

Name: _____

Date: _____

Social Studies

Period: _____

THE EGYPTIAN SOCIAL PYRAMID



Directions:

Read through the passage on the following page and fill in the “Social Pyramid’s” steps using the information given. Answer all the questions at the end of the reading.

In Ancient Egypt, there were definite social classes that were linked to an Egyptian's profession. These social classes can form a pyramid shape. At the bottom of the "Social Pyramid" were soldiers, farmers, and tomb builders, who represented the greatest percent of the Egyptian population.

The workers supported the professionals above them, just as the base of the pyramid supports the rest of the structure. Above the workers were skilled craftsmen, such as artists, who used early tools to make everything from carts to coffins.

Above the craftsmen were the scribes. The scribes were the only Egyptians who knew how to read and write, and therefore had many types of job opportunities. A scribe's duties ranged from writing letters for townspeople, to recording harvests, to keeping accounts for the Egyptian army.

Above these scribes were more scholarly (or wiser) scribes, who had advanced to higher positions such as priests, doctors, and engineers. Priests were devoted to their religious duties in the temples at least three months out of every year, during which time they never left the temple. At other times they worked as judges and teachers.

The doctors of Ancient Egypt had their own social structure. At the top was the chief medical officer of Egypt. Under him were the superintendents and inspectors of physicians, and beneath them were the physicians (or doctors). Egyptian doctors were very advanced in their knowledge of herbal remedies (using plants to heal people) and surgical techniques. Also, part of Egyptian medicines were magic, charms, and spells.

Engineers, with their mathematical and architectural knowledge, were responsible for the planning and building of the monuments, temples, and pyramids of Egypt. The architects were not the actual builders, instead they were in charge of the branch of government involved. The men who did calculations, drew up the plans, inspected the sites, and supervised the work day were scribes.

Above the priests, doctors, and engineers were the high priests and noblemen whom the pharaoh appointed as his assistants, generals, and administrators, who together formed the government. The **vizier** was the pharaoh's closest advisor. Finally, at the top of the social pyramid was the pharaoh. The pharaoh of Egypt was not simply a king and a ruler, but was considered a god on earth.

QUESTIONS

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences in your NOTEBOOK.

Make sure you provide appropriate examples where necessary.

1. How do you think the pharaoh chose a vizier as his closest advisor? What skills do you think a vizier needed to be second in command to the pharaoh?
2. Why do you think that the social structure for doctors was so complex?
3. Give an example of a modern hierarchy (system of classifying people). For example, your family, your school, etc.
4. How might social systems be beneficial or detrimental to Egypt's ability to grow and prosper? Support your answer with appropriate evidence.
5. Is there a need for social systems in a civilization? Why or why not?