

# WONDERS OF EGYPT

1 For centuries, the pyramids of Giza have been **timeless** symbols of Egyptian culture. But who actually built them? For years, we did not know for sure. But archeologists recently discovered an ancient village near the pyramids. Close by, there was a cemetery where pyramid builders were  
5 buried. From studying these places, archeologists can now **confirm** that the pyramids were not built by slaves or foreigners (or space aliens!).  
**Ordinary** Egyptians built them.

It took about eighty years to build the pyramids. **According to** archeologists, about 20,000–30,000 people were **involved** in completing  
10 the **task**. The workers had different **roles**. Some dug up the rock, some moved it, and some shaped it into **blocks**. People also worked on different teams, each with its own name. These teams often **competed** to do a job faster.

## I A Pyramid Builder's Life

15 Life for these workers was hard. "We can see that in their skeletons," says Azza Mohamed Sarry El-Din, a scientist studying bodies found in the cemetery. The bones show signs of arthritis,<sup>1</sup> which developed from carrying heavy things for a long time. Archeologists have also found many female skeletons in the village and cemetery. The damage to their bones  
20 is similar to that of the men. Their lives may have been even tougher: Male workers lived to age 40–45, but women to only 30–35. However, workers usually had enough food, and they also had medical care if they got sick or hurt.

The work was challenging, but laborers were **proud** of their work. On  
25 a wall in Khufu's Great Pyramid, for example, a group of workers wrote *Friends of Khufu*. "It's because they were not just building the tomb of their king," says Egyptian archeologist Zahi Hawass. "They were building Egypt. It was a national project, and everyone was a participant."<sup>2</sup>

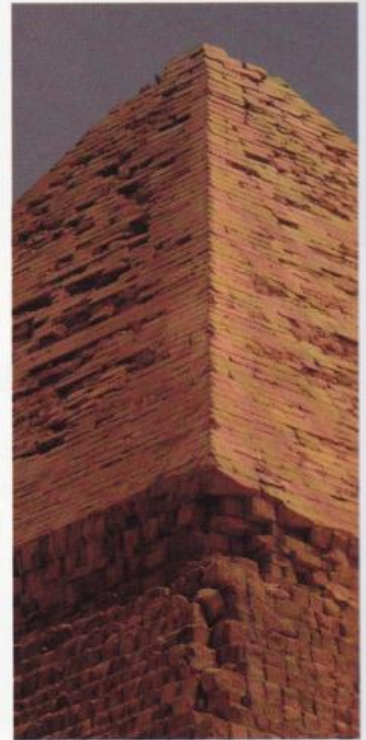
<sup>1</sup> **Arthritis** is an illness that causes the hands, knees, or other joints to hurt.

<sup>2</sup> A **participant** is a person who joins a certain activity.

## Reading Comprehension

**Multiple Choice.** Choose the best answer for each question.

- Purpose** 1. The main purpose of this reading is to describe \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. who the pyramid builders were and what they did  
b. how Khufu's Great Pyramid was constructed  
c. what life was like for Egyptian kings  
d. why Egyptian kings wanted to build pyramids
- Vocabulary** 2. What does *dug up* in line 10 mean?  
a. took out of the ground  
b. broke into small pieces  
c. placed on top of each other  
d. joined together
- Detail** 3. Which statement about building the pyramids is true?  
a. It took over a century to complete.  
b. Builders all did the same work.  
c. More than 30,000 workers were involved.  
d. Builders worked in teams.
- Gist** 4. What is the third paragraph mainly about?  
a. how long female workers lived  
b. information on the lives of pyramid builders  
c. the benefits of being a male worker  
d. men's vs. women's roles in Egyptian society
- Reference** 5. In line 20, what does *their* refer to?  
a. archeologists  
b. male workers  
c. female workers  
d. medical workers
- Vocabulary** 6. In line 24, what does the word *laborers* mean?  
a. kings  
b. archeologists  
c. workers  
d. women
- Inference** 7. What can we infer about the people who wrote "Friends of Khufu" on a wall?  
a. They were looking for new friends.  
b. They were pleased with their accomplishments.  
c. They were very angry with their bosses.  
d. They were in trouble because of their bad behavior.



### Did You Know?

The Great Pyramid is made up of more than two million blocks of stone, each one weighing about 2,200 kilograms (about 2.5 tons).

## Vocabulary Practice

**A. Completion.** Complete the information by circling the correct word in each pair.

Cleopatra became queen of Egypt at age 18, when her brother became king. The couple **1. (competed / confirmed)** for control of Egypt, and Cleopatra lost. Later, two important leaders from Rome—Julius Caesar and Marc Antony—both fell in love with her. **2. (According to / Involved)** legend, Cleopatra was very beautiful. She was also apparently very smart. With the help of Caesar and Antony, she became queen and played an important **(role / block)** in Egyptian society.

But staying in power was not an easy **4. (task / role)**. Cleopatra had many enemies<sup>1</sup> who eventually took power from her. In the end, the queen was too **5. (ordinary / proud)** to surrender<sup>2</sup> and instead chose to kill herself. Her legend survived, however, and today Cleopatra remains a(n) **6. (timeless / according)** symbol of ancient Egypt.



^ A sculpture recovered from what is thought to be Cleopatra's palace

<sup>1</sup> An **enemy** is someone who wants to harm you.

<sup>2</sup> If you **surrender**, you stop fighting and admit you have lost.

**B. Completion.** Use the correct form of the words in **red** in **A** to complete the definitions.

1. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is common or usual.
2. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is an activity or some kind of work you do.
3. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is shown to be true.
4. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ has flat sides and is usually square or rectangular in shape.
5. If you are \_\_\_\_\_ with something, it means you are connected or concerned with that thing.

**Word Partnership** Use **task** with: (v.) **complete** a task, **give someone** a task, **perform** a task; (adj.) **difficult** task, **easy** task, **important** task, **impossible** task, **simple** task.

