

## Bringing the Museum Home: Powerful Pyramids

Egypt is famous for its pyramids. The Ancient Egyptians believed that by burying their pharaohs inside a pyramid, their souls would ascend to heaven and the afterlife.

The pyramids are made from big stone blocks and were covered in a smooth, polished white limestone surface when they were first built. The white surface would have reflected the sun's rays and, when seen from a distance, the pyramids would have shone brightly. In most cases, this white covering has been damaged over time, or has been removed and used in other buildings. All Egyptian pyramids were built on the west bank of the river Nile, which as the site of the setting sun, was associated with the realm of the dead.

Pyramids were very difficult to build because the stone blocks were heavy. It took many years and many thousands of people, mostly slaves, to build them.

The Ancient Egyptians started to build pyramids in around 2700 BCE. The first pyramid was built for Pharaoh Djoser by his architect Imhotep. The largest Egyptian pyramids are at Giza. Archaeologists believe there are 135 pyramids, but there may be more still left to discover.

The way the Ancient Egyptians built pyramids changed over time. It is likely that the huge stone blocks were cut from quarries with chisels and handsaws then dragged to the building site and lifted into position. Exactly how the stones were moved is unclear. Perhaps the stones, some weighing up to 60 tons, were pulled along on rollers by teams of men with ropes. The stones may have been lifted into place using wooden logs as levers or hauled up giant ramps built around the sides of the pyramid.

### You can make your own pyramid. Here's how;

1. Print out the pyramid, or try drawing your own.
2. Decorate your pyramid while it is still flat. You could draw stone blocks, or try writing some Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.
3. Fold your pyramid into shape and glue or tape together.

