

Myths about the Pyramids

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When I was a child, I can only remember being taught the ancient pyramids were built to be the tombs for the kings and queens of that time. I would always wonder why kings and queens would spend so many years to build pyramids just to bury themselves with their prized possessions. I can remember thinking It's not like their gold and silver would be of any value to them once their dead. It wasn't until one night I was watching a TikTok video, and the panel was discussing how the pyramids aligned with certain stars, how the pyramids produced energy, the streams underneath the pyramids, etc. that I began to think about the pyramids more in depth. I began to question everything I was ever taught about the pyramids. I questioned how they were built, what they were built for, the hieroglyphic inscriptions and text on the walls, the perfect engineering that constituted the structures, and more. This also made me wonder why we were taught such minimal information in school about a vast subject.

As a child I can remember imagining you would walk inside a pyramid, and it would be filled with mummies. Thats why I was shocked to learn that very few mummies were found inside the pyramids. In the article “Were All Egyptian Pharaohs Buried in Pyramids?” Alicja Zelazko (2025), Encyclopedia Associate Editor, Zelazko states that “the mummies of pharaohs Djoser, Khafre, and Menkaure were placed in a subterranean burial chamber underneath a

pyramid". Here is a photo of Pharaohs Djoser's burial chamber taken by Mohamed Ghany (2020)



This proves that at some point the pyramids were intended to be used as tombs for pharaohs but that quickly changed after the pyramids began to get looted for valuables. Due to the constant looting of the pyramids, Egyptians royalty began to think of a different way to hide their possessions with their body when they were dead. This is what I believe began the creation of the Valley of Kings, where most of the kings began to get buried. I believe they thought being buried in an underground tomb would lower the chances of being robbed of their prized possessions. Maybe they thought looters would have more trouble finding their burial site or even digging a huge coffin out of the ground. In the article Valley of the Kings, Brian Handwerk (2025), National Geographic faculty member, states "during Egypt's new Kingdom (1539-1075 B.C.) the valley became a royal burial ground for Pharaohs such as Tutankhamun, Seti I, and Ramses II, as well as queens, high priest, and other elites of the 18th, 19th, and 20th dynasties". Here is a

photo of the Valley of Kings taken by Peter J. Bubenik (1995).



After watching a series of TikTok videos and realizing the pyramids weren't just filled with mummies, this made me research all of the alternatives. What else could be a myth about the pyramid that we believed in? What about the way it looked, who built it, etc. I began to search images of pyramids and learned they look extremely different to what I grew up thinking. I always thought pyramids were just dusty large boulders placed on top of each other to build a triangle. In the article "What did the Ancient Egyptian Pyramids look like when they were built" by Patrick Pester (2023), News Write for Live Science, states the pyramids were once covered in a layer of shiny limestone rock. In the same article its stated Pester (2023) This limestone casing would have given the pyramids a smooth, polished layer that shined bright white under the

Egyptian sun. In the article Myths & mysteries: The missing capstone of the Great Pyramid, Fatima Sajid (2014), Dawn E-paper writer, speaks of a possible gold cap stone that would have been on the top of the pyramid of Giza. Some scientists believe it may have absorbed energy and made the pyramid work as a machine. Sajid (2014) wrote that “the metal absorbed the sun’s energies and was used as the main part of the entire structure and made it work like turning the key to a machine”.

Once I gained information that the ancient pyramids were not dusty stone structures this made me question who and how they were built. I can always remember seeing photos in books at my school of slaves with white cloths wrapped around their waist pulling large boulders miles through the desert to a building site. This would make almost anyone believe that slaves built the pyramids. I questioned this belief of slaves building the pyramids after learning about how precisely the pyramids are built. For example, in the article “The mystery of the perfect alignment of the Pyramids of Giza with the Stars” by Historical Eve (2022), they state all three of the pyramids in Giza align with Orion's Belt. Not to sound judgmental but this information alone made it hard for me to believe that the pyramids were entirely built by slaves. I then began to research who built the ancient pyramids and I indeed learned the pyramids weren’t built by slaves but actually by paid skilled laborers. In the article “Who Built the Egyptian Pyramids? Not Slaves” Eric Betz (2021), The Magazine Author, states “the best evidence suggests that pyramid workers were locals who were paid for their services and ate extremely well. We know this because archaeologists have found their tombs and other signs they lived well. These skilled laborers took the time to put detail and effort into building the Great Pyramid”.

Another function of the pyramid that was not readily available information is that it was used as a sundial to tell time. I can't remember ever being taught that the pyramid was used to tell time. In the article “My Summer with the Pyramids”, Hana(2021), teen volunteer, wrote

“the Great Pyramid is not like any typical sundial. It's so intricate that it not only told time but was also able to signal solstices (the time or date at which the Sun reaches its maximum or minimum declination, marked by the longest and shortest days) and equinoxes (the time or date of which the Sun crosses the celestial equator, when day and night are of approximately equal length); as a result, it helped the Egyptians tell the solar year.”

This was impressive information I found about the pyramids. I never thought there was a need for them to tell time back then let alone signal solstices. In the article “Telling Time in Ancient Egypt” Janice Kamrin (2017), associate curator at Metropolitan Museum of Art, “that the Egyptians were the first civilization to measure time by hours and track days by twenty-four-hour segments using the rising and setting of the sun and the rising and waning of the moon.” It's astounding to me that they counted 12-day hours 12-night hours, and the month was three weeks long which consisted of 10 days. This would make each day 24 hours and each month 30 days long, which is basically what we follow today.

I believe one of the biggest myths that most people believe is how the boulders were transported to the pyramid construction site. I can remember watching movies or tv shows and it would show slaves pulling these enormous boulders across the desert on rolling wood lumber. They would have guards walking past shouting and whipping whips at them while they had beads of sweat dripping from their foreheads. I think Hollywood portrayed this image because it was more entertaining for the viewer but I'm not sure this is what really happened. Recently scientists have discovered a dried-up lost river (called the Ahramat) that may have been used to transport materials for the production of the pyramids. In the article “Scientist find traces of a lost river next to the pyramids” Alan Boyle (2024), past president of Council for Advancement of Science writing, “stated researchers determined in ancient times that the Ahramat Branch extended for about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from the pyramids at Lish to Giza, flowing past 31

pyramids in all". This would make more sense as to the transportation of the materials instead of being pulled across a dry hot desert on wood logs. In the article "We mapped a lost branch of the Nile River- which may be the key to a longstanding mystery of pyramids", Timothy Ralph, Eman Ghoneim, Suzanne Onstein (2024), associates professors, provided a satelite view of the Ahramat river. Here is a photo to show how close the river was to the pyramids.



In conclusion, there are many myths that people believe about the ancient tombs. These myths can come from movies, books, tv shows, school etc. The main myth I was taught to believe growing up was that the ancient pyramid's sole purpose was to be used as a burial tomb for pharaohs and queens. Even though it is stated that this was their purpose in the beginning of the construction. To give the kings a queen a place to be buried to signify their power, wealth and authority, over time this pyramid tomb idea changed. Due to the fact of thieves robbing the tombs of the royal riches that were to be stored for the kings and queens in the afterlife they decided to be buried in underground tombs to prevent this. Even though this didn't stop the thieves, it did make their job harder. There is also a misconception that the pyramids are just old dusty stones when in reality they were originally covered in limestone and possibly had a capstone with gold inside. This limestone would allegedly gleam white when the sun hit it during the day hours. The pyramids were also used to tell time by having a sundial on top. This would help the ancient Egyptians with their agricultural timing or knowing when the sun would be setting. I also discovered that the 2.3 million tons of stone that were used to build the pyramids were possibly transported down a dried up-river called the Ahramat. Contrary to what many people may believe that multi-ton boulders were pushed on wooden logs through a hot desert. There are many myths about the pyramids, and some may have been true. I believe that if we dig deeper into the history of the pyramids we can discover more about the future of our world. There are also so many mysteries to uncover from the pyramids that may unlock hidden truths about the unknown. Due to the depth of the information pertaining to the ancient pyramids I believe this is a research topic that will never end.

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