Project glossary

afterlife The life that is believed to begin after death.
ancient Egypt A civilisation that existed around the banks of the Nile from c3100 BC until 30 BC.
ancient Sumer The first civilisation in the world that existed in Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq, from c4500 BC until c1900 BC.
archaeologist A person who studies human history by excavating sites and analysing artefacts.
archaeology The study of human history by excavating sites and analysing artefacts.
artefact An object that was made in the past, such as a tool.
canopic jar A wood, stone or clay container with a lid used in ancient Egypt to hold organs from a mummified body.
civilisation The developed culture and way of life of a society.
cuneiform Ancient writing used by the Sumerians made up of simple pictures.
Fertile Crescent The area of land in the Middle East where the first ancient civilisations began.
floodplain A fertile area of low-lying land near a river that often floods when the river rises.





hierarchy A system in society where people are organised into different levels of importance from highest to lowest.
hieroglyph A picture or symbol representing a word used in ancient Egyptian writing.
Indus Valley The area next to the Indus River in modern-day Pakistan and north-west India where the Indus Valley civilisation developed from c2500 BC to c1700 BC.
irrigation The digging of channels to allow water to flow through a field to water crops.
<i>lugal</i> The name for a king in ancient Sumer.
Mesopotamia An ancient historical area in modern-day Iraq where the Ancient Sumerian civilisation developed in c4500 BC.
mummification The process of preserving a dead body by drying and wrapping that was used by the ancient Egyptians.
necropolis A large cemetery belonging to an ancient city.
nomad A person who travels from place to place to find food, water and shelter.
papyrusA material made in ancient Egypt from the stem of a water plant and used in sheets for writing or painting.



A ruler of ancient Egypt.





A structure with a square or triangular base and sloping sides used as a royal tomb in ancient Egypt.
sarcophagus A stone coffin usually decorated with carvings or inscriptions used in ancient Egypt.
scribe A professional writer.
shaduf An irrigation device from ancient Egypt that used a lever mechanism to raise water from a water source onto the land.
vizier The pharaoh's chief minister in ancient Egypt.
ziggurat A large pyramid in ancient Sumer made from mud bricks, with a temple on top.

