

Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

(1st Person Informal Text)

**Clothing
Games
Education
Government
Work**

Clothing

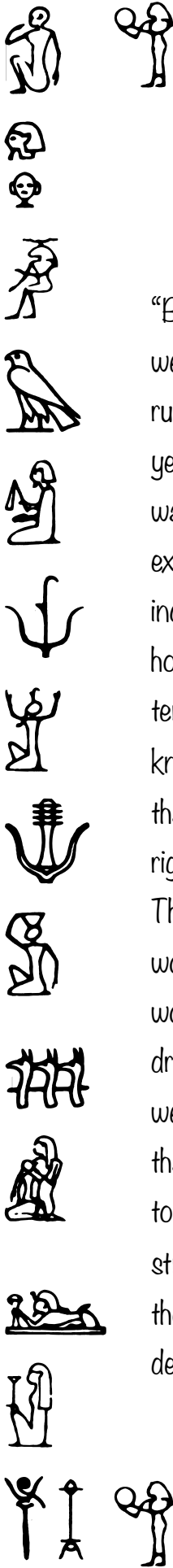
"Believe it or not, our children do not wear any clothing! That's right - they run around naked until they reach six years old. After all, why would we want to dress them? Clothing is expensive here in Egypt and it is so incredibly hot! As for the adults, however, we all dress in very simple terms. The men wear something known as a **shendyt**. I know, I know, that's a tough word to pronounce, right? It's pronounced "Shen-deet." The shendyt is a cotton kilt that is worn around the waist. As for our women, they wear tight-fitting dresses known as **kalasiris**. My wife wears hers all the time! She has one that covers only one shoulder, like a toga. She has one that has shoulder straps! Regardless of which one though, her dresses are always decorated with beads.

Another major part of our clothing is jewelry! Whether rich or poor, we Egyptians love our jewelry. My wife and I both wear earrings and necklaces made of turquoise, gold, and silver, but these metals are really just for us wealthy Egyptians. Those in the lower class use simpler materials in their jewelry, such as pottery beads or copper."

shendyt



kalasiris



GAMES

“So, you want to know about our games, sports, and hobbies do you? There is only time for games once our work is done for the day. If my children finish their chores -- to a satisfactory level -- they might hold wrestling matches, go fishing, or even hold target practice! After all, our children need good practice to help the men hunt animals like the fox, rabbit, and hyena. We also have several balls made of animal skin that the kids like to kick around! But, some kids find other ways to pass their free time. Take my neighbor for example: his children play with rag-dolls and they even goof around with their pet duck and pigeon!

What about the adults you ask? What do we do for fun? Well, we will occasionally have lavish parties where we invite our friends and family to

attend. These parties are the best! We hire dancers, acrobats, and even musicians to entertain us! We also have many holidays to honor the gods. For example, we have a festival to honor Bes, our god who banishes evil spirits, where people would stop all of their work to parade down the streets. What do you think they wear while they do this? Masks that depict Bes!”

A mask of Bes!



EDUCATION

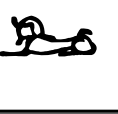
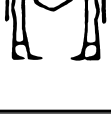
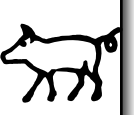
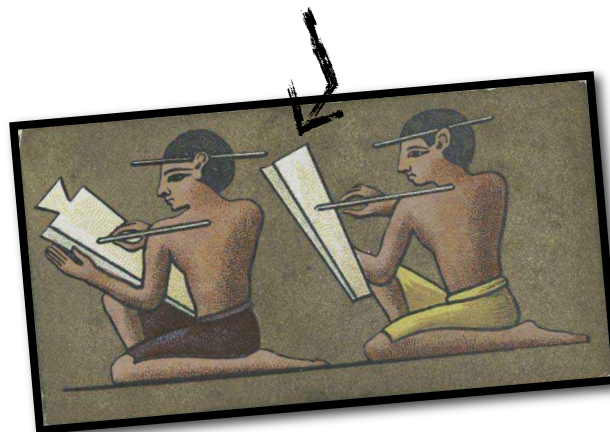
“Are you wondering how education worked in ancient Egypt? Well, we certainly value education and learning, but it may not look the same as your society. The earliest form of learning takes place as soon as our children learn to walk -- we teach our kids to imitate our actions, chores, and responsibilities. Our boys learn from their fathers how to hunt, tend the fields, and even become a warrior. Our girls learn household chores from their mothers. Do we have schools in ancient Egypt? Yes, but only for the boys. Boys from wealthy families can be taught mathematics, reading, and writing, or could become priests in the temples or officers in the army.

While women are unable to attend schools there are many respectable professions open to them. Women can run the family farm or business

when their husband is away. They can serve as maids to wealthy households. My wife even has been hired as a singer or dancer at parties!

We take great care in raising our children. After all, they are expected to look after us, their parents, when we grow old. My son will inherit my land when I die, and my daughter will care for the household items and jewelry.”

Egyptian boys learning how to write hieroglyphics!



GOVERNMENT

“Our land has always been very, very valuable. Each year the mighty Nile River floods our land, and when it recedes it leaves the land extremely rich and fertile, which has allowed us to grow a variety of crops with relative ease. So, what does this have to do with our government you ask? Well, over the years many different groups have fought over this land. In fact, prior to 3,100 BCE there were two territories of Egypt: the Upper Kingdom and the Lower Kingdom. In 3,100 BCE, Egypt’s Upper Kingdom and its ruler Menes conquered the Lower Kingdom, which united all of Egypt under one ruler. We call this ruler our **pharaoh** and he leads our government.

Whereas many societies have “kings” our pharaoh is more than that -- to us, he is a god! He ruled over both

the Upper and Lower Kingdoms, owned all of the land, made the laws, collected the taxes, defended us from outside enemies, and even communicated to the gods! Can the leader of your government do all of that? I doubt it!

The pharaoh is so respected that we build great tombs for him upon his death. This is to ensure that he will live well in the afterlife! After all, this is how we came up with the name ‘pharaoh’ since it means ‘great house.’”



WORK

“What sort of jobs do we have in ancient Egypt? There are many jobs in ancient Egypt, and the job you get depends largely on what social class you belong to. If you are well-connected and have wealthy parents then you might work in the government. You might lead the army or even become the treasurer in charge of collecting the taxes. If you’re really lucky, you might land the position of the pharaoh’s right-hand-man, the **vizier**. How cool would this be? You would take over in case something happens to the pharaoh and you serve as the judge in important court cases! But, really, to get a government position you have to ‘know somebody’ if you know what I mean.

Becoming a priest is a fine choice, however this job is also difficult to secure. If you are lucky enough to get it, you would manage a temple, perform religious rituals, and even advise the pharaoh if you rose to become the **high priest**. Do you have good handwriting? If so, you could become a **scribe**. These people record all the information that

takes place in Egypt. You might record court cases, create written contracts, or even write books!

If you belong to Egypt’s “middle-class” than it is very possible you will become an **artisan** (also called a craftsman). These are skilled workers such as carpenters, jewelers, painters, weavers, or metal-workers. However, if you are a member of the lower class then you will likely be a **peasant**. If you are, then you have two options: farm the rich land along the Nile River or become a construction worker and build homes, temples, or even the great pyramids! Of course, this is better than if you are a slave! Slaves are property of the pharaoh and cannot, under any circumstances, earn their freedom. Why not? Well, we make slaves of the people we conquer. If we let them free, don’t you think we’d be in danger? As a tradeoff though for their ‘eternal slavery’ we give them decent jobs! Some slaves help priests in the temples, others work in mineral mines or the fields, and a few work in elite households.”

