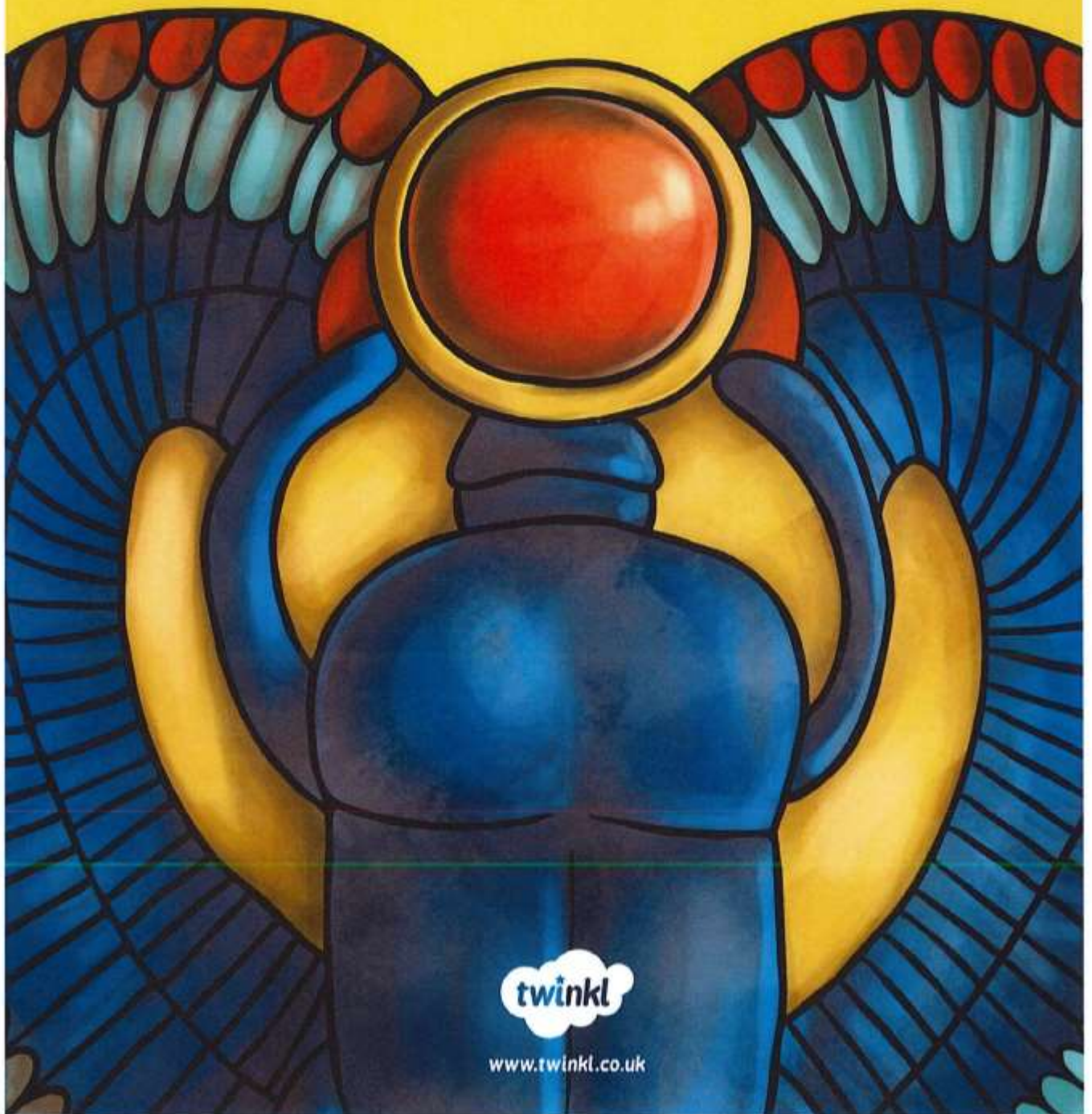


THE
ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

3500 BC - 395 AD



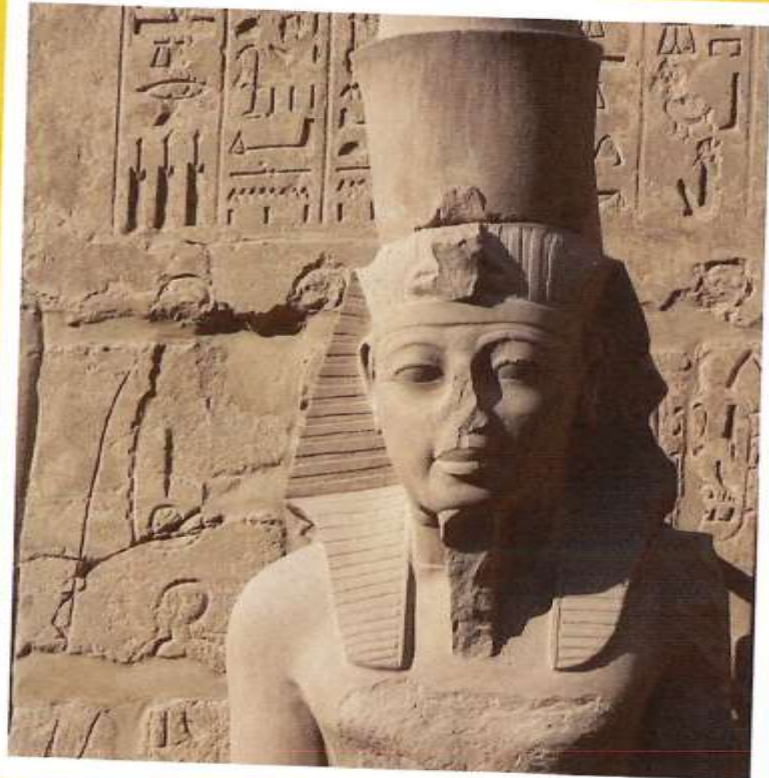
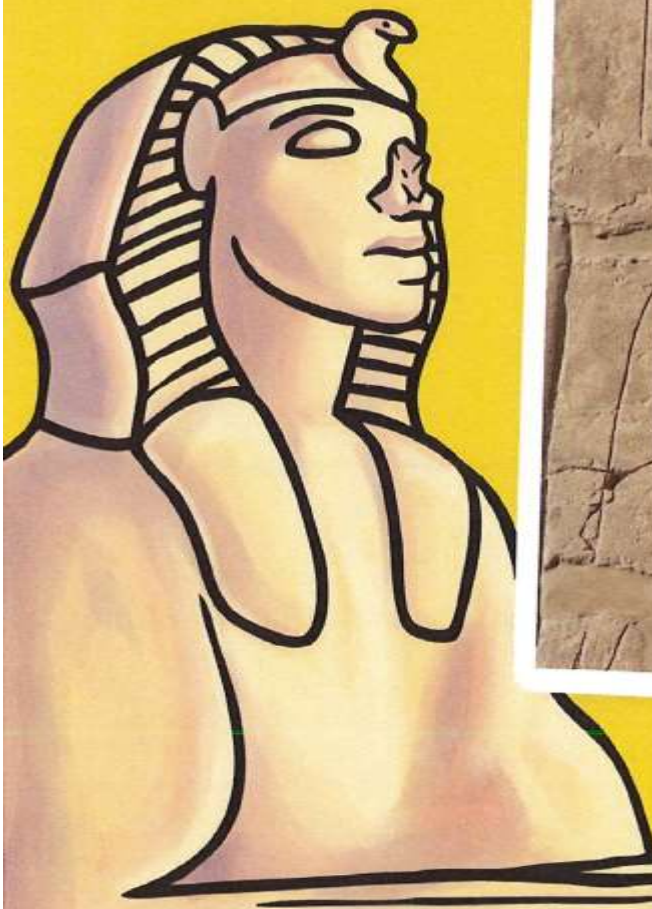
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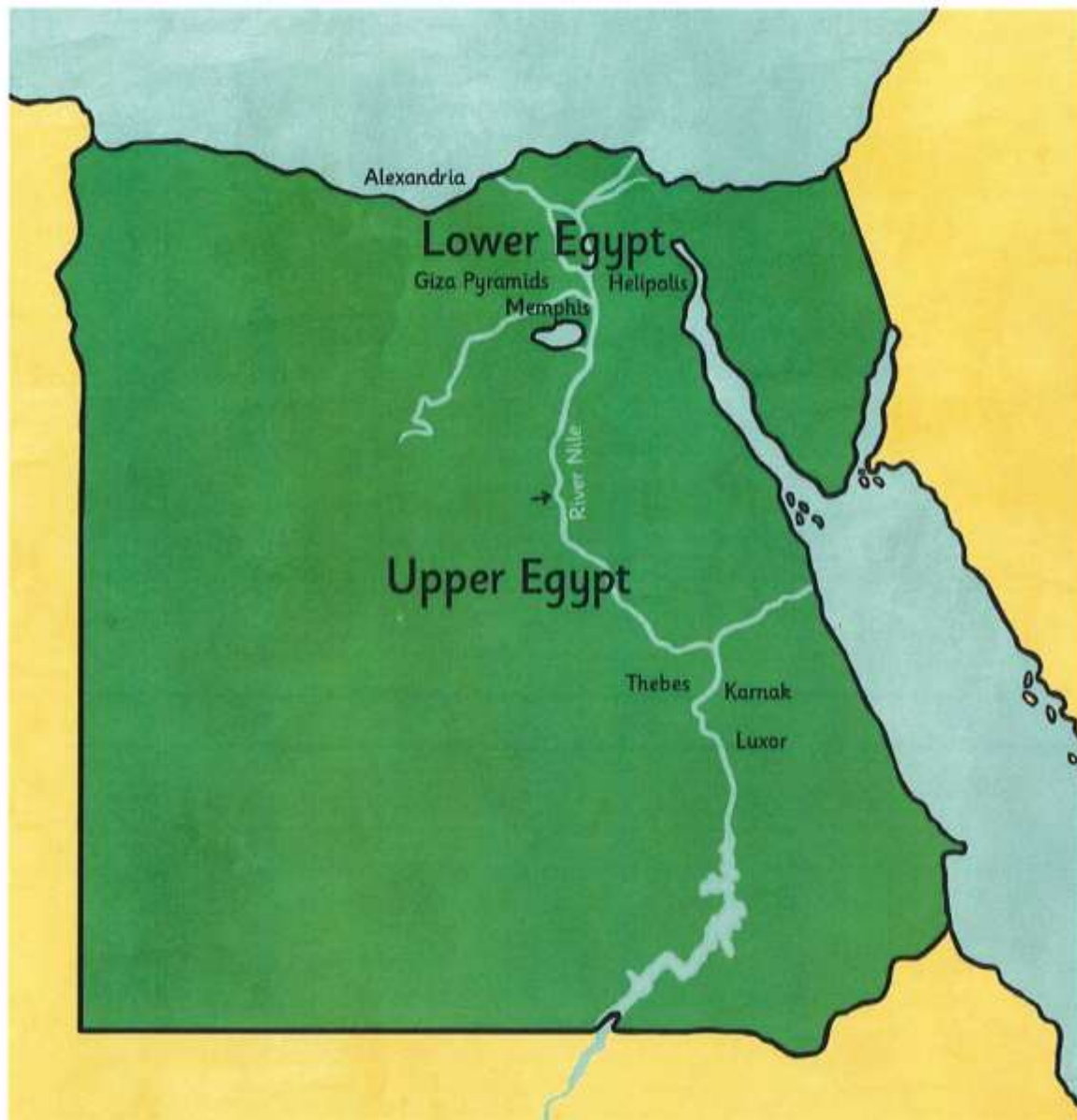
Who They Were

The ancient Egyptians were an ancient civilisation which existed from around 3100 to 332 BC. They lived in the lower end of the river Nile, which now lies in the modern country of Egypt. They were very successful due to their skills in medicine, farming and construction. Remains of their civilisation can still be seen today in their buildings, art and hieroglyphics.

The Egyptians had many rivals when they were at their most powerful, including the Hittite, Assyrian and the Mitanni Empires. The civilisation was invaded many times over its existence until it finally fell to the Greeks and then the Romans by 30 BC.

Most of the Egyptians lived by the Nile, a river which runs through the country and almost all of the people in Egypt today live along the same river.



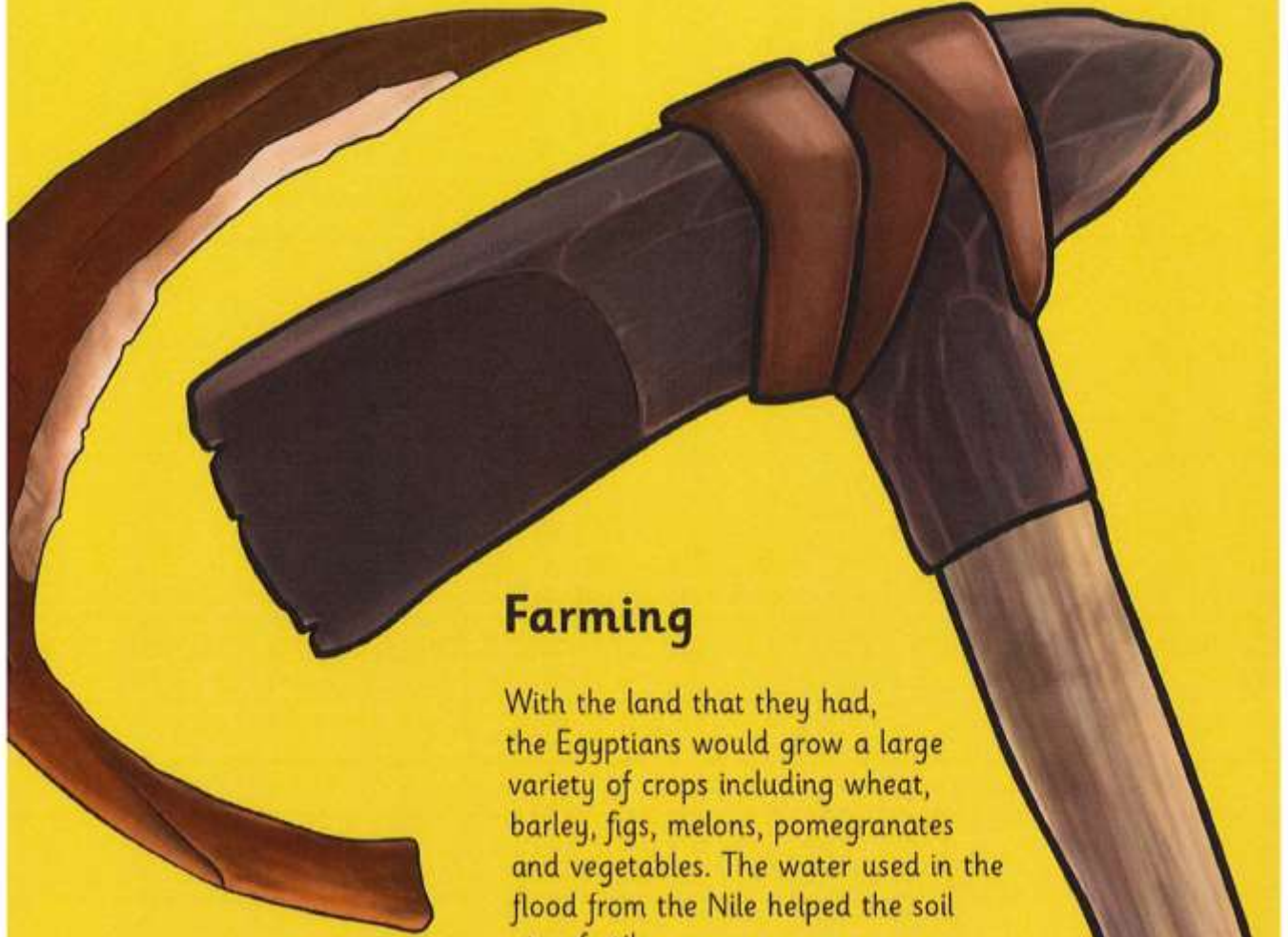


The Land

The ancient Egyptians lived mainly around the Nile and northern coast of Africa because on the rest of the land it was hard to grow crops. However, at the beginning of the ancient Egyptian civilisation the climate was very different, the land was green and filled with plants and animals.

Their continued success was because of their skills at adapting to the conditions of the Nile River valley. They knew how to predict a flood and used the water to grow more crops than they needed, giving many a comfortable life.

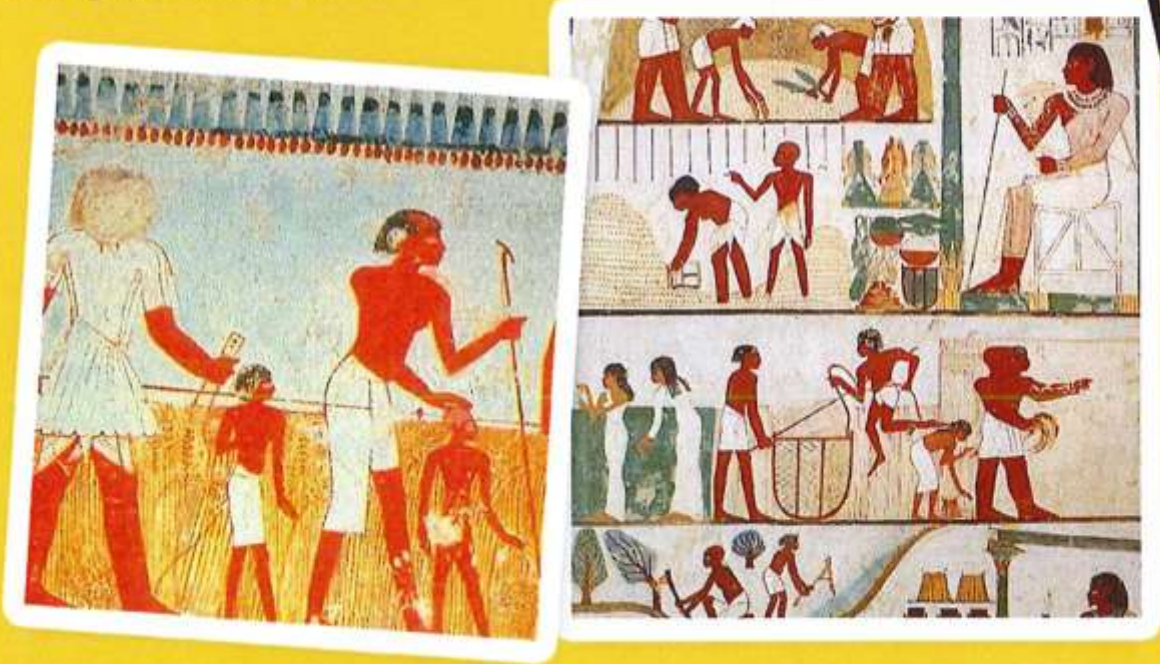




Farming

With the land that they had, the Egyptians would grow a large variety of crops including wheat, barley, figs, melons, pomegranates and vegetables. The water used in the flood from the Nile helped the soil stay fertile.

Of the crops that they grew, their most important harvest was grain. The grain was used to make beer, bread and porridge. Once the grain was safely cut, the farmers could start growing the vegetables like onions, cabbages, beans and lettuces.



The Seasons

A farmer's year was split into three seasons:

Akhet (June-September): The Flooding Season.

In the floods, no farming could be done so the workers would have to do other jobs to make money and pass the time like taking care of animals, serving their King (the Pharaoh) and fixing their tools for the year ahead.

Peret (October-February): The Growing Season.

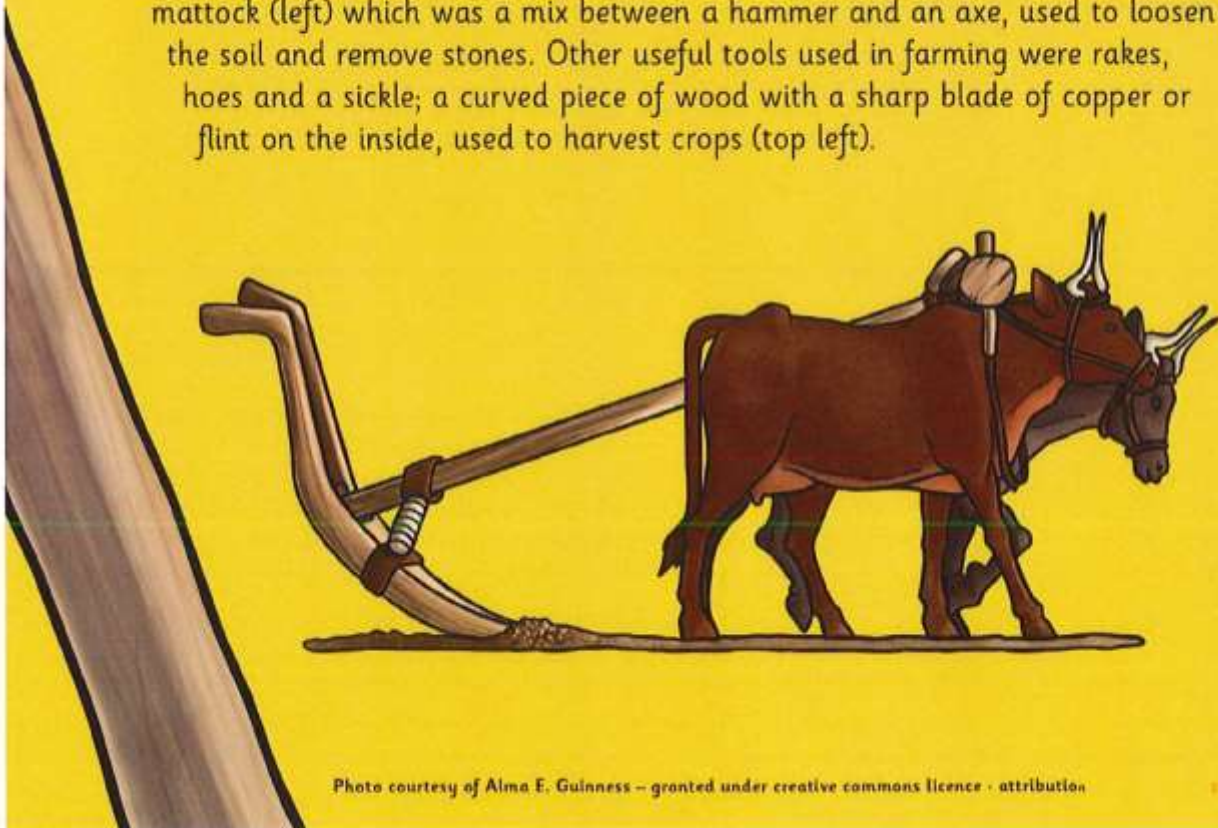
The flood water leaves behind the rich soil so the farmers can go into the fields to plough and sow them.

Shemu (March-May): The Harvesting Season.

By March, many of the crops are ready to be harvested. This job must be done quickly before the floods return.

Tools They Used

The Egyptians used tools similar to those still used today. They would use a hand plough or use an oxen to pull a larger plough. They also had tools like the mattock (left) which was a mix between a hammer and an axe, used to loosen the soil and remove stones. Other useful tools used in farming were rakes, hoes and a sickle; a curved piece of wood with a sharp blade of copper or flint on the inside, used to harvest crops (top left).



DAILY LIFE

Keeping Clean

Most ancient Egyptians were farmers but they still found great importance in staying clean and well dressed. Most of them would bathe in the Nile using a soap made from animal fats and chalk, followed by strong perfumes and ointments which were used to hide their body odour and sooth the skin.

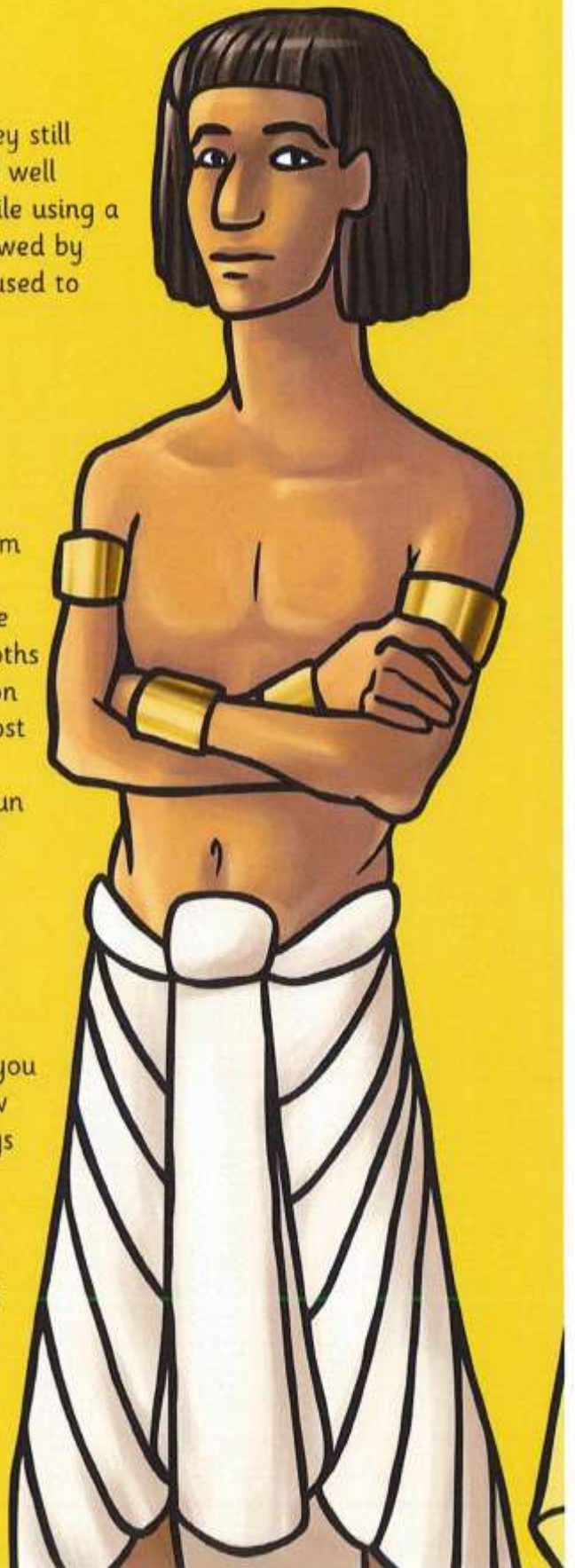
Clothing

As Egypt was so hot, it meant that people needed to wear lighter materials to keep them cool during the day. Most men and women would wear white sheets of linen. These were made into dresses for the women and loincloths or shirts for the men. Linen was very common as it was made from the flax plant which most farmers would have grown. The clothing would give them some protection from the sun but most children would be without clothing until around 12 years old.

Finishing Touches

If you were a family that had more money, you would usually wear more accessories to show off your wealth. The women would wear wigs but both men and women would wear makeup, usually blue and green eyeshadow and black eyeliner. Jewellery was also worn. The most popular was an amulet which they believed gave them strength and protection from the Gods.

The Egyptians would usually go barefoot but if it was a special occasion they might wear a pair of sandals made of leather.

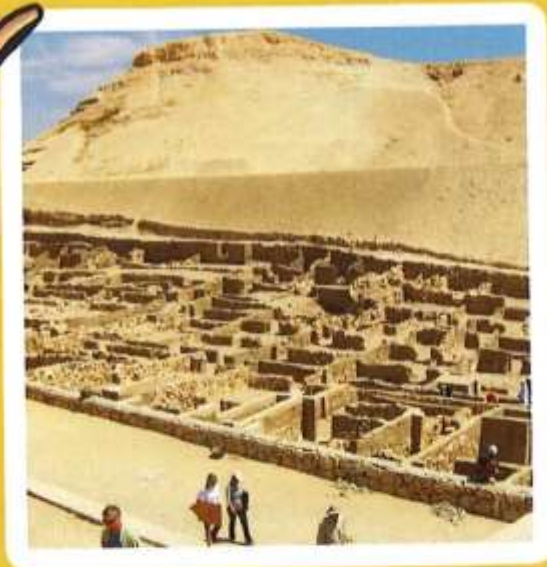


Home Sweet Home



Trees were very rare in ancient Egypt so the buildings had to be made of bricks, consisting of mud and straw. This was perfect as the bricks kept the inside of the house cool even when the weather was so hot outside. Most houses were lived in by a farmer and his close family. Each home would have a kitchen with no roof to allow the heat from cooking to rise out. There would be a grindstone to mill the grain into flour as well as a small oven for bread.

Most Egyptian houses had at least three rooms and a flat roof which would also be used as an outdoor living room. Examples of these houses can still be seen today at places like El-Qasr (below).



Dinner Time

The Egyptian diet started with bread and beer. The rest of the meal would have included some of the fruit and vegetable crops. On feasts or meal times for the rich, the Egyptians would have also enjoyed some wine, meats and fish.