study: On a map of Egypt and its surrounds locate Karnak, Sudan, Palestine, the Euphrates, Deir el-Medina, Abydos, Elephantine Island, Heliopolis.

3. Research: Select a number of the more significant Egyptian gods and outline their significance and responsibilities.
4. Make a table of the socio-political ladder in Egypt at this time.
5. Outline the role and importance of the vizier in the early eighteenth dynasty.
6. Discuss the extent to which Egyptian life was dominated by the gods.
7. Film study: From your viewing of the film outline the contributions of the early pharaohs to both Egypt and her people.

### **Hatshepsut: Queen and Pharaoh**

Hatshepsut was the daughter of Thutmose I and his chief queen Ahmose. However she could not become Pharaoh because it was traditionally a male role. As a result her younger half brother Thutmose II became pharaoh after the death of their father. However she became the 'Great Wife of the King'. After the death of her husband Thutmose II, Queen Hatshepsut became the regent for her young stepson. As queen regent she was able to rule until Thutmose III came of age.

However sometime between the second and seventh year of her regency she displaced the pharaoh, assumed the role herself and became the dominant partner in a royal partnership or co-regency. Hatshepsut adopted the full regalia and titles of a pharaoh and set about to show the legitimacy of her actions. Hatshepsut stressed her relationship with the god Amun and her divine conception and birth. Also she stressed her relationship to her father Thutmose I and how he had chosen her as his heir and co-regent. Despite this action there is no strong evidence to suggest that Thutmose III resented his stepmother, and it appears that he was kept busy leading a number of military campaigns. Hatshepsut maintained her control over Egypt for nearly 22 years. She had the support of her trusted adviser Senenmut, who became her chief steward and the chief architect of Thebes and Deir el Bahri. She also had powerful allies in the bureaucracy and in the priesthood of Amun-Re. Her reign marked the beginning of the real power of the priests of Amun.

Hatshepsut embarked on a major building program, particularly in Thebes. She extended existing temples at Karnak. Two tombs were built for her, one in the cliffs near Deir el Bahri and her royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings. The most spectacular construction was her mortuary temple at Deir el Bahri. This temple depicts scenes of her divine birth and coronation, the military exploits during her reign and the trading expedition to Punt. Although the expedition to Punt was regarded by Hatshepsut as one her greatest achievements, there is evidence to suggest she promoted trade in other areas as well.

There has been much debate about the relationship between Hatshepsut and her stepson/nephew Thutmose III, but there is little doubt that she was the dominant figure until at least the twentieth year of her reign. After her death representations of her name were damaged, her images defaced and her tomb stripped of its body. There is the possibility that Thutmose was involved in this vandalism.

*Understanding the issues:*

1. Explanation of terms: 'Golden Horus', 'Great Wife of the King', co-regent, mortuary temple.

2. Write as assessment of the influence and work of Senenmut. What titles and honours were awarded to him?
3. Research: What evidence is there that Hatshepsut was a warrior pharaoh?
4. What were the achievements of Hatshepsut's building program? How did she prepare for her death?
5. Debate: That Hatshepsut was justified in claiming the role of pharaoh.
6. Discussion: What do we learn about Hatshepsut from the scenes at her mortuary temple?
7. Film study: Explain why Hatshepsut is portrayed as a controversial figure.

### **Thutmose III: Warrior and builder**

During his co-regency with Hatshepsut, Thutmose acquired both administrative and military skills, which served him well. He was involved in 17 military campaigns over 20 years. During this period Egypt became undisputed master of Syria and Palestine. The southern border of the Empire reached the Fourth Cataract in Upper Nubia. Prominent amongst his victories was that at Megiddo in Palestine. Megiddo was a fortified town overlooking the Plain of Esdraelon. It was the focus of all the major roads north and north-east. The account of the campaign is described in the *Annals* and in the text of the Gebel Barkal stela. During his campaigns Thutmose proved to be an astute general and warrior and displayed personal bravery.

Thutmose attributed all his military successes to Amun Re. The greatest beneficiary of these victories was the temple of Amun and its priesthood. Thutmose repaid the support of Amun with offerings, feasts, treasure, lands, slaves, cattle and monuments. Evidence can be seen of this in the Hall of Annals in the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Thutmose also recorded that every law and regulation he made was in the interests of Amun. Thutmose was a sound administrator. Egypt had been well governed during the time of Hatshepsut and this continued under him, with many of the same officials. Thutmose relied heavily on his southern and northern viziers. It appears that more than 100 high officials served Thutmose, heading vast bureaucracies of lesser officials and scribes. To facilitate trade and further conquest, Thutmose maintained garrisons in a number of cities. He used his armies to keep the trade routes open, to organise the collection of tribute and to ensure the loyalty of the princes. Prominent among those who helped his administration were Djehuty who was overseer of the northern lands, Nehi the Viceroy of Kush and Intef the royal herald.

Thutmose was a prolific builder. He built fortresses, government buildings and mortuary and cult temples. While no major god was ignored, none fared better than Amun. Nearly every city and cult centre in Egypt had one of his structures. Most of his energies however were concentrated on the temple at Karnak. He remodelled the court of Thutmose I and restored part of the hall. He also built the 6<sup>th</sup> Pylon on which he inscribed details of the Megiddo campaign. He erected his own sanctuary and enclosed the temple with new walls as well as raising the largest obelisk in Egypt.

Furthermore he built the 7<sup>th</sup> Pylon which was inscribed with places he had conquered and built two huge statues of himself. The great southern lake was also constructed for the priests to perform their daily rites.

Thutmose was a great military leader, a capable administrator and an energetic builder. He also demonstrated much devotion to Amun. He died in the fifty fourth year of his reign and was succeeded by his son Amenhotep.

*Understanding the issues:*

1. Understanding the issues: Obelisk, pylon, *Annals*
2. Outline the main events and the strategy used by Thutmose in the military campaign at Megiddo.
3. Research the importance of Djehuty, Inhef and Nehi to the reign of Thutmose III.
4. Discuss the ways in which Thutmose controlled the Egyptian empire.
5. Debate: That Hatshepsut laid the foundations for the success of Thutmose III.
6. How does the film portray Thutmose III as a great warrior-pharaoh?

### **Maintenance of the Empire: Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV**

Amenhotep was given the traditional training of a crown prince from an early age. His official names reflect his strength and physical prowess. Throughout his reign of 25 years, Amenhotep continued to emphasise his military and athletic abilities. Evidence of his ability with the bow is found at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pylon at Karnak.

Amenhotep campaigned in Palestine. At Takhsy, he defeated and captured seven local chieftains and showed his lack of mercy by hanging them from the walls of Karnak and Napata. He also campaigned into Syria. While these two campaigns were successful, no other campaigns are recorded. These campaigns are recorded in the Karnak Stela and in inscriptions at Amada in Nubia and on the island of Elephantine. Like his predecessors, Amenhotep added to the Temple of Amun at Karnak. He also repaired the southern section of Thutmose's hypostyle hall, which had been destroyed by the erection of Hatshepsut's obelisks, and added his name to other buildings. Amenhotep II's royal wife Tia, was believed to have been his sister. She is the mother of Thutmose who succeeded him on the throne. In keeping with his sporting and militaristic image, Amenhotep was buried with his bow.

Thutmose IV ruled for less than ten years. Thutmose campaigned only twice in Asia. His reign was a turning point in terms of the empire. The need for major military campaigns in Syria appeared to have ended. Diplomacy rather than war was employed to deal with foreign powers and Thutmose may have entered into a diplomatic marriage with the daughter of Artatama, King of the Mitanni. Unlike his predecessors, Thutmose seemed to be less concerned with promoting the god Amun and appeared more interested in the cult of the sun god of Heliopolis. Although he did not turn away from the worship of Amun, he built fewer monuments to the god. However he did add a golden porch in front of the 4<sup>th</sup> Pylon and a shrine for the barque of Amun. Thutmose issued a large commemorative scarab, on which the Aten was referred to as a god who led the pharaoh into battle and with an inscription that Egyptians would serve the Aten forever. This reference to the Aten was an

indication of developments that would occur in the reigns of his son Amenhotep III and his grandson Akhenaten.

*Understanding the issues:*

1. Explanation of terms: Aten, hypostyle hall, scarab, barque.
2. Research: What attributes are attributed to Amenhotep II on the Great Sphinx Stela?
3. Outline the message about the Sphinx conveyed to Thutmose in a dream while he was hunting in the desert near Memphis?
4. Discussion: How does Thutmose III differ from some of his predecessors?
5. What assessment is made about Amenhotep from the film?

### **The Amarna Revolution**

When Amenhotep III came to the throne, Egypt was at the height of her power. His reign of almost forty years was sometimes referred to as the 'golden age'. It was a period of relative peace after almost a century of war and conquest. Wealth flowed into Egypt from tribute and trade. Following the practice of his predecessors, Amenhotep stressed his relationship with Amun. However he also promoted the solar god Aten during his reign. Evidence for this can be seen in the name given to the palace at Malaka, 'House of Nebmare the dazzling Sun Disc'. Amenhotep introduced profound changes to royal art. He used this format to show that he and Queen Tiye were gods during their lifetime.

His architecture is also remembered for its exceptional beauty and quality. He was the first pharaoh to introduce uniform changes to all major Egyptian and Nubian temples. His aim was to increase sun worship. However he built a boat shrine for Amun, erected the 10<sup>th</sup> pylon and the 3<sup>rd</sup> pylon and constructed the Avenue of Sphinxes. He also rebuilt the temple of Montu and built a number of mortuary temples. His most ambitious construction was his massive 32 hectare palace and its artificial harbour. Amenhotep was an effective administrator. Diplomacy and marriage feature in his foreign policy. His viziers Phatmose, Amenhotep-Huy, Ramose and Aper-el were capable and effective. Later reliefs show the pharaoh as inactive and somewhat indulgent, but the young Amenhotep was an accomplished hunter and scarabs indicate he captured 96 bulls and killed 102 lions. Egypt was not required to participate in any campaigns in her northern lands during most of his reign but there is evidence of a military campaign against rebellious tribes in Kush.

Amenhotep was succeeded by his son Amenhotep IV, later known as Akhenaten. Despite only reigning for 17 years, he introduced a variety of changes that caused enormous upheaval within Egyptian society. Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti changed the focus of religion from the chief god Amun and other gods, to a single god Aten. The Great Royal Wife Nefertiti seemed to wield unprecedented power as queen. The Aten's co-regent and only priest was his son Akhenaten. The Aten was not a people's god and only the royal family worshipped him, while the rays of the sun disc never caressed anyone else. Akhenaten was the god of the people. Akhenaten moved the capital from Thebes to a site known as Amarna and set up boundary stelae to mark its limits. By the ninth year of his reign the new capital Akhetaten was ready and

Akhenaten possibly celebrated his second Heb Sed Festival there. Akhetaten was made up of six major sections, the Northern Palace, northern suburbs, central city, southern city, Southern Palace, a worker's village as well as tombs for royalty and nobles.

The art form used during his reign was most innovative. The intimacy of human relationships was displayed and subjects were given a liveliness and naturalism. The most dramatic evidence can be seen in the portrayal of the king and the royal family, particularly with the physical appearance of Akhenaten. An important aspect of this art was its depiction of religious themes. While some refer to Akhenaten as a pacifist, there is evidence to suggest that he favoured the military and placed key people from the military in high positions in Akhetaten. His vizier Ay was a general. His favourite crown appeared to be the khepresh or blue war crown. In the twelfth year of his reign he launched a Nubian military campaign. Akhenaten also adopted the practice of using mercenaries. The Aten was the beneficiary of the booty and tribute that flowed to his temple at Akhetaten and a temple at Kawa in Nubia.

Smenkare, a younger brother of Akhenaten possibly ruled for about three years in co-regency or as a sole ruler after the death of Akhenaten. However everything about this pharaoh is subject to controversy, including the identity and sex. There does appear however, to be some return to the orthodox religion.

Smenkare was succeeded by Tutankhaten and there is also some debate about his background. The new pharaoh was a nine year old. Ay was his vizier and Horemheb was his general. He married Ankhesenpaaten, the daughter of Akhenaten. He lived at Akhetaten for the next four years while Horemheb and Ay probably administered Egypt from Memphis. Tutankhaten then turned his back on the Aten and moved back to Thebes, changing his name to Tutankhamun in honour of Amun.

While the Restoration Stela outlines Tutankhamun's plans to restore all the gods, it was Amun that received special attention. He began a vigorous building program for the gods. He built a small temple at Karnak, continued the Avenue of the Sphinxes, added to the temple of Thutmose III at Medinet Ghurab, built a sanctuary at Kawa in Nubia and built a number of statues of Amun and himself. Perhaps his most famous work is his decoration of the colonnaded hall of Amenhotep's sanctuary at Luxor.

During his reign there was fighting between the Egyptians and the Hittites at Kadesh and the Egyptians also undertook military action to punish the Nubians and Kushites. The unexpected death of Tutankhamun caused concern as he left no heir.

Tutankhamun was replaced by Ay, who married Ankesenamun and who had served as his vizier. During his short reign he probably followed the same policies that he had during the reign of Tutankhamun. He carried out building projects at Karnak and Luxor. After his death he was replaced by Horemheb. According to his stela he was concerned with eliminating corruption in the army and civil service. He appeared to be actively involved in military campaigns. He destroyed Aten's temples at Amarna, Karnak, Memphis and Heliopolis. The buildings at Amarna were dismantled and Akhenaten's statues were destroyed. The Eighteenth Dynasty came to an end with the death of Horemheb in about 1295BC.

*Understanding the issues:*

1. Explanation of terms: Amarna, Akhetaten, Heb Sed Festival, khepresh, mercenaries.
2. In what ways could the reign of Amenhotep III be called a 'golden age'?



3. List the characteristics of the new religion that Akhenaten tried to impose on Egypt?
4. Research: What claims does Tutankhamun make in the Restoration Stela?
5. Discussion: How and why did the image of the pharaoh change throughout the New Kingdom?
6. Discussion: How did the transitional pharaohs, Smenkare, Tutankhamun, Ay and Horemheb return Egypt to orthodoxy in religion?
7. Debate the issue that Akhenaten was a heretic.
8. What evidence is given in the film that this period could be referred to as the Amarna Revolution?

### **The Ramesside Period**

Horemheb had no heirs and an elderly vizier, Parmeses, became Ramesses I and, founded a new dynasty. His short reign of two years gave Ramesses little time to complete major building projects. He is credited with the design of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. This work was continued by Seti I and completed by his grandson Ramesses II. Ramesses I also established a new religious policy. To prevent any priesthood becoming too powerful, the pharaoh began promoting Egypt's major creator gods, Re, Amun and Ptah. There is evidence of only one campaign during his term, against rebels in Phoenicia.

Seti was a prolific builder and erected obelisks and statues, many promoting the cult of his father. Seti also added to the temples of Re at Heliopolis and of Ptah at Memphis. He also erected a temple to all the gods at Edfu in the south of Egypt. His greatest achievement was the white limestone temple at Abydos. Seti concentrated on reforming the administration and wiping out corruption. Seti strongly promoted the new religious policy of Ramesses. His military campaigns in Palestine, Nubia and Libya indicate a return by the pharaoh to the role of an active warrior.

His son Ramesses II had a reign of 67 years. He was a prolific builder and his buildings are renowned for their size and grandeur. As well as building many temples he was also known to claim the work of others as his own. He completed Seti's temple at Abydos. He created a new city in the eastern delta, Pi-Ramesse, where all the gods were honoured. He completed work on the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. He began work on the Temple of Amun, building a huge colonnade with statues of the pharaoh. He erected the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pylon, placing in front of it obelisks and huge statues of himself. Inscriptions on the wall of the colonnade to the temple relate *The Hymn to Ramesses* and the *Battle of Kadesh*.

Ramesses built an impressive tomb for himself and one for his queen consort Nefertari. His mortuary temple, The Ramesseum is one of the largest in Egypt. Perhaps the most significant mortuary temples he built were at Abu Simbel in Nubia. Both sanctuaries were carved into the face of the mountain and have a pillared interior hall with a shrine at the rear. The larger of the two is dedicated to Ptah, Re, Amun Re and to the pharaoh himself and has a facade of four huge statues of Ramesses. On the wall of the hall is an account of the Battle of Kadesh. The smaller temple was dedicated to Nefertari and the goddess Hathor.

Ramesses set out to recapture all the northern territories that had been claimed by Thutmose II. He campaigned in Syria and Palestine over a number of years to try and maintain control. However his most important campaign was at Kadesh. While the results were indecisive with a truce accepted by both sides, Ramesses on his return to Egypt was able to magnify this military setback into an important victory. Ramesses had eight principal wives and numerous lesser wives as well as a harem, and it is little wonder that he produced over 100 children. Ramesses chose his administrators wisely and had a reputation for efficient government, treating his workers fairly and establishing high standards of honesty. Egypt during his reign was prosperous, peaceful and secure.

By the time Ramesses II died at the age of about 90, he had outlived 12 sons. His thirteenth son Merenptah became pharaoh at an advanced age and immediately faced a series of foreign crises. He suppressed revolts in Nubia and Libya. However after his death there were dynastic problems and four kings ruled in quick succession. The last ruler of the dynasty was a female ruler Tewosret.

With her death in 1196 BC the Nineteenth Dynasty came to a close. The origins of the Twentieth Dynasty are as vague as the demise of the Nineteenth. The first pharaoh of the new dynasty Sethnakht, appeared to have accomplished little in his two years on the throne. His son Ramesses III restored some prominence to the New Kingdom. He secured Egypt's borders, restored some prosperity and built some monuments. However his death marked the demise of the New Kingdom. He was succeeded by his son Ramesses IV. Seven subsequent pharaohs, all named Ramesses, completed the Twentieth Dynasty.

*Understanding the issues:*

1. Explanation of terms: Colonnade, Ramesseum, Hathor.
2. Outline the reasons why the Ramesside pharaohs decide to honour and promote many gods?
3. Research: What do we learn from archaeological sources about: (i) The Hymn to Ramesses; (ii) The Battle of Kadesh.
4. Discussion: The tactics of Ramesses II and their level of success in the campaign in Kadesh.
5. Debate: That Ramesses is worthy of the title 'Ramesses the Great'.
6. Film Study: From the film what features characterise the Ramesside Period?