

Module 2: Ancient River Valley Civilizations


Topic 2 Content: The Class System in Ancient Egypt

Introduction

The Class System in Ancient Egypt

Introduction

In ancient Egypt, there was a rigid class system based on occupation and social proximity to the pharaoh. Click on each level of the pyramid to learn more about the ancient Egyptian class structure.



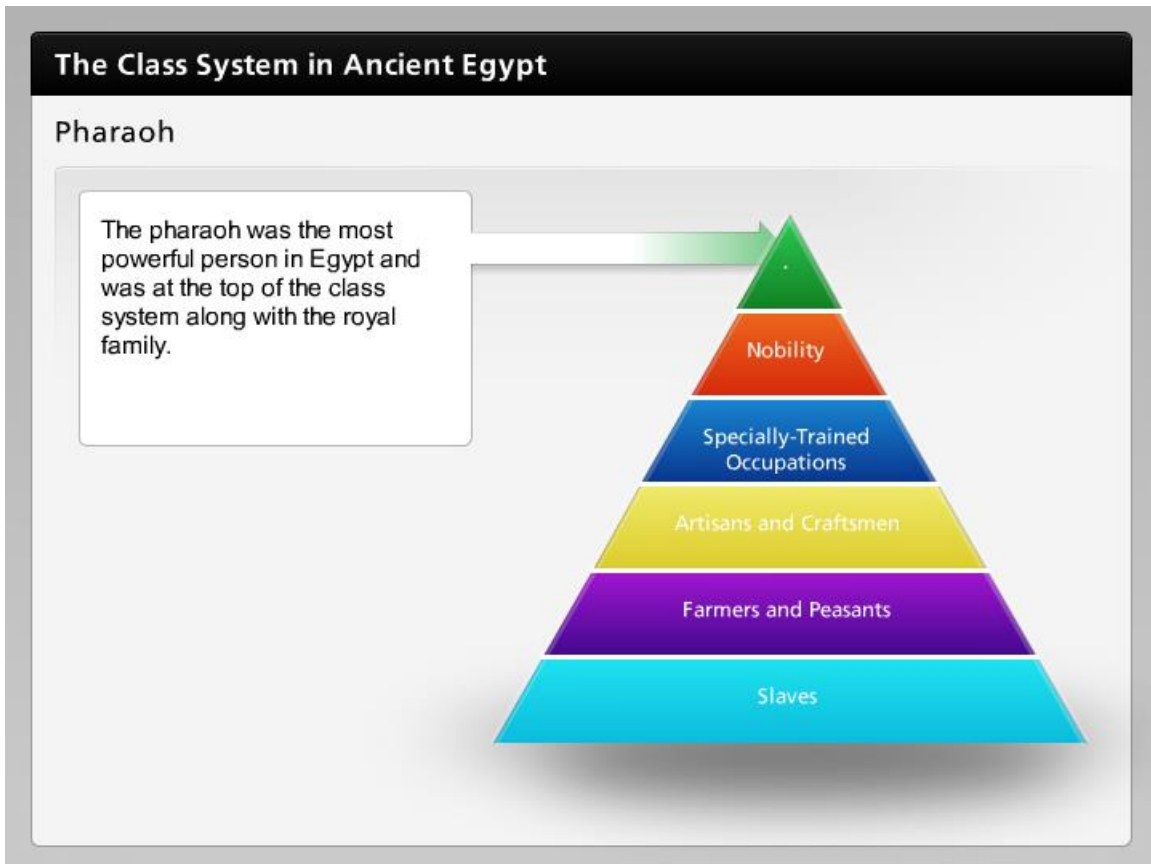
Class
Nobility
Specially-Trained Occupations
Artisans and Craftsmen
Farmers and Peasants
Slaves

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Pharaoh

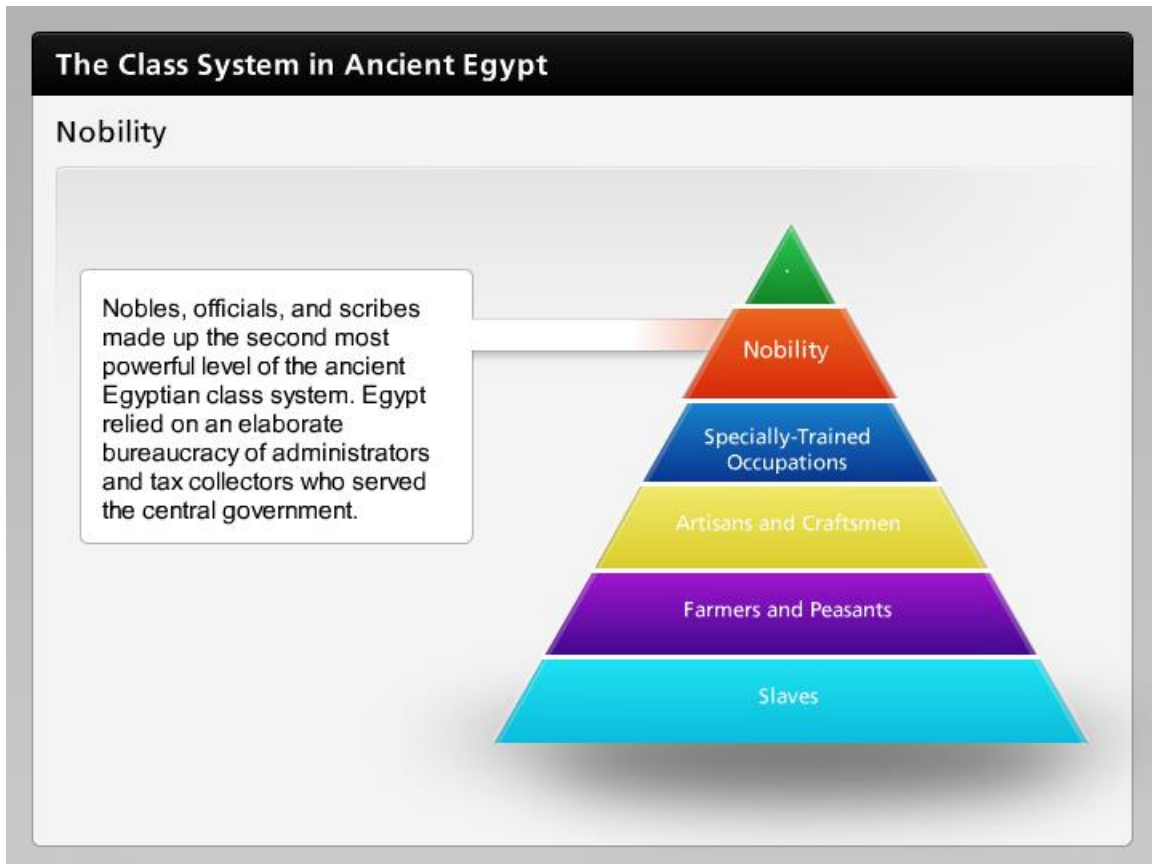


The pharaoh was the most powerful person in Egypt and was at the top of the class system along with the royal family.

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Nobility

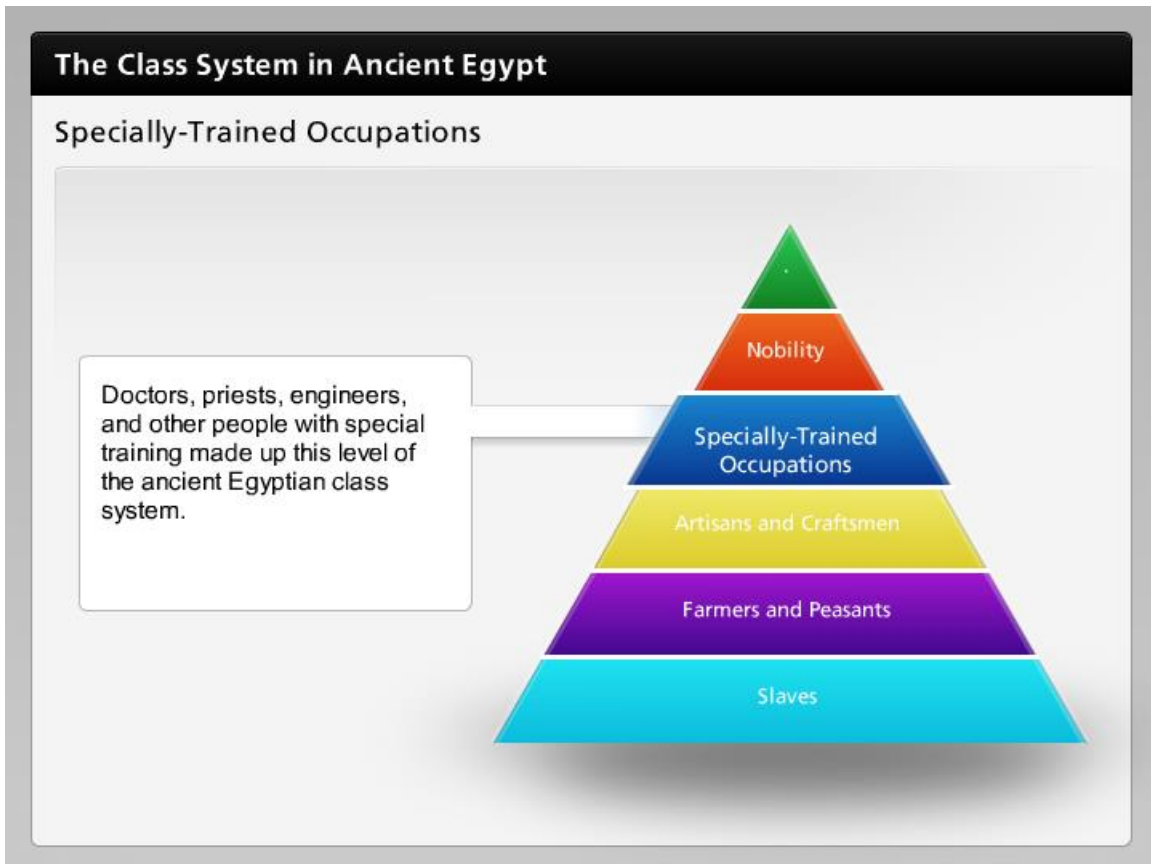


Nobles, officials, and scribes made up the second most powerful level of the ancient Egyptian class system. Egypt relied on an elaborate bureaucracy of administrators and tax collectors who served the central government.

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Specially-Trained Occupations



Doctors, priests, engineers, and other people with special training made up this level of the ancient Egyptian class system.

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Artisans and Craftsmen

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Artisans and Craftsmen

Merchants, artisans, and craftsmen made up this level of the ancient Egyptian class system. These people, and the products that they produced, were under the control of the government. Often, their shops would be attached to government or religious buildings and they would be paid by the state. Many of their products, like dishes, tools, and furniture served practical functions, but were ornately painted or decorated.

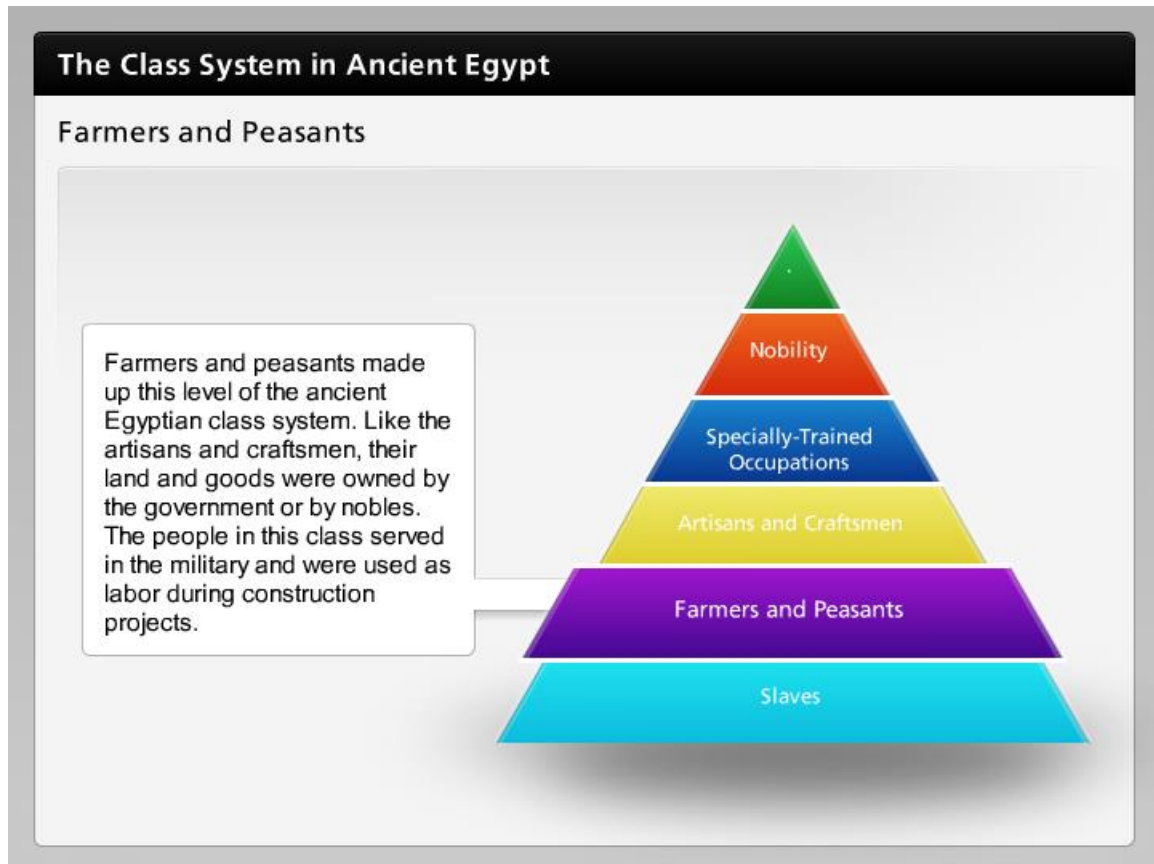
The diagram illustrates the hierarchy of the ancient Egyptian class system. At the top is the Nobility, followed by Specially-Trained Occupations, then Artisans and Craftsmen, then Farmers and Peasants, and finally Slaves at the base. The Artisans and Craftsmen level is highlighted with a yellow background.

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Farmers and Peasants

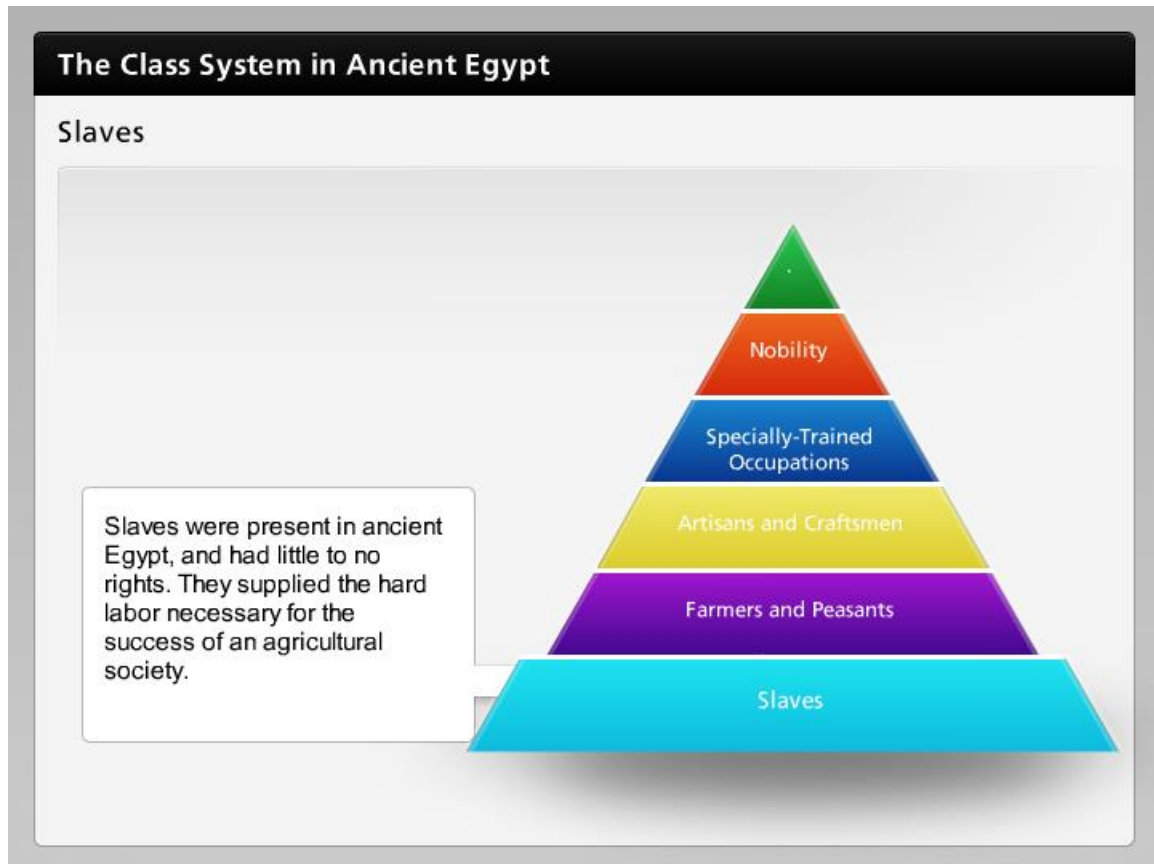


Farmers and peasants made up this level of the ancient Egyptian class system. Like the artisans and craftsmen, their land and goods were owned by the government or by nobles. The people in this class served in the military and were used as labor during construction projects.

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Slaves



Slaves were present in ancient Egypt, and had little to no rights. They supplied the hard labor necessary for the success of an agricultural society.