ANCIENT EGYPT

SSWH1B: DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGION AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN ANCIENT EGYPT

SSWH1E: EXPLAIN THE DEVELOPMENT & IMPORTANCE OF WRITING; INCLUDE CUNEIFORM, HIEROGLYPHICS, AND THE PHOENICIAN ALPHABET

Ch. 2, Sec. 2 (pp. 35-41)
GEOGRAPHY OF EGYPT

- Built on the longest river in the world, the Nile, a 4,100 mile river that flows Northward
  - On the banks of the Nile was the fertile Black Land, where crops grew...everything else was the desert Red Land
  - River flooded once a year leaving silt and providing water for irrigation ditches
  - Nile was so important to life that it was worshiped as a God
  - Where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were unpredictable, the Nile was like clockwork
- The surrounding desert or Red Land, kept Egyptians relatively safe from invaders
Because the Nile flows from the South to the North, a sail is only needed if a boat is headed South.
UPPER AND LOWER EGYPT

- The Nile was divided by a dangerous rapid called a cataract
  - The First Cataract separated Egypt into 2 kingdoms
  - The Lower Kingdom was in Northern Egypt
  - The Upper Kingdom was in Southern Egypt
  - Yes, it does sound backwards

- Egyptians lived in farming villages from around 5000 BC and in 3200 BC The Lower and Upper Kingdoms were solidified
King in Lower Egypt had a red crown
King in Upper Egypt had a white crown
When two become one...a new crown!
Not completely sure, but Egypt might have been unified by a king named Scorpion...or maybe it was Narmer
A new capital was created at Memphis, where the kingdoms met...was the first of 31 dynasties for 2,600 years
Egyptians pharaohs (god kings) were worshiped as real gods
+ This is called a theocracy where the government is based on religious authority
IT FEELS GOOD TO BE A PHARAOH

- To Egyptians, the pharaoh was the center of religion and government
  - He made the sun rise, the Nile flow...
  - Believed to rule even after death
- His life force, *ka*, required sweet digs after death... so they built pyramids for burial
  - Filled with treasures, food, and mummified pets for company
- Pharaohs were mummified to preserve their body and jars of their brains, liver etc. were buried with them
  - This was a 70 day process, and some mummies still have their hair and skin attached
RELIGION

- Polytheistic religion: believe in multiple gods
- Worshipped more than 2000 gods
- Believed in an afterlife, that they would be judged based on their deeds
  - Anubis, the underworld god would weigh your heart against a feather...if it was too heavy, the Devourer of Souls would eat it
- Ra was the sun god
- Osiris was the god of the dead
EGYPTIAN LIFE

- Royals
- Upper class: Officials, priests, landowners
- Middle class: Artisans and merchants
- Lower class: Poor farmers and laborers
- Slaves (in later periods of Egyptian history)
EGYPTIAN LIFE

- Social classes could change
- Women and men had very similar rights
- Created a writing system called hieroglyphics that used pictures to stand for words
  - Decoded using the Rosetta Stone
  - Wrote on a type of reed paper called papyrus
- Created a calendar system with 12 months of 30 days each...off by only 6 hours to the true calendar!
- This advanced society collected taxes, had great architects and engineers and used geometry