

# Historical Comprehension

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## Historical Comprehension 1: Pharaoh Seti I

Seti I had been buried in one of Egypt's most colourful royal tombs, but his body was gone by the time its richly decorated halls were discovered in 1817.

Seti I is thought to be one of the 19th Dynasty's greatest warrior kings. He was born in 1323 BCE. He was the son of Rameses I and father of Rameses II The Great. He ruled as Pharaoh for 11 years from 1290 BCE to around 1279 BCE, when he died.

Can you work out how old he was when he died?

The Valley of the Kings was the burial site of many rulers of Egypt's New Kingdom (1539-1075 BCE). Most of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings have been raided and robbed several times over the last few thousand years.

In 1817 Giovanni Belzoni, an Italian explorer, found the tomb of Rameses I. During the excavation he found a hidden entrance to another tomb where they found some of the most beautiful and complete hieroglyphs and artwork ever discovered in Egypt. When Belzoni reached the burial chamber he found an empty coffin. There were no gold treasures, apart from a mummified bull and some shabtis that had been left by grave robbers.

The tomb was identified as that of Seti 1 once the hieroglyphs were finally deciphered in 1828.

Seti's mummy was later found in another secret tomb nearby, which had been used by the Egyptians to keep some mummy's safe from grave robbers. Seti's mummy is now kept in National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo, Egypt.

## Image bank



Hieroglyphs from the tomb of Seti I

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The ceiling in the tomb of Seti I | CC BY 2.0 | Wikimedia Commons



Image of Seti I from his temple at Abydos | CC BY-SA 3.0 | Wikimedia Commons

# Historical Comprehension 2: The Valley of the Kings

## Deir el-Medina – The Worker's Village in the Valley of the Kings



You can still see the ruins of the original crafts workers village at Deir el-Medina. The village was well planned out, with rows of 73 equally sized house plots and one larger house, all surrounded by a perimeter wall. Families who worked on planning and decorating tombs and temples and craftspeople like Ipi all lived at the village. It was easy to

Remains of the workers village at Deir el Medina | CC BY-SA 3.0 | Creative Commons

walk to the Valley of the Kings from here.

We know that the community at Deir el-Medina was very well organised from ancient papyrus records found at the site.



Craftsmen at work on a tomb | CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0)

### The people of Deir el-Medina

The crafts people building tombs and temples were supervised by a Foreman.

The Foreman supervised all the tools and materials used and often earned more rations than the other workers.

Did you know - workers were mostly paid in grain?

Other staff including guardians, doorkeepers, police, and servants, supported the work and kept law and order.

Guardians guarded entrances and gave out tools. Copper chisels were the most valuable tool that was used and when they became blunt, workers went to the guardians to exchange them for sharp ones.



Doorkeepers closed the tomb, delivered messages and fetched the grain that was used to pay the workers.

Police protected the royal tomb and inspected tombs that had been robbed.

The servants made bread, fetched water and did laundry for the crafts people.

## Historical Comprehension 3: Ancient Egyptian Artists and Craftspeople

### Egyptian Artists



Artists in ancient Egypt were not celebrated as they are today. Artists worked in assembly-line situations. The tomb building, and most of the artwork that decorated the Valley of Kings was attributed to the person who paid for the work and not the artist.

Image of Ancient Egyptian artist | CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0)

### Apprenticeship system

In ancient Egypt, the apprenticeship system was a part of the education system. During an apprenticeship, a boy would work alongside the tradesman to learn from him. Ancient Egyptian Craftsmen offered apprenticeship to boys at the age of 12 or 13.



An apprentice would work for, and be looked after by his master for many years. The boy's father would pay money to have his son taught special skills until he was good enough to be paid as a Craftsman himself.

Image of Ancient Egyptian apprentices at work | CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0)