

# Life in Ancient Egypt

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# Egypt's Early Rulers

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# Old Kingdom

- 2600-2200 BCE
- Trade increased
- Unified government
- Building of cities
- First Egyptian rulers were kings, later called pharaohs
  - Means “Great House”

# Political & Religious Leaders

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# The Pharaoh

- **Theocracy**: when the **political** leader and the **religious** leader are the same
- Pharaoh appointed government leaders, bureaucrats, to oversee his commands.
- **Taxes** were collected; paid for **building** projects

# The Pharaoh... cont'd

- Son of **Re**, the Egyptian sun god
- Pharaohs had to
  - Make laws
  - Fight battles
  - Carry out religious **ceremonies**
- Blamed if crops did not grow or disease spread

# Religion & Egyptian Life

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# The Gods of Egypt

- Religion played a major role in daily life
- Were polytheistic
- Beginning: each city had their own god
  - Eventually became more organized
- Temples were built to honor the gods
- Gods appearance resembled both human and animal form
- Famous Egyptian gods:
  - Re
  - Osiris
  - Isis
  - Horus



# Emphasis on the Afterlife

- Believed in the **afterlife**
- Believed every person had a life form called “**ka**”
  - The “ka” left the body but lived at the burial site
- People buried with items to help in the afterlife
  - Furniture
  - Jewelry
  - Art
  - Clothes

# Burial Practices

- The afterlife shaped burial practices
- To keep “ka” happy the body had to be preserved
- **Embalmed** bodies and made them into mummies
  - Took weeks to finish but would keep you happy in the afterlife
- Only Egyptian elite were buried in pyramids

# The Book of the Dead

- Contained prayers and magic spells to prepare for the afterlife
- Osiris would greet you at the gate
  - If you knew the spell and lived a good life you got in.

# The Pyramids

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- **Burial** sites important part of Egyptian afterlife
- Built amazing **tombs** to honor their **rulers**
- Most were built during the Old Kingdom
  - 2,000 years before Christ
- Most famous, the Great Pyramids, are at **Giza**;  
built for **Khufu**
- Egyptians some of the best **engineers** in the ancient world
- Wanted to keep pharaohs happy
  - Believed pharaoh's controlled everybody else's afterlife

# How Were They Built

- 1,000's of workers
  - Surveyors, engineers, carpenters, stonecutters
- Most stone came from Upper Egypt

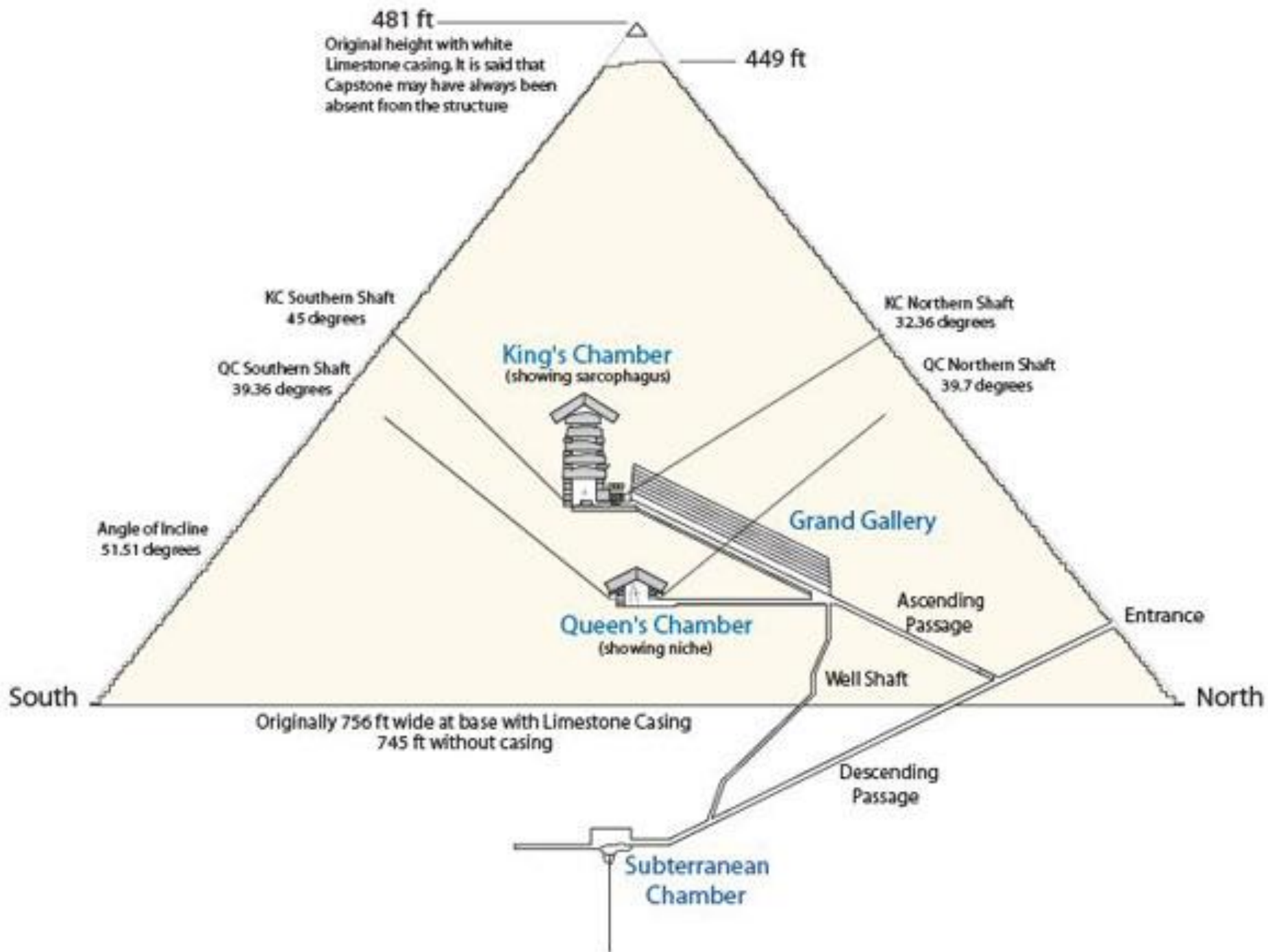


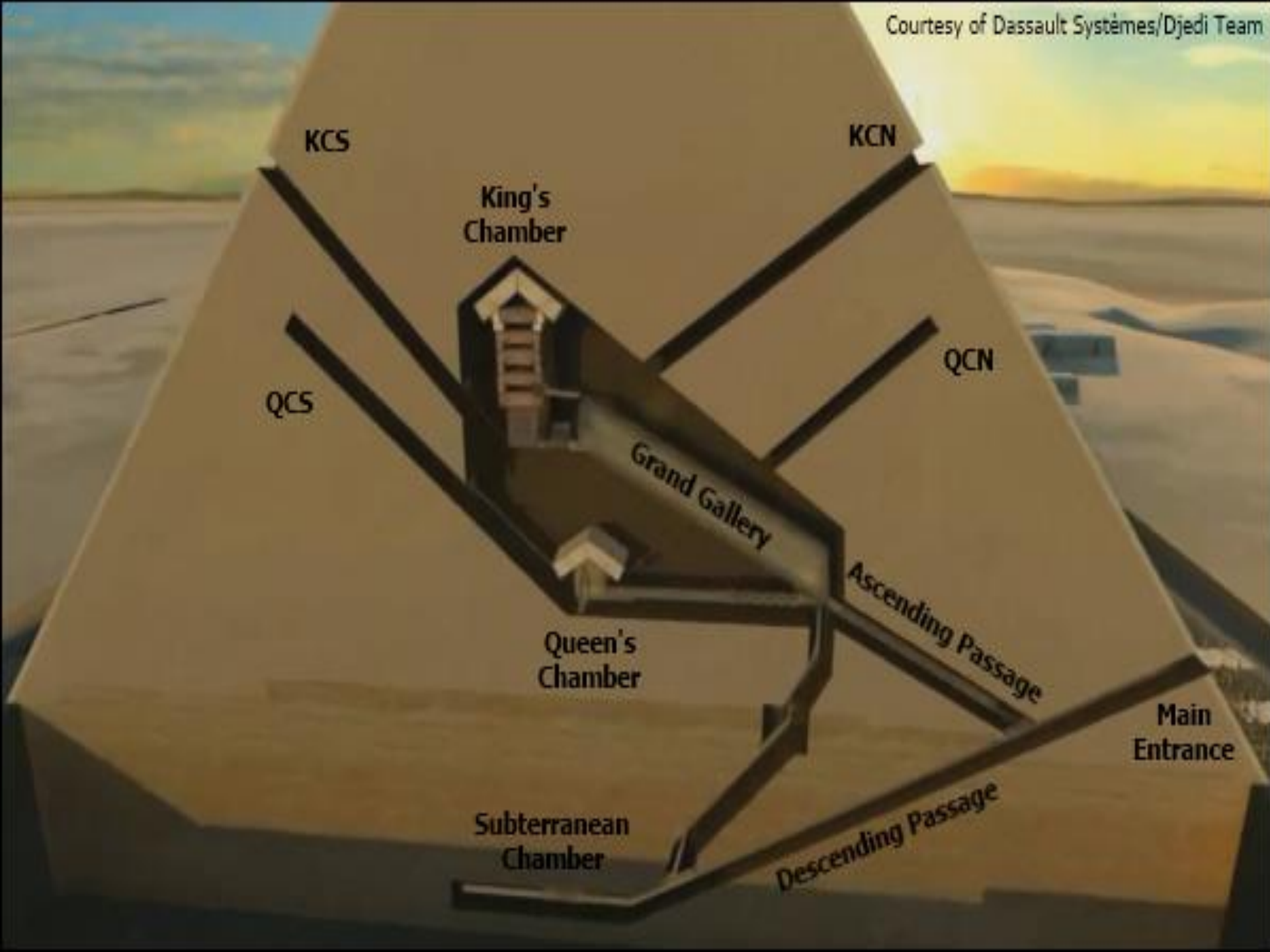












KCS

KCN

King's Chamber

QCN

QCS

Grand Gallery

Ascending Passage

Queen's Chamber

Main Entrance

Subterranean Chamber

Descending Passage

# The Ascending Gallery



# The Grand Gallery



# King's Chamber



231 ft



481 ft

756 ft

151 ft



























# Discoveries From Building

- Used astronomy to find north
- 365-day calendar
  - 3 seasons
  - 12 months
  - 30 days long
- Written numbers based on 10
- Created fractions

# Daily Life

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# Social Groups

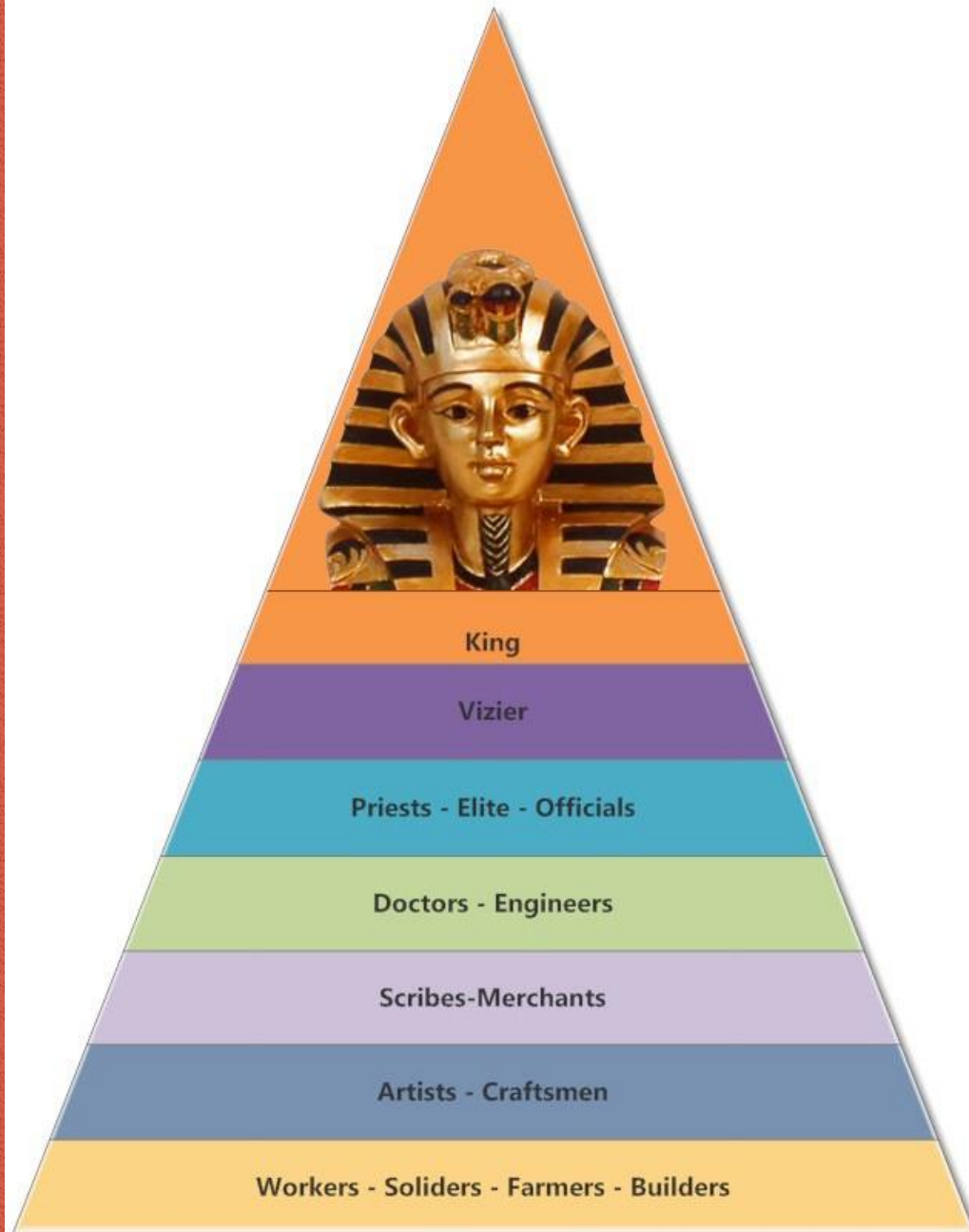
- Roles reflected their position in society
- 5 levels
- Largest group: Farmers and unskilled workers
- Ambitious people in lower groups could improve their social position.

# Egyptian Social Pyramid

Egyptian Social  
Classes were  
based on wealth,  
job and  
education



# Egyptian Social Hierarchy



# How People Lived

- 3 Groups
- Upper Class
  - Priests, **nobles**, warriors
  - Along river, wood & sun-dried bricks, 2-3 stories tall
  - Lush gardens with pools (fish & water lilies)
  - Servants waited on them; completed household chores
- Middle Class
  - Owned business or **skilled** jobs
    - Artisans: produced clothes, jewelry, pottery, metal goods
  - Lived in smaller houses
- Lower Class
  - **Farmers**, unskilled labors, slaves
    - Rented land from wealthy
    - Lived in crowded city neighborhoods



# Egyptian Families

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# Families

- Most important group in ancient Egyptian society
  - Gods & goddesses arranged in family groupings
- Father head of household
- Women
  - More rights than other civilizations
  - Held similar legal status
  - Own property, buy & sell goods, obtain divorces
  - Wealthy women: could serve as priests
    - Manage temples & perform religious ceremonies
  - Farmers: helped in the field with husband
  - Upper class: usually stayed in the home

# Children

- Few attended school
- Had time for fun
- Expected to respect their parents
- Mothers
  - Taught daughters to sew, cook, run household
- Fathers
  - Taught farming or other trade
    - Oldest son inherited father's business
- Teenagers
  - Get married & start their own family