

THE PYRAMIDS AND ARCHITECTURE

Overview

Pyramids are the most famous symbols of ancient Egypt. They were built as tombs for pharaohs and powerful nobles. Pyramids show the Egyptians' knowledge of mathematics, engineering, and organization.

Construction and Labor

Pyramids were built with huge limestone blocks. Workers included skilled craftsmen, laborers, and farmers during the Nile flood season. Ramps, levers, and sleds helped move the stones.

Famous Pyramids

- Great Pyramid of Giza: built for Pharaoh Khufu, one of the Seven Wonders
- Step Pyramid of Djoser: earliest pyramid design
- Smaller pyramids: tombs for queens and nobles

Architecture Beyond Pyramids

Egyptians also built temples, obelisks, and statues. Temples were centers of religion and education. Columns, carvings, and hieroglyphics decorated buildings and told stories of gods and kings.

Timeline

- c. 2630 BCE – Step Pyramid built
- c. 2580 BCE – Great Pyramid of Khufu
- c. 2500 BCE – Pyramids at Giza completed

Key Vocabulary

Pyramid, tomb, pharaoh, limestone, monument, architecture

Overall idea

Egyptian architecture reflects religious beliefs, social organization, and technical skill. Pyramids and temples show how society worked together to honor pharaohs and gods.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why were pyramids built?
2. How did Egyptians move the massive stones for construction?
3. What do pyramids tell us about Egyptian society and beliefs?