

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt started out as two kingdoms more than 5,000 years ago. The kingdoms were called Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. The people who were farmers lived along the Nile River where there was good soil to grow food. Since most of Egypt is in the Sahara, the largest desert in the world, water is very important. When King Menes of Upper Egypt conquered Lower Egypt, the country was united under one government. Many different families ruled Egypt over the years. Each time the rule of Egypt passed from one person to another in the same family, it was called a dynasty. When a new family took over, there was a new dynasty. There were more than 30 dynasties in ancient Egypt. The ruler was often called a pharaoh.

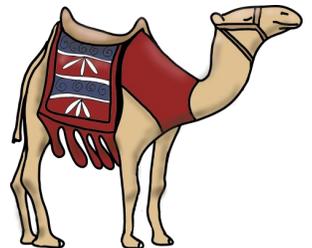
There were many large cities, but many of the people lived in small towns outside the cities. The Egyptians divided their people into three main classes of citizens. The upper class was made of the royal family, people in government, the rich, doctors, and people who were important as priests or officers in the army. The middle class was made of merchants and people who worked in crafts and made products. The lower class was made of the people who did jobs like farming. If people were taken prisoner during war, they were often made slaves, which was another class of people. The people of ancient Egypt developed a form of writing called hieroglyphics, which is a kind of writing made of picture symbols. Another invention was papyrus, a kind of paper made from plants.

Trading was very important in ancient Egypt. Ships sailed all over the known world to trade for goods that were not available at home. The Egyptians also got many riches from trading, such as gold and gems.

One of the things ancient Egypt is best known for is their pyramids. Pyramids were built like tombs to bury upper class citizens like kings. Some of the pyramids are still standing today, about 4,500 years after they were built.

Writing Prompt #1

SAMPLE



Ancient China

A dynasty is a long period of time one family rules a country. Different dynasties have ruled in China over the last 4,000 years. Between about 1766 BC and 206 BC, the Shang dynasty, the Zhou dynasty, and the Qin dynasty ruled.

Silk was a very important resource during the Shang dynasty. Special plantations raised silkworms that spun beautiful cocoons out of silk thread. The thread was woven into material that was some of the most valuable in the world. People also created beautiful things out of bronze during the Shang dynasty, developed a way to write their language, and had war chariots drawn by horses, which was something not everyone had at that time.

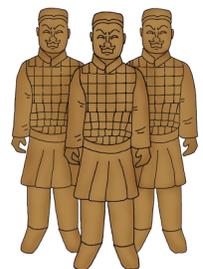
As the Shang family's power started to weaken, the Zhou dynasty took over. The Zhou also made beautiful objects out of bronze, and they made weapons and farm tools out of iron. The oldest book of Chinese poetry ever found was written during the Zhou dynasty.

After the Zhou, many groups fought for control of China. The Qin finally won in 221 BC. They only ruled for about 15 years, but they did amazing things for the country. They brought China and all the warring groups together under one government. The Qin also brought many walls together that the Zhou had built, and these walls became the Great Wall of China. Some of the Great Wall is still standing today!

Emperor Shi Huangdi, the first person who ruled the Qin, has a very famous tomb. He ordered that thousands of statues of soldiers, horses, and other animals and objects be made out of baked clay and buried with him. These beautiful carvings were forgotten for over 2,000 years until they were discovered in the 1970s. There is always something new to be learned or discovered about ancient China.

Writing Prompt #6

SAMPLE



Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece started as a group of small farming towns. These farming towns were controlled by a larger city in the southern part of Greece. Some historians believe this is the time when the ancient Greeks won a war against Troy, using the surprise of the Trojan horse.

After the larger city that controlled much of the area fell from power, small places called city-states grew up. City-states were cities or towns with the farmland and villages that were close around them. The city-states sometimes fought each other for control of areas of land. One of the most famous city-states was Athens. The children in Athens went to school and learned things like music, reading, writing, and arithmetic. They also took part in sports. In Athens, people had a part in the rule of the city-state. This was called democracy, and it is a type of government that is very popular today. Athens also had a large navy that it used whenever there was a war.

Another important city-state was Sparta. In Sparta, the people were taught to live by fighting with other city-states. It was very important to the people of Sparta to build strength and learn to fight. The Spartans did not think reading and writing were as important as military training. Boys went to camps when they were seven years old to learn how to follow the rules and be strong, just as if they were soldiers. Girls were even allowed to exercise and take part in sports, which wasn't allowed in many parts of the ancient world.

Sports were very important to the ancient Greeks. The Olympic Games started there. Ancient Greece was also known for the study of medicine, mathematics, and many other things such as architecture, art, writing stories, and keeping a record of history.

Ancient Greece did not have a lot of good land and weather for growing food. Because of this, they did a lot of trading and started colonies in many areas so they could trade for some of the things they needed. The ancient Greeks spread their way of life over a large area of the world at that time, and their ideas spread to many other lands.

Writing Prompt #3

SAMPLE



Ancient Rome

Ancient Rome was a city in Italy that started out very small more than 2,500 years ago with only some shepherds. It grew until it was a powerful empire that ruled many countries. The Roman Empire ruled most of the world that was known at that time. Roman soldiers were very good fighters and were feared by many people.

The Roman Empire made all the countries it conquered live under its laws and its government. Sometimes, Romans took some of the people back to Rome as slaves. The empire had different types of government during its long reign, but one type of ruler was the Caesar. The Caesar had control over everything and everyone.

There were many different languages spoken in the Ancient Roman Empire, but the language of the Romans was Latin. From that language, many of the languages of today grew, such as French, Spanish, and Italian.

The Romans were very skillful builders. They built roads to many parts of the known world. Some of those roads are still being used today. The Romans also built bridges and aqueducts. Aqueducts were large brick and stone waterways that carried water to the towns and cities that needed it. The Romans also made many beautiful works of art. You can still see some of them in museums in Rome today.

The Romans also enjoyed sports and games. Some of the games were very dangerous, like the chariot races. The rich also liked to relax and be spoiled. They had public gyms called baths where they could exercise and then get a massage and be waited on by slaves.

After more than one thousand years, the Roman Empire fell. It was too big, and even Rome couldn't control it all any more. It took so long to get messages from one end of the empire to soldiers and people in the other end of the empire, that Rome couldn't keep the empire working any more. It divided into many smaller countries with their own cultures and ways of government.

Writing Prompt #2

SAMPLE

