EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS

LO: to discover facts about the Ancient Egyptian Pyramids

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The Egyptian pyramids are stone structures, mostly built as tombs for Egyptian Kings.

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Pyramid of Djoser

There are over one hundred pyramids in Egypt, the first was the Pyramid of Djoser, built over four thousand years ago in Saqqara, south of Cairo. It was designed by the architect Imhotep and built during the third dynasty. This is thought to be the oldest monumental structure in the world made from cut stone.

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It is not known how many men it took to build a pyramid, estimates are anything from two thousand to a hundred thousand!!
Pyramid building would happen when the Nile was in flood.

Q: Why do you think they chose this time of year to build?

A: It was impossible to farm the land so many men were available for work.

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The most famous pyramids are those in Giza.

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Can you spot the River Nile on the map?

Are you ready for a fact hunt?

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The Pyramid of Khufu

The Pyramid of Khufu, sometimes called the 'Great Pyramid' of Giza is the largest of all the Egyptian pyramids.
It is one of the 'Seven Wonders of the Ancient World' and is the only one still standing.

Built over 4500 years ago, this pyramid was the tallest man made structure in the world until the 1300's.

How tall do you think it is?

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Khufu Pyramid: Facts and Figures

What other buildings do you know of today that are over 140m high?

How long would it take an Olympic sprinter to run the same distance as the length of one side of the pyramid?

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The Pyramid of Unas

This is the Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara, but the photo shows casing similar to that which covered the Khufu pyramid before the stone was used for buildings in Cairo.

Why do you think they covered the pyramids in this way?

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Secret Entrances and Trap Doors

From the outside the pyramids look quite simple, but inside were various passages and chambers, some with secret entrances and trap doors.

Why do you think they used secret entrances and trap doors?

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Hieroglyphics

The chambers and passages were intricately decorated with pictures and hieroglyphics.

These examples come from the Pyramid of Unas.
The writings tells stories of the King, religious tales, requests for help from the gods in the journey to the afterlife, and some are a warning to grave robbers!

What does this evidence tell us?

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Treasure

Treasure and items for the King to use in the afterlife would be left in the burial chamber.
Other chambers might be used for members of his family.

If you believed you were going to the afterlife, what would you want to take with you?

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The Khufu pyramid complex included five boat pits, containing ships. One of the ships was restored and is on display.
It is not known whether these vessels ever touched water, perhaps to bring the King's body along the Nile to his tomb, or whether they were intended for the King's use in the afterlife.

What do you think was the purpose of the boats?

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The Khafre Pyramid

Khafre was the son of Khufu and ruled between 2558 and 2532 BC. His pyramid was slightly smaller than that of his father, but the two entrances have led some to believe that it was originally intended to be bigger.

This is what is left of the limestone casing that would have covered the whole pyramid.

Why do you think plans might change?

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The Menkaure Pyramid

The Menkaure Pyramid is the smallest of the Three Pyramids of Giza at 65 metres tall.

This is still pretty big.
How tall are you?
Roughly how many times your height is 65 metres?

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The Sphinx at Giza

The Sphinx is a mythical creature with a human head and the body of a lion. The word means 'father of dread' or 'the terrifying one'.
Made in limestone, it sits near the Pyramids of Giza.
It is the largest stone statue in the world at over 73m long, 19m wide and 20m high.
It was believed to have been built during the reign of Khafra, and the face made in his likeness.

Why do you think the Sphinx was built?

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THE END

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