

Section 3
Egyptian Religion

Chapter 3
Ancient Egypt and Nubia

Objectives

Learn about Egyptian gods and goddesses.

Find out about the Egyptians' belief in the afterlife.

Discover how and why the pharaohs' tombs were built.

Key Terms

afterlife – a life after death

mummy – a dead body preserved in lifelike condition

pyramid – a huge building with four sloping triangle shaped sides; built as royal tombs in Egypt

Giza – an ancient Egyptian city; the site of the Great Pyramid

The Afterlife

- The Egyptians believed in an **afterlife** or life after death.
- The important Egyptians were **mummified**, a process by which the body can be preserved and spared from excessive decay.
- The Egyptians provided the deceased with everything they would need for their journey, including valuable treasures.



ANUBIS. FROM A TOMB IN LUXOR, EGYPT

This is a picture of Anubis, the Egyptian god of the dead.

According to legend, Anubis invented mummification.

Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

- Religion was a way for the Egyptians to understand and explain the workings of nature.
- They believed that gods controlled things like the rains, floods, sickness, and death.
- There was a god for each aspect of life, so the Egyptians tried to please each of their gods and goddesses.

Regional Differences

- Each part of Egypt had its own gods and goddesses.
- Upper Egypt had different gods than Lower Egypt.
- Over the centuries, however, people in all parts of Egypt began believing in some of the same gods.

Important Gods

- Egyptian Gods were often portrayed as humans with animal heads.
- Re was the Egyptian sun god.
- He was the creator of the universe.



- Some believe that Re was once a pharaoh.
- Later, Re was combined with the god Amon, who was also said to be the sun god.
- The god became known as Amon-Re, the most important and powerful Egyptian god.
- Amon-Re protected the rich and the poor.
- He watched over humans and judged them from a hidden place.

- Amon-Re was born each morning in the east and died each evening in the west.
- Egyptians associated death with the west and buried their pharaohs on the Nile's west bank.
- Egyptians preferred to stay on the east bank of the Nile at night, because they believed the spirits of the dead lived on the west bank.



Osiris was the god of the afterlife.

He was once a beloved pharaoh who taught his people how to farm.

Osiris was murdered by his evil brother Set.

Set chopped up his body and spread the pieces out all over Egypt.

Osiris' wife, Isis, collected all of the pieces of the body and Osiris was reborn as a god.

Osiris showed Egyptians that there was life after death.

Osiris was also thought to be a judge of the people's deeds.

He was said to have scales, called **Libra**, which means, "the balance."

- Libra is also a constellation of stars, that were thought to be the scales Osiris used to judge the souls of people.
- If a soul weighed on the side of evil, then it would be eternally punished.



Reading Check

Who was Osiris?

Osiris was the god of the living and the dead.

Belief in the Afterlife

Journey to the Afterlife

The Egyptians believed that the souls of the dead could not survive unless the body was mummified.

If the pharaoh's soul made it to the afterlife, he would live a life of ease, hanging out with Osiris and meeting with friends and family that had died.

Preparing the Dead

Pharaohs were buried inside three to four coffins

The innermost coffin was usually shaped like a human body, with the person's face painted on the cover.

They were buried with their earthly possessions.



The mummy of Ramses II.

Reading Check

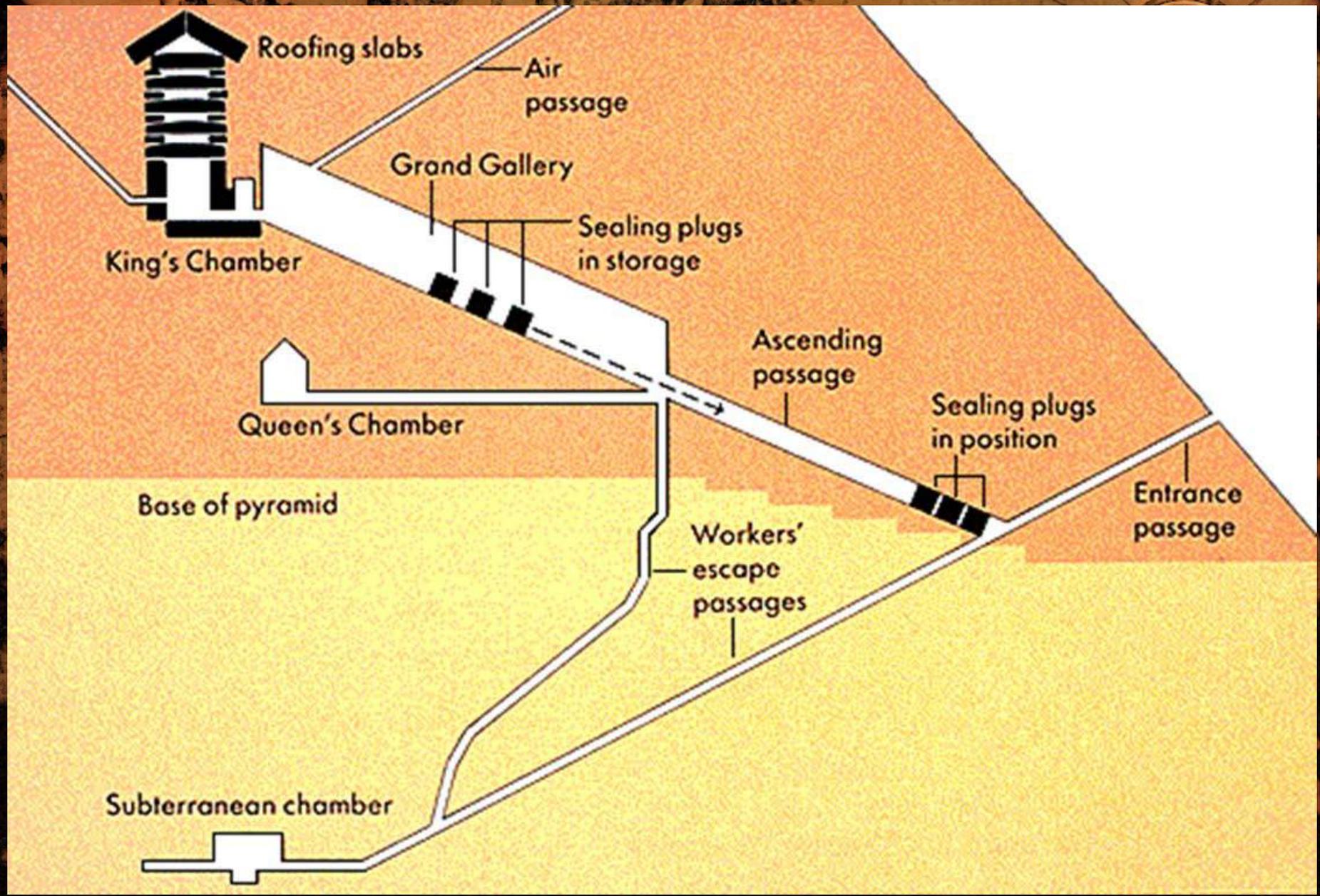
Why did ancient Egyptians bury their dead with food and other possessions?

They believed that people needed their possessions in order to survive in the afterlife.

The Pharaohs' Tombs

- The largest and most famous tombs were built during the fourth dynasty.
- These were the great pyramids.
- The largest tomb is the Great Pyramid at Giza.
 - The Great Pyramid of Giza was built by the pharaoh Khufu.

The inside of the great pyramid of Giza.



Khufu's boat, which was found at the site of the Great Pyramid, was to carry Khufu to the afterlife.

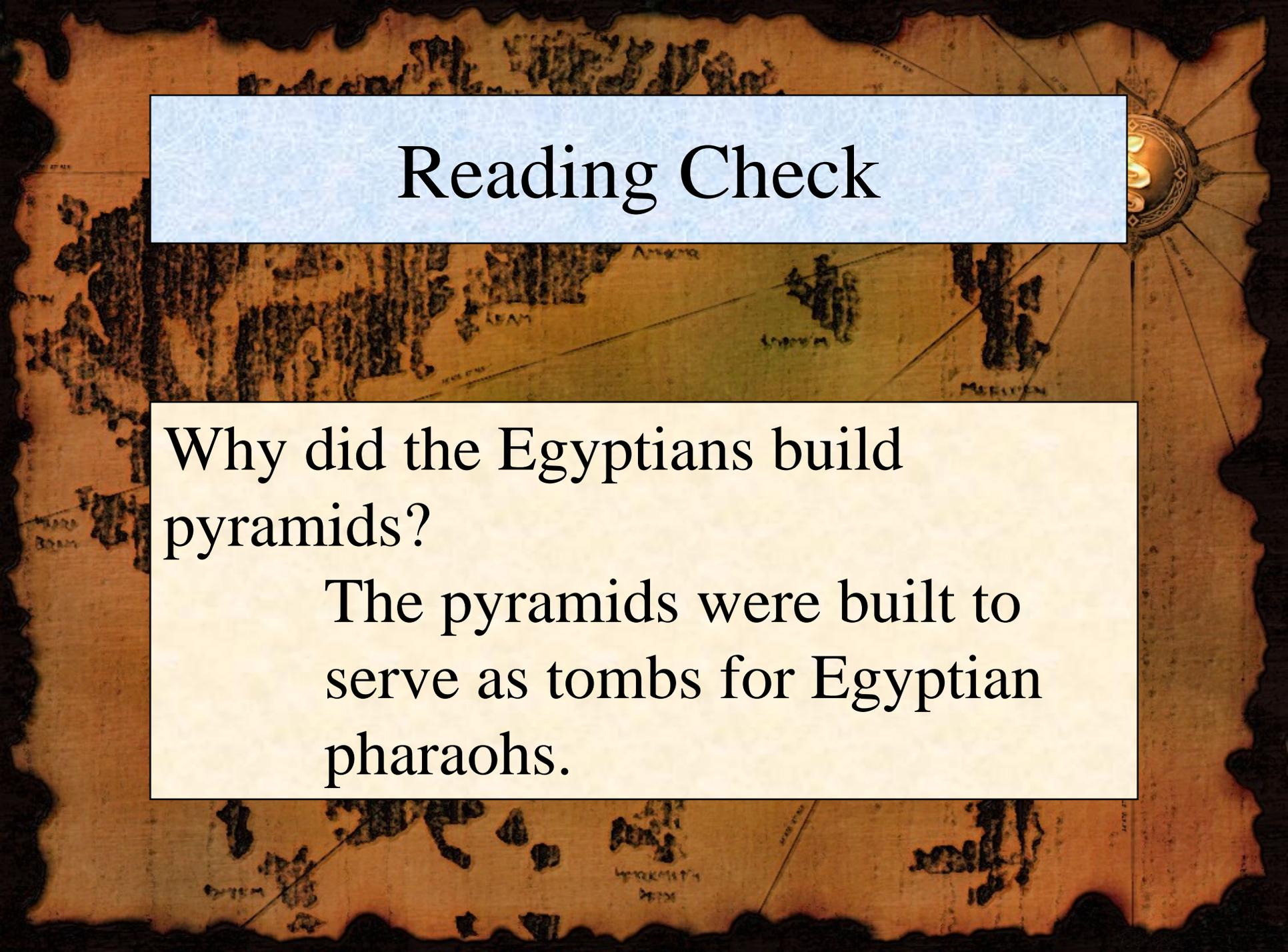


Building Process

- Each stone weighed about 5,000 lbs.
- Each pyramid took about 20 years to build.
- They were built on west side of Nile.
- The stones came from all over, including Nubia.

Teamwork

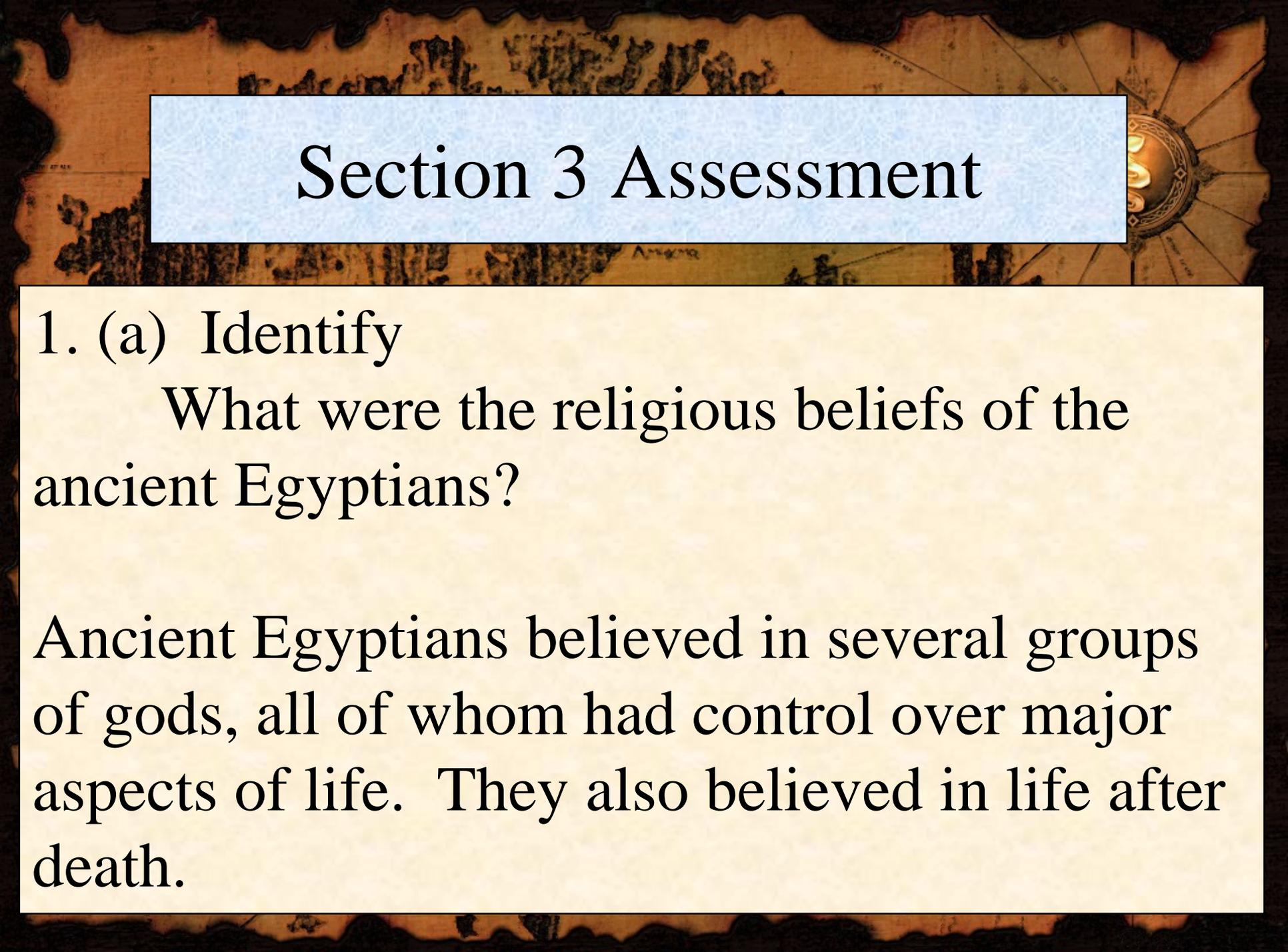
- The workers used sleds, wooden rollers, and levers to move the blocks.
- The building of a pyramid was an act of faith.

The background of the slide is a stylized, aged map of the world. The map is rendered in shades of brown and tan, with dark, irregular shapes representing continents. A prominent compass rose is located in the upper right corner, featuring a central sun-like symbol with rays. The map's edges are irregular and dark, giving it the appearance of an old parchment or leather-bound book.

Reading Check

Why did the Egyptians build pyramids?

The pyramids were built to serve as tombs for Egyptian pharaohs.

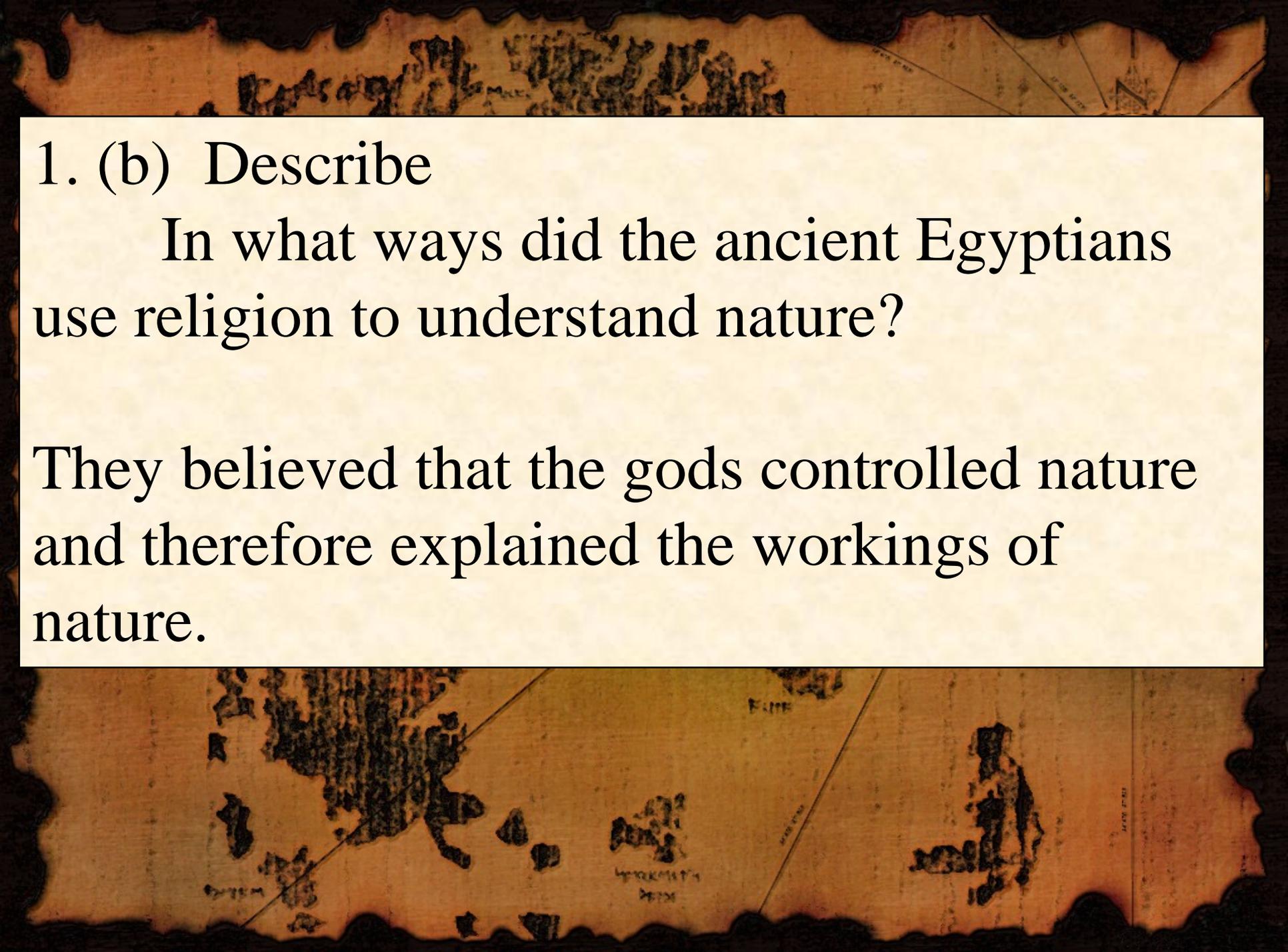


Section 3 Assessment

1. (a) Identify

What were the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians?

Ancient Egyptians believed in several groups of gods, all of whom had control over major aspects of life. They also believed in life after death.



1. (b) Describe

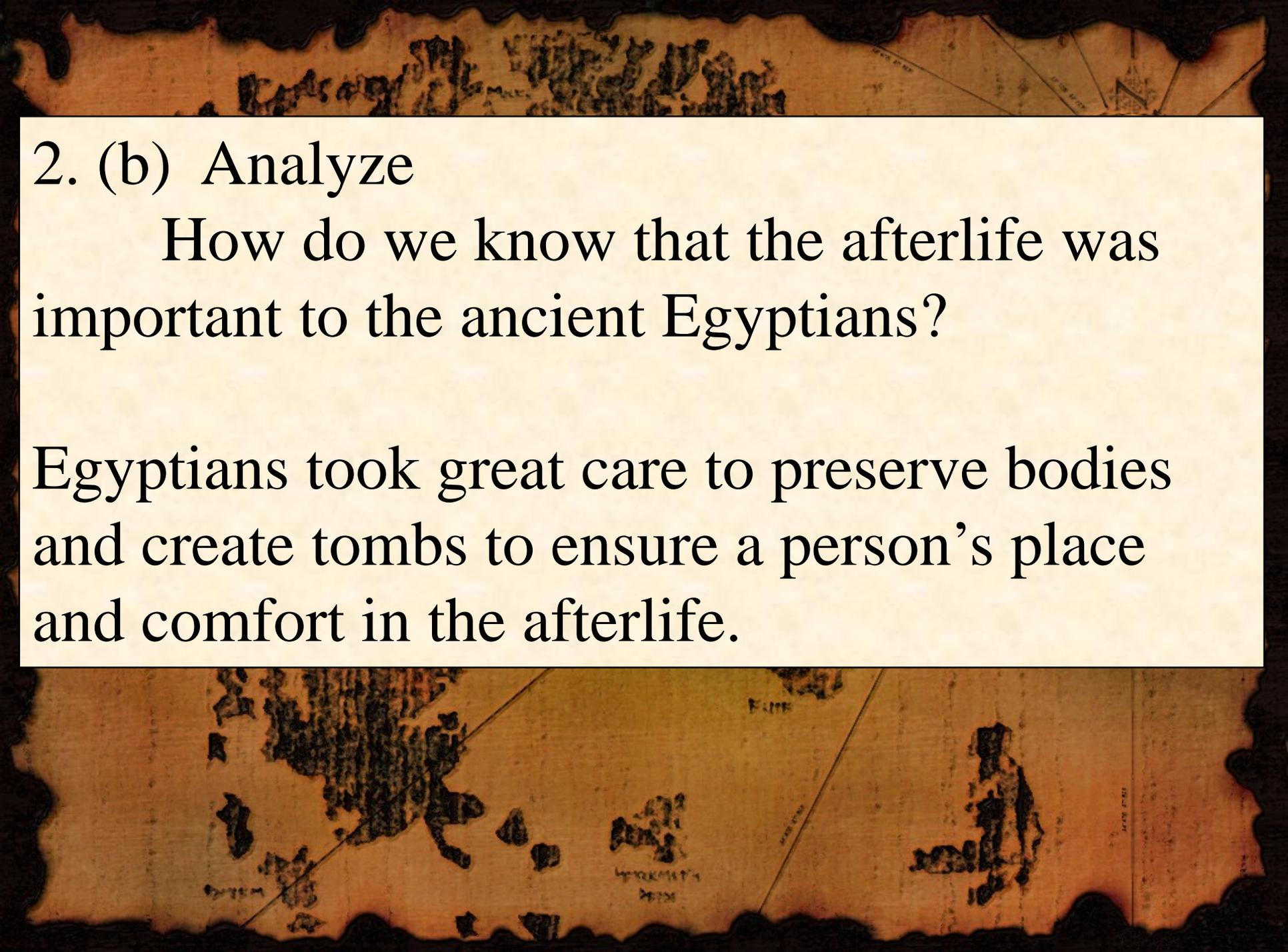
In what ways did the ancient Egyptians use religion to understand nature?

They believed that the gods controlled nature and therefore explained the workings of nature.

2. (a) Explain

Why did the Egyptians mummify their dead?

Egyptians believed that a person's spirit would exist in the afterlife and would return to the mummified body to receive food and offerings.



2. (b) Analyze

How do we know that the afterlife was important to the ancient Egyptians?

Egyptians took great care to preserve bodies and create tombs to ensure a person's place and comfort in the afterlife.

3. (a) Recall

Why were the pharaohs concerned about the condition of their tombs?

The pharaohs wanted their bodies and possessions to be safe from robbers. They may have also felt that the appearance of the tomb reflected their wealth and power.

3. (b) Sequence

Describe how the ancient Egyptians organized the building of the pyramids.

They carried stone to the building site from quarries near and far. Then they cut building blocks from the stone. Next, they used sleds, wooden rollers, and levers to push huge blocks up ramps to the level they were working on.