



Egypt Today

MAIN IDEA

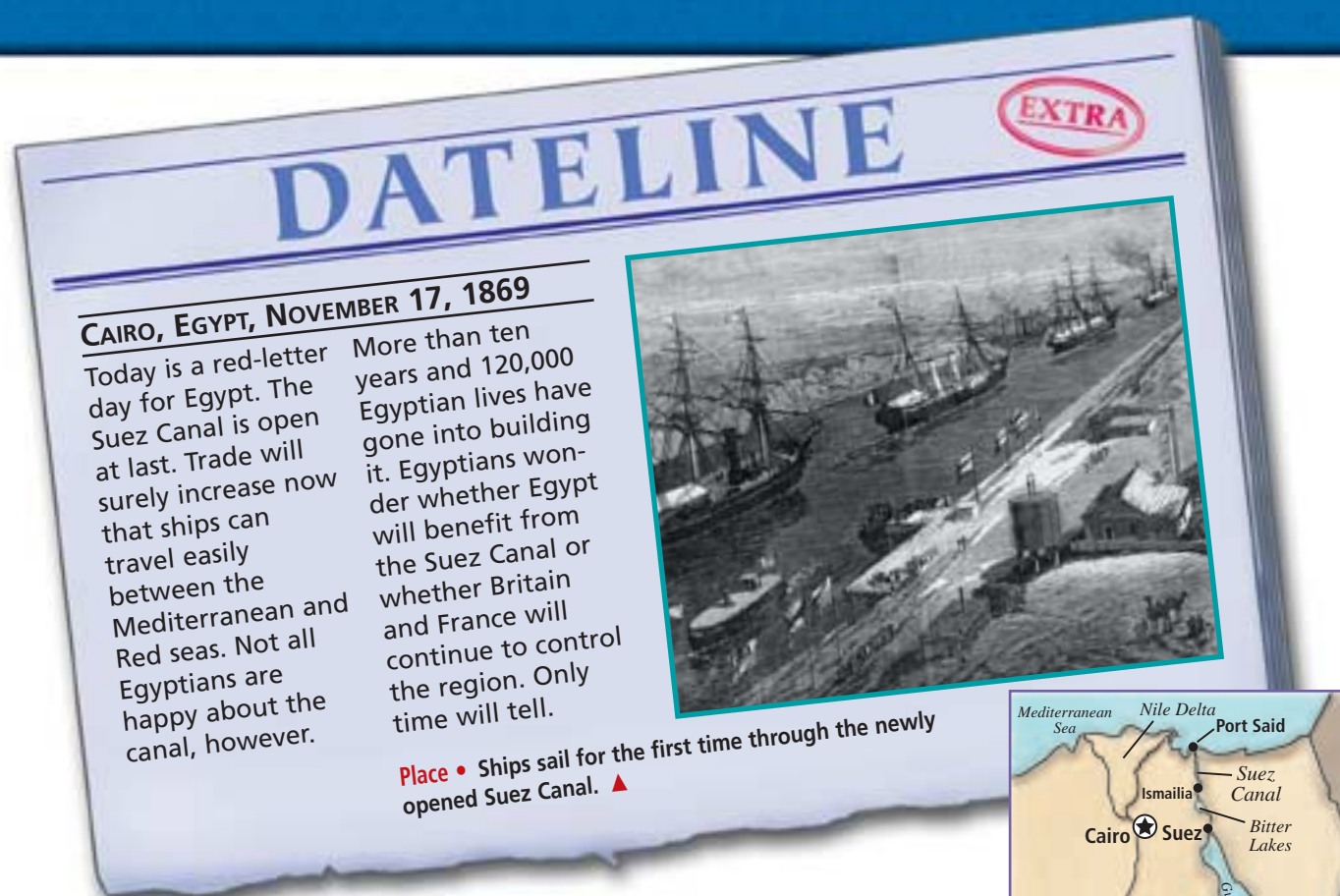
Egypt's modernization has brought progress and problems.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Egypt often sets the pace in the region for social and political change.

TERMS & NAMES

King Farouk
Gamal Abdel Nasser
Aswan High Dam
tradeoff
Anwar Sadat
Muslim Brotherhood
fellahin



The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal was the grand project of Egyptian ruler Ismail Pasha (is•mah•EEL PAH•sha). He wanted it built to make Egypt the equal of Western nations. But the cost of the canal and other expensive projects drove Egypt into bankruptcy. Ismail had to sell Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal Company to the British government. From then until 1956, Great Britain had some control over Egypt.

Location • The Suez Canal connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. ▲



From Ancient to Modern Times

Great Britain was not the first foreign power to rule Egypt after the time of the pharaohs. For 2,500 years, Egypt was under foreign influence. It was conquered in turn by Persians, Macedonians, and Romans. Arab Muslims from the Arabian peninsula invaded in A.D. 639–642. A military group called the Mamelukes (MAM•uh•looks) seized control in about 1250 and ruled until Ottoman troops invaded in 1517. From the late 1700s to the early 1900s, France and then Great Britain controlled much of Egypt. Britain gave up absolute control in 1922, and Egypt became a monarchy, a country ruled at first by King Fuad (fu•AHD), and after 1936 by his son, **King Farouk** (fuh•ROOK). Foreign policy, defense, and communications, however, remained under British control.

Nasser Takes Over An Egyptian Army officer, **Gamal Abdel Nasser**, resented the weakness of his government and the strong British influence on his country. In 1952, he and other officers overthrew King Farouk. The next year Egypt became a republic. Nasser was Egypt's leader from 1954 to 1970.

Controlling the Nile Nasser's most significant accomplishment was the construction of the **Aswan High Dam**, begun in 1956, to control the flooding of the Nile River. The dam gives Egyptian farmers a more dependable source of water for their crops and allows them to grow crops year round. It also gives Egypt more electrical power and has made fishing an important industry.

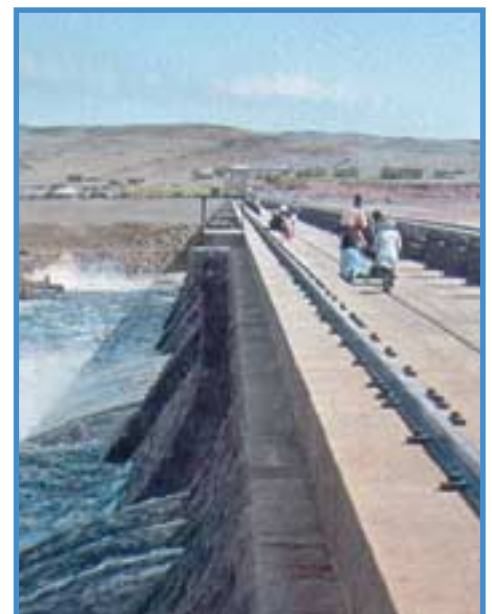
Place • Gamal Abdel Nasser was President of Egypt for 16 years. ▼



Human-Environment Interaction • The Aswan High Dam, opened in 1971, cost about \$1 billion to build. ▼

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

- Location** • What is the location of the Aswan High Dam?
- Human-Environment Interaction** • What does the map show you about the dam's importance to Egypt?





Place • Egyptian women campaigned for the vote in Cairo in the 1920s. ▲

Biography

Anwar Sadat, 1918–1981

Anwar Sadat (below, left) took part in the 1952 seizure of the government of King Farouk. When President Nasser died in 1970, Vice President Sadat was elected President.

Sadat led Egypt to war with Israel in 1973. A few years later, however, he became the first Arab leader to seek peace between the two countries. He shared the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (right, below). In 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty. Muslim extremists objected to Sadat's peace treaty with Israel and his close ties with the United States. On October 6, 1981, extremists assassinated him.



Because of the dam, however, the river no longer deposits the rich soil from the south as it did during yearly flooding. Instead, over 100 million tons of earth settle behind the dam each year. Farmers now have to use artificial fertilizers which pollute the water. The Aswan High Dam is an example of a tradeoff. A **tradeoff** is an exchange of one benefit for another.

Rights for Women Women were active in the movement for Egyptian independence in the years from 1919 to 1922, yet were denied the vote. Although they gradually acquired the right to higher education, women were still subject to the Muslim Personal Status Law, which gave men far more rights in marriage. Women continued to demand their rights. In 1956, in Nasser's new government, they gained the right to vote and to run for office. A revised Muslim Personal Status Law in 1979 somewhat improved women's rights within the family. In 2000, Egypt passed a law making it easier for women to get a divorce.

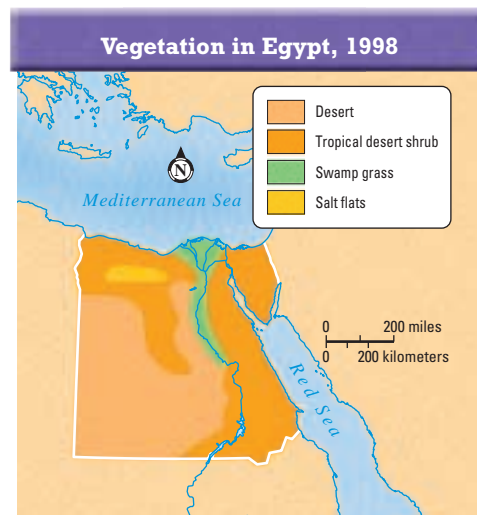
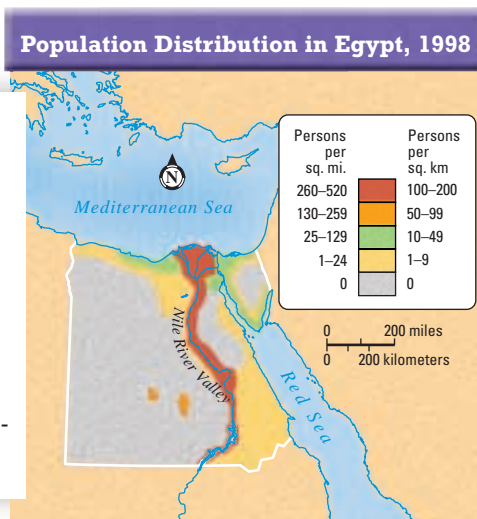
A Search for Peace Egypt actively opposed Israel for many years. However, in 1979, led by President **Anwar Sadat**, Egypt became the first Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Egypt also led the region in opposing Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Egypt has tried to settle arguments between Iraq and the United Nations. In the fall of 2000, President Hosni Mubarak met with other regional leaders to talk about how to end Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The Muslim Brotherhood Not everyone in Egypt values freedom and compromise. The **Muslim Brotherhood** is an extremist Muslim group which insists that Egypt be governed solely by Islamic law. The Brotherhood claims the Egyptian government is being untrue to the principles of Islam by working with Israel and the United States.



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

- Place** • What do you notice about the Nile River on each map?
- Human-Environment Interaction** • What relationship do you notice between population and vegetation?



The Land and the People

Most of Egypt consists of desert lands where no one can live. Just about all of Egypt's 70 million people live in a narrow strip of land along either side of the Nile or in a few desert oases. Some live in big cities. Others farm the fields made fertile by the Nile.

Egyptian Cotton Cotton is a major primary product and agricultural export. Cotton-growing developed in Egypt during the 1860s when the Civil War in the United States disrupted cotton exports from southern states. Egypt produces some of the finest cotton in the world. It has also developed a textile industry that manufactures cotton yarns and cotton fabrics as secondary products.

Human-Environment Interaction • These fellahin raise sheep. ▼

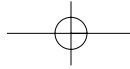
Village Life More than half the population of Egypt lives in villages. Most villagers are **fellahin** (FEHL·uh·HEEN), or peasant farmers. The fellahin are some of the poorest Egyptians. Most rent land or work in their own fields. Many do not know how to read or write. Many fellahin children do not go to school.

Fellahin wear traditional Arab clothing. Men wear pants and loose-fitting, hooded gowns. Women wear long, flowing gowns. Like poor people in the cities, they eat a simple diet of bread and beans, which leads to malnutrition. Infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, also afflict the fellahin. Only a lucky few are ever treated by doctors.



Reading Social Studies

A. Identifying Problems What are the main problems the fellahin face?



Africa's Largest City

Life in Egyptian cities is different from life in rural areas. Cairo (KY•roh) is the capital of Egypt. The city's older inhabitants remember when the city had gardens, trees, and birds. Now those gardens have been paved over. The city is crowded and polluted, and the population continues to grow. Thousands of people leave Egypt's villages every year and come to Cairo looking for work. Instead, they find unemployment and overcrowding.

The total population of ancient Egypt was never more than four million people. Only about 5 percent of the population lived in cities. In 2000, the population of Cairo alone was more than 12 million. Cairo now has more people than any other African city.

Life in Cairo Cairo has both historic and modern sections. Many poor people live in the older sections. Some poor Cairenes live in cemeteries or on roofs. Others live in poorly built apartment buildings. Many have no steady work. Some are unskilled workers in factories. Others work in the city's small shops that sell jewelry and tourist souvenirs. Cairo's newer areas are along the west bank of the Nile. Most well-educated Cairenes live near the government buildings, foreign embassies, hotels, museums, and universities located there. They are doctors, lawyers, teachers, factory managers, and government officials.

Reading Social Studies

B. Analyzing Causes What is the main reason for Cairo's increase in population?



The Pyramids and the Great Sphinx

The current residents of Cairo, Egypt, live in the shadows of some of the ancient world's most magnificent architecture—the pyramids and the Great Sphinx.

Egyptians built the pyramids as tombs for their kings more than 4,000 years ago. Near the pyramids, they also carved an enormous sphinx—a mythological creature with a lion's body and human head—out of natural rock. The head of the Great Sphinx is fashioned to look like King Khafre (c. 2575–c. 2465 B.C.).





Place • Cairo is a huge city crowded with buildings, cars, and millions of people. ►



Place • These girls live in Cairo within sight of the Sphinx and pyramids of ancient Egypt. ▼

The Region's Cultural Leader

Egypt has been the Arab world's cultural leader for over a century. It has led the region in education. In 1829, it opened the first modern school for girls in the Arab world. In the 1950s, it became the first Arab country to require that all children attend elementary school. It has also had a strong feminist movement for many years. Arabs throughout the region get much of their information and entertainment from Egyptian television, radio, movies, newspapers, and magazines.



SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Terms & Names

- 1. Identify:** (a) King Farouk (b) Gamal Abdel Nasser (c) Aswan High Dam (d) tradeoff
(e) Anwar Sadat (f) Muslim Brotherhood (g) fellahin

Taking Notes

- 2.** Use a time line like this one to write the dates when control of Egypt changed hands.



Main Ideas

- 3. (a)** What were Nasser's major achievements?
(b) How have Egyptian women's rights improved over the last century?
(c) What has Egypt done to improve the search for peace in the region?

Critical Thinking

4. Evaluating Decisions

Do you think the building of the Aswan Dam was a worthwhile tradeoff?

Think About

- ♦ its value to farmers
- ♦ the consequences of pollution

ACTIVITY -OPTION-

Write a **letter** telling about daily life as a young person in Cairo or in a farming village along the Nile.