



THE STORY OF EGYPT



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<p>0:00</p> <p><i>An animated desert landscape with a pyramid floating in front of the sun. Red text reads “The Story of Egypt”. The camera zooms out to reveal blue artifacts rising from the sand, with pyramids in the background. A red book opens and closes and the scene changes to grain plants.</i></p>	<p>Ancient Egypt brings to mind massive pyramids, mummies, pharaohs, and hieroglyphs. Egypt was one of the world's earliest and most successful societies, and its rich history fills our history books, stories, and imaginations. But none of it would have been possible without farms. And those farms wouldn't have been possible without the waters of the Nile River and some incredible features of geography.</p>
<p>0:38</p> <p><i>The Earth’s layers are shown with outer space in the background.</i></p>	<p>The story of ancient Egypt begins deep beneath Earth's surface where plate tectonics shifted millions of years ago to create a sloped pathway. While most rivers change course over time, these plate tectonics have allowed the Nile's path from the Ethiopian highlands to the Mediterranean Sea to remain steady.</p>
<p>1:01</p> <p><i>A map of North Africa and the Middle East appears with “12,000 BCE” in orange text. The camera zooms in on Egypt as green shading appears along the Nile. Trees and pyramids appear along the Nile.</i></p>	<p>And for a millennia, the Nile has supported life in the desert. Thousands of years ago, the region around the Nile became drier, creating more desert landscape. People living in the area moved closer to the Nile, where they could find food and water. There they also found predictable seasons. Every summer, rain fell in the Ethiopian highlands, filling the river and causing the Nile to creep up over its banks to flood the land surrounding it. The floods filled the land with nutrients and made it incredibly fertile.</p>
<p>1:36</p> <p><i>The camera zooms out from a green plant to reveal a mural showing scenes of ancient Egypt and people win white clothing.</i></p>	<p>So around 6,000 BCE, people began setting up permanent settlements in the Nile River Valley. The surrounding deserts isolated and protected the settlements from invasion by other peoples and the rich soil made the area ideal for farming. Ancient Egyptians began working with the natural rhythms of the land, growing crops and finding ways to improve their harvests. This shaped ancient Egypt as one of the first societies to use large scale agriculture which helped them flourish for more than 3,000 years.</p>
<p>2:11</p> <p><i>The scene shifts back to the map with green shading.</i></p>	<p>Over time, agriculture in ancient Egypt developed and became more complex as Egyptians learned to control the Nile River. They built levies and canals to bring water further inland from the river. They also developed basin irrigation.</p>
<p>2:29</p> <p><i>A curved basin appears and fills with water. Plants appear along the edges of the basin. The screen shifts upward to reveal ancient Egyptian crops then shifts</i></p>	<p>This system directed the Nile's floods into bowl-like areas that could hold water for over a month. The water slowly saturated the soil before draining out, leaving behind valuable minerals and nutrients that helped crops grow, including staple foods like wheat and barley. Those crops were ready for harvest by the time the flood cycle started again. And with so much good soil and water, Egyptians were able to grow even more food than they needed and expand beyond the staples to fruits, vegetables, flax, and papyrus. The agricultural surplus meant they could store some, so they still had enough food during</p>



<p><i>down to bags and a pot of crops.</i></p>	<p>years when flooding was low. They could also sell and trade crops and they used the Nile to transport goods throughout Egypt and into the Mediterranean Sea.</p>
<p>3:18</p> <p><i>The scene shifts back to the map with green shading. White lines appear on the map. Stone bricks fall from the top of the screen and form a wall.</i></p>	<p>Egypt eventually became the breadbasket of the Mediterranean, selling grain to Greeks, Romans, and others through trade that built up Egypt's wealth. As Egyptian agriculture and economy became more complex, Egyptian society also grew and became more complex. With more people, the region became more urban and there were more jobs to do besides farming.</p>
<p>3:43</p> <p><i>Orange sand dunes with the sun in the background appear behind the brick wall. A Pyramid emerges from the sand. Orange text appears above the pyramid.</i></p>	<p>Egyptians developed a hierarchical society with pharaohs ruling at the top. These pharaohs passed their power down through family lines and from 3,400 to 30 BCE there were more than 300 different pharaohs. Egypt had long periods of stability under these rulers which historians group into three kingdoms: the Old kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom.</p>
<p>4:10</p> <p><i>A pharaoh's head and hands appear above the pyramid. Ancient Egyptians in white appear below the pharaoh. Orange text appears above the pharaoh while pyramids appear below.</i></p>	<p>And while the pharaohs ruled with an iron fist and the authority of the gods, they also had support from a class of nobles, priests, and advisers. These leaders in turn ruled over artists, scribes, the military, peasant farmers, and enslaved people. That meant that Egyptian society was very organized. The government-controlled agriculture, labor, the military, and even religion. Pharaohs were seen as gods on earth, and workers built hundreds of huge pyramids and grand monuments in their honor. Then scribes, artists, and crafts people decorated and inscribed the buildings and monuments with hieroglyphics and art that kept Egypt's records and told the stories of its people.</p>
<p>4:57</p> <p><i>A map shows Egypt with pyramid icons over the Nile and a blue gate to the east. The screen shifts out to show more historical icons. The screen blurs and statues appear. The scene shifts to the blue waters of the Nile.</i></p>	<p>Those are the stories, monuments, and images we still know of today. And we know them because the power of Egypt, agriculture, and the Nile reached far beyond the Nile River Valley. Over the centuries, conquerors like Alexander the Great and the Persian and Roman empires would all take their turn vying to control Egypt and the Nile. And each of these empires built on a millennia of Egyptian development and culture. They added new layers of complexity and continued to shape the story of Egypt and society as they came and went from the land built by farms and the waters of the Nile.</p>