Pyramids

Introduction

The ancient Egyptians built pyramids as tombs for the pharaohs and their queens. There are about eighty pyramids known today from ancient Egypt. The three largest and best-preserved of these are in Giza. The most well-known of these, the Great Pyramid, was built for the pharaoh Khufu.

Meaning

Egyptologists believe that the pyramid shape was built for religious reasons. Proposed theories include:

1. They represent the first land to appear in creation, a hill
2. They allowed the dead pharaoh to climb to the sky
3. They represent the rays of the sun.

Which explanation do you like?

Geometry

A pyramid is a 3-dimensional shape that connects a polygonal base with a point, called the apex. Each base edge and apex form a triangle. The pyramid is typically described by the shape of the base. Because the base of the pyramids is a square, the Egyptian pyramids are square pyramids.

Building the Pyramids

Teams of oxen or men dragged the stones to the construction site on a slipway lubricated with oil. At the construction site, ramps were built to get them into place on the pyramid. These ramps were made of mud brick and coated with chips of plaster to harden the surface. It is estimated that between 20,000 and 30,000 laborers built the Great Pyramid in less than 23 years.

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