

## World History Week 2: Lecture Egypt

### Warm-Up Exercise:

- 1. What makes Ancient Egypt memorable/important in history?
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### Lecture Notes: Religion and the Development of Ancient Egyptian Civilization

- **Religion as the Foundation of Egyptian Society**
  - Ancient Egypt was a deeply religious civilization, with beliefs centered around **polytheism** (worship of many gods).
  - Egyptians believed in an **afterlife**, which greatly influenced their culture, government, and daily life.
  - Pharaohs were not just rulers; they were considered **divine figures**, seen as gods on Earth.
  - The idea of maintaining **ma'at**, or balance and harmony, guided laws, leadership, and social order.
- **Architecture as a Reflection of Religious Beliefs**
  - Some of the most impressive structures in Egypt were built to honor gods and provide for the afterlife.
  - The **pyramids** were constructed as **tombs for pharaohs**, reflecting the belief that rulers needed to be well-prepared for the afterlife.
  - These pyramids, such as those at **Giza**, were carefully designed with passageways and burial chambers to protect treasures meant for the next world.
  - Temples, like those dedicated to **Amun-Re at Karnak** and **Horus at Edfu**, served as places of worship and were decorated with grand carvings and hieroglyphs honoring the gods.
- **The Role of Mummification in Society**
  - Egyptians believed that preserving the body was essential for the **ka** (soul) to reach the afterlife.
  - The mummification process was highly detailed, involving the removal of organs, drying the body, and wrapping it in linen.
  - Tombs were filled with **grave goods**, including food, tools, and even small statues called **shabtis**, which were believed to serve the deceased in the afterlife.
- **The Influence of Religion on Government & Daily Life**
  - Pharaohs, as both rulers and gods, had temples built to reinforce their divine power.

- Religious ceremonies, festivals, and rituals were a regular part of life, often taking place in massive temple complexes.
  - Priests held great power in society, overseeing temples and acting as intermediaries between the gods and the people.
  - The **Book of the Dead**, a collection of spells and instructions for navigating the afterlife, was buried with important individuals to ensure safe passage.
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## **Discussion Questions**

1. **Why do you think the Ancient Egyptians put so much effort into building monuments like pyramids and temples? What does this tell us about their values?**
2. **How did the belief in an afterlife influence daily life, from leadership to burial practices?**
3. **If you lived in Ancient Egypt, would you have wanted to be a pharaoh, priest, architect, or another role? How would your job connect to religion?**