



# Families of Egypt

## Teacher's Guide

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## Rural Script

It's almost morning here in Grandma and Grandpa's village. Grandma says it's the same every morning. First the imam in the mosque calls us to pray, then the birds wake up, the dogs, and the donkeys. Then the people come making noise to tell us they're here to sell things.

It's 7 o'clock and Dad's waking me up for school. My name's Hesham and I'm 6 years old. I have a sister named Sara. She's 3. And we have a brand new baby brother named Mahmud.

We're staying here at Grandma's house so she can help take care of Mahmud so Mommy can rest until she feels stronger. Mom says we'll probably go home in about a month.

For breakfast I'm having tea, milk, a piece of cake and sweet bread that I dip in my tea.

It gets hot here, so Mom puts lotion on my face to keep my skin from drying out in the desert air.

Dad gives me money to buy a snack at school. Our house is in another town. When we're there I walk to school. But while we're staying here with Grandma I take a bus.

While I'm in school, Grandma's busy at home. Mom says Grandma's good at taking care of babies, because she had 10 babies of her own. Grandma gives Mahmud a bath every day. Then she puts baby powder on his skin. She puts a special kind of medicine in his eyes to protect them. Then it's time for him to nurse. That means Mom's feeding him milk from her breast. Then he takes a nap. He sleeps a lot.

Every day neighbors and friends come to see my new brother.

Today's market day. Grandma is going there to buy things that street sellers don't bring by her house. I like to watch people when they buy and sell things. The one who's selling asks for more money than they think they'll get. The person who's buying offers less than they think they'll have to pay. After they talk awhile they agree on a price somewhere in the middle. Grandma says a good bargain is when both people feel the price is fair.

This is the day of the week when women make sun bread. They mix flour, water, and yeast together to make a dough. Then they pat it into round flat loaves. I don't know why they cut it around the edge like that. I'll have to ask Grandma. She says when the loaf sits in the warm sun, the yeast makes little bubbles and that's what makes the bread rise.

The women heat the oven while they wait for the dough to rise. It takes about 2 hours to get the oven hot. They clean out the ashes from last week. Then they put in the loaves and close up the oven to let them bake. At the end of the day, the families have enough bread to last all week.

Dad says ovens are usually made from mud bricks. Mud bricks are often used to build houses, too. You don't have to buy anything. Just mix some water with dirt and straw. Make it into brick shapes, and let the bricks dry in the sun. When they're hard and dry you're ready to build your house.

I bet you're wondering what happens when it rains. Guess what. It almost never rains here. That's because this is a desert! The Sahara Desert! The only place we can grow things here is right along the Nile River. Farmers pump river water into ditches for their fields. That's called irrigation.

Dad says farmers were using irrigation in Egypt even before the pyramids were being built. He says that was more than 4000 years ago. I think that's even older than Grampa!

Tourists come to this area from all over the world. They want to see all the temples, tombs and monuments that those people built without the machines that we use today.

Lots of archaeologists work around here. They try to find and study things that were left behind from people that lived before us. Dad says this helps us understand those people better.

Dad works for an archaeologist. He supervises workers who are uncovering a very large, old tomb. They think it might be where the sons of King Ramses the second are buried.

When Dad gets home from work, he takes Uncle Mohammed, Sara and me on a picnic. I carry the sodas, Dad has the oranges, and Mohammed brings a piece of sugarcane. I'll tell you why later.

Dad's renting a boat for our picnic.

Dad's telling us how important the Nile is for fishing, tourism and transportation.

Mohammed is chewing on sugar cane. That's because it tastes like candy.

When we get back from our picnic I get to play my favorite video game.

Dad's buying felafel for supper. A felafel is a small cake made out of chickpeas. Sometimes Grandma makes them, but she says this is easier.

I usually have a half-hour of homework a night. My lessons are in Arabic. I write my answers in a workbook. When I finish, it's time for me to take a shower before prayers and supper.

People who follow the Islamic religion are called Muslims. Islam is based on the words of the prophet Mohammed that were written in a book called the Koran. Momsays most people in Egypt are Muslims

After prayers, it's time to eat. Tonight Grandma made beans, egg omelets, bread, tomatoes, salad, cheese, the falafel that Dad bought, and soup with bread in it.

Last night we had an aqiqa for Mohammed. Our family and friends came to help us celebrate his first week of life. Grandma's the one who knew what was supposed to happen at the aqiqa. We lit candles to show we're happy that Mohammed is healthy and strong. She told us to make a circle around Mohammed to show we're all united to help him and help each other

We stayed up late yesterday. So tonight we're really tired when it's time for us to go to bed. Dad often tells us stories before we go to sleep. Tonight he's telling us about a fisherman who tried to catch a fish that could read and write. We had a good laugh because the fish was smarter than the fisherman!

Good night.

## Urban Script

I live on the edge of Cairo, which is one of the biggest cities in the world. It's built along the banks of the Nile River. Mom says Cairo is a mixture of old and new.

Mom wakes me up at 7 because I have to be at school by 8. My name is Jasmine and I'm 7 years old. I live here with my brother Elhassan, and my Mom and Dad.

I usually don't eat breakfast, so Mom packs me a sandwich, juice, milk and water for me to take to school to eat later.

Elhassan is 3 years old, and when Mom and Dad are at work, he goes to a nursery school.

Dad's going to drop me off at school on his way to work. He has to drive to work because we live just outside of Cairo. If we lived in Cairo, he could take a subway or bus wherever he wanted to go.

Government schools in Egypt are free, but this is a private school, which means my parents have to pay for me to go here. All the classes are taught in English.

My first class is science. The teacher divided the class into two teams, and we're playing a game to see which team can answer the most questions

Next we have math. Here in Egypt, kids are required to go to school from age 6-12. After that some students leave school to help earn money for their families.

At 10 o'clock we have a break. Some kids buy things here. But I'm having the lunch that Mom fixed for me this morning. It's impolite to eat in front of other people without sharing, and we often trade food with each other.

In English class we practice spelling by playing crossword puzzles.

After English I have ballet class. I really like ballet, and I take lessons twice a week after school. I like French, too. My last class is swimming.

While I'm at school, Dad's at work. He's an engineer for a company that helps other companies produce oil. They use this kind of equipment to take care of oil wells once they find oil. Dad says his company wants him to work in Saudi Arabia for a few years, so our family will be moving there soon.

Mom's at work, too. She manages the tennis court at the country club near us. She also teaches tennis to kids after school. Tennis is an important part of our family's life. Mom's father was a famous tennis player and so was his father. I'm learning how to play, too, but right now I like ballet better.

The tennis courts here are made of clay and it takes a lot of people to take care of them. These boys work here instead of going to school, because their families need the money they earn. Mom has found people to pay for teachers so the boys can keep on learning after they've dropped out of school. That way maybe the boys can get better jobs when they leave here.

When Mom gets home, she does some laundry. Our machine washes and dries the clothes.

Now Mom's going grocery shopping. She and Elhassan taste cheese samples to see if they want to buy some. Mom also buys some ripe olives. She pays for the groceries in pounds, which is what Egyptian money is called.

When they get home, Mom and Nagwa make dinner. Nagwa lives with us and helps with the housework and cooking. She's from another African country called Sudan. Once a week she takes a bus home to visit her Mom and Dad.

Elhassan and I usually eat at about 5 o'clock, and Dad and Mom eat when he comes home at 7 o'clock. Tonight we're having beef, salad, and rice with pasta.

We usually watch TV while we eat. TV here is mostly in Arabic, which is the official language of Egypt.

Tonight we get to stay up later than usual because tomorrow is Friday, our holy day, and we don't have school.

Our family always spends Fridays together. Mom says it's a good day to think about how to be a good Muslim. We should love each other, respect our parents and elders, give to people who don't have as much as we do, pray, and of course, not do bad things like hurting people or lying.

On Fridays Muslim people go to the mosque.

Today's Saturday and I have my Arabic class. We speak Arabic at home, but to learn to read and write it, a friend and I study 2 hours a week with a private teacher. Arabic has its own alphabet. We read and write it from right to left.

After my lesson we go to a toy store to pick out a gift for my friend's birthday party. Dad's going to play golf while we go to the party.

We play all kinds of games at the party. Marwon makes a wish before he blows out the candles.

On Saturdays we always visit our grandparents. At 3 o'clock we have dinner with Mom's family. Mom says we have four generations here.....Great-Grandma, Grandma, Mom, and me. Today's Mom's birthday, so they made her a birthday cake.

We also go to see my grandparents who are my Dad's parents. My aunts and uncles always come, too, and Elhassan and I get to play with our cousins.

Grandpa was a fighter pilot in the Egyptian Air Force but he's retired now.

After we eat supper at about 9, we celebrate Mom's birthday again!

As I take a shower and get ready for bed, I think about my day full of birthday parties.

Good night!

# Glossary

**Archaeologist:** People who study other people from long ago and their world.

**Ballet:** A kind of performance art with dancing

**Engineer:** People who work with modern technology.

**Fighter Pilot:** Soldiers who fly planes that fight in wars

**Imam:** A religious leader in the Muslim religion

**Mosque:** A house of worship for Muslims

**Olives:** Small fruits of a tree that are edible, often used to make olive oil

**Pyramids:** Large structures built to house the bodies of ancient Egyptian kings

**Science:** knowledge that allows people to understand and predict how things work.

**Yeast:** Very small organisms that are fungi. A particular species of which is used in baking bread and whose actions cause the bread to expand and rise.

## **Discussion and Activities After Viewing**

- Ask each child to list some of the similarities and differences between their family and school and those in the video.
- Invite someone from Egypt to talk with the class about growing up in Egypt and to play Egyptian music or tell an Egyptian story.
- Ask the class what things in the video tell us that the climate in Egypt is like.
- Discuss what it is to live in a country with one of the longest histories in the world.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between the US and Egypt and how well people live.

## Questions

1. What language is Arabic?
2. Why is Arabic spoken in many countries of north Africa and the Middle East?
3. Did the Egyptians always speak Arabic?
4. Why do you think the Egyptians are proud of their history?
5. How old are the pyramids?

## Answers to Questions

1. What language is Arabic?

Arabic is descended from Semitic languages that predominated in the Middle East for thousands of years. Some words that come from Arabic include admiral, cotton, candy, orange and camel.

2. Why is Arabic spoken in many countries of North Africa and the Middle East?

Soldiers and merchants came out of the Arabian peninsula and conquered much of the Middle East and North Africa. They were Muslims and the language of the Muslim holy book is Arabic. As the people of the conquered lands became Muslim they also adopted the Arabic as their language.

3. Did the Egyptians always speak Arabic?

No, the ancient Egyptians spoke a different language. The language slowly changed. After the invasion of the Arabs, most people began to speak Arabic. But the Christian Coptic Egyptians still maintain a language that is the descendant of the original Egyptian.

4. Why do you think the Egyptians are proud of their history?

They can still see the many monuments built by their ancestors all over the land. They understand that their people were one of the first to have a written language and built cities.

5. How old are the pyramids?

The pyramids are over 4500 years old.

## Some Things We've Learned About Egypt

(Please circle the correct answer).

1. T F Arabic is the national language of Egypt.
2. T F Most people in Egypt live in the cities.
3. T F Egypt is on the continent of Africa.
4. T F Weather in most parts of Egypt is hot.
5. T F There are pyramids in Egypt.
6. T F Egypt has a long history.
7. T F Very few Egyptians use modern technology.
8. T F In Egypt "football" or soccer is very popular.
9. T F The official currency of Egypt is the Egyptian pound.
10. T F Egypt is a rich country.
11. T F Egypt is a very large country.
12. T F Egypt has some of the best transportation systems in the world.
13. T F Most people in Egypt are Muslim.
14. Draw a series of pictures telling Hesham or Jasmine's story. Try to include as much detail as you can remember from each part of the story.

## Websites

[www.touregypt.net](http://www.touregypt.net)

[www.memphis.edu/egypt/egypt.html](http://www.memphis.edu/egypt/egypt.html)

## Activities

Construct a model of the Great Pyramid

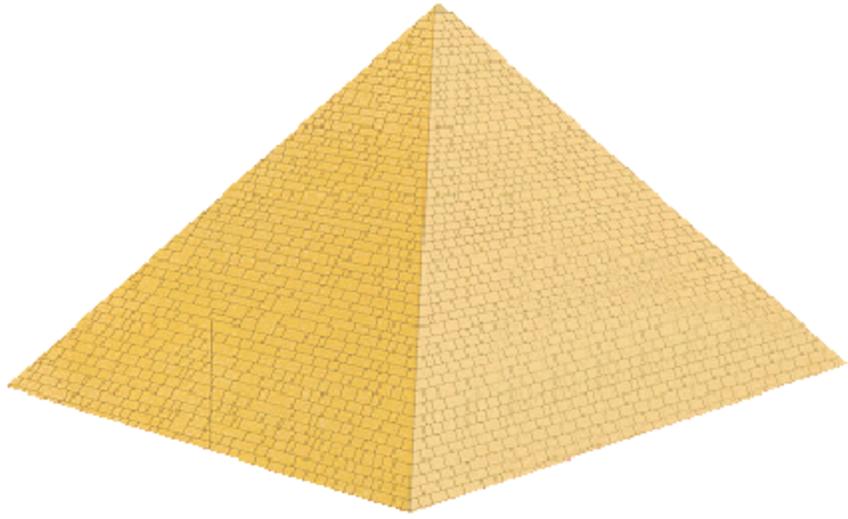
2 different methods

1. Use Cardboard cutouts.

Cut out 4 equal sized triangles. Place them side to side next to each other and tape the insides.

2. Use Papiermache

Ask the class to collect small rectangular boxes. Pile the boxes together to get a starting point for a large pyramid. Mix papier mache and have the entire class join in making it. Might be a little messy, work clothes and drop sheets recommended



## Recipes

Baklava, which is common in the west, uses honey in the syrup. More typical Egyptian Baklawa does not. Recipes for syrup variations are included here.

- 2 cups walnuts, finely chopped
- 1 cup almonds, finely chopped (optional – this is found in Greek baklava)
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups clarified, melted butter
- 2 Ts. cinnamon
- 1 Tb. Orange blossom water (*mazahar*)
- 1 package phyllo dough (1 lb. Or 454 gms.)
- Syrup (see below for variations)

Mix the walnuts (and almonds if using), sugar, ¼ cup of the butter, cinnamon and orange blossom water, then set aside.

Butter well a 13 x 9 inch baking pan, then set aside.

Taking one sheet of the phyllo dough and place it in the baking dish, then brush with melted butter. Repeat this process until ½ of the dough is used.

Then place the walnut mixture of the buttered layers and spread evenly.

Place one layer of dough on the nut layer and brush with melted butter, then continue this until the rest of the dough is used.

Heat the remaining butter, then pour it evenly over the dough. With a sharp knife, carefully cut the pastry into 2 inch squares or diamond shapes. Bake in a preheated oven of 400F for five minutes, then lower the heat to 300F and bake for 30-45 minutes or until the sides are a light shade of brown.

While the baklawa is baking, prepare the syrup and set aside.

- *Egyptian Sugar Syrup or Sharbat*
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons orange blossom water (optional)

Place the sugar and the water in a pot over a medium heat.

Stir constantly for 10 minutes or until the sugar is thoroughly dissolved.

Remove from the heat, then stir in the lemon juice. Return to the heat and bring it to a boil. Remove again and stir in the orange blossom water ( if using ), then allow the syrup to cool until the pastry is ready.

After you have made your syrup, it is important that your pastry is cooked through. You can either broil the top of the pastry briefly, to brown it, or you can cover it with foil if you find that the top is browning too quickly. Once the pastry is finished and lightly browned, spoon the syrup evenly over the hot baklava. Let the pastry cool for several hours before cutting again into serving portions.

## **Introduction**

Egypt is the oldest nation in the world, the largest Arab speaking country in the world. It is the home of the Suez Canal, the Nile Delta and the Aswan Dam. It is famous for the Pyramids, King Tutankhamun and the Sphinx.

## **The Land**

Egypt is approximately the size of Venezuela or the state of California, Nevada and Arizona together. It lies in the North African desert. Mountains occur in the southeast along the Red Sea Coast, in the southwest by the border with Libya and in the southern Sinai peninsula. The land along the Mediterranean is very arid except for the mouth of the Nile. There are some oases in the south central of the country which lie atop a large underground aquifer. The Nile River flows for 750 miles through this desert and brings the water that makes vegetation possible. Where the Nile meets in the Mediterranean in the north of Egypt, a vast delta has formed from the soil borne downstream by the Nile. The Nile breaks into many channels as it flow through the delta.

## **The Climate**

The desert climate of Egypt is characterized by cool and mild winters and hot summers. Egypt has a very sunny climate, only in the winter is there a low amount of rain. The average temperature in Cairo during June is 91 degrees Fahrenheit ( 41 degrees Celsius)

## **Plant and Animal Life**

Egypt has a variety of desert fauna and flora, including tamarisk, acacia and palms. Some of the animals include the mountain goat, the gazelle, the miniature desert fox, jackals and the striped Egyptian mongoose. Along the Nile, there are a profusion of vegetation including reeds, lotus, bamboo and many perennials. Crocodiles still live in the far south, as do more than 200 species of migrating birds and 150 resident species. The Nile also contains over 150 species of fish, of which the Nile perch, and the gray mullet are the better known.

## **People**

The people of Egypt come mainly from a mixture of the indigenous pre-Islamic population and later Arab peoples. In more recent times there have been an influx of many peoples, Greeks, Jews and Romans, Europeans from the Crusades, Seljuk and Ottoman Turks and Europeans in the past hundred years. The majority of people are Muslim, there exists a small Christian community mainly Copts. Almost everybody speak Arabic, and except for use in the religious service of the Copts, the pre-Islamic spoken language of Egypt is not used.

Up to 30% of the people make a living from farming. Many Egyptians work in the surrounding Arab states of North Africa, the Gulf of Arabia and remit money home. There is high unemployment in Egypt and economy is still far from developed.

## **History**

Man has lived in Egypt for tens of thousands of years. The Nile plays a major role as it is the only source of water in a region that became more like a desert as time went on. Archeological evidence show that about 7500 years ago, Neolithic people in Egypt left evidence of permanent settlements. About 5000 years ago, the lands were united into a single kingdom. And the Egyptians discovered writing.

The Egyptian dynasties were ruled by pharaohs who were believed to be god-kings. For three thousand years, a series of thirty dynasties ruled Egypt. The country was administered by people who were literate and understood mathematics. The priests conducted ceremonies from temples dedicated to the many Egyptian gods.

The first pyramid was built in the 27th century BC; over the next 500 years the monuments grew increasingly grander. The pharaohs extended their rule south to Sudan and east to present day Lebanon. They fought with the other powers of the ancient world. They built massive monuments and temples, but the empire began to crumble and it was in disarray when the Persians conquered it in 343 BC. Greek conqueror Alexander the Great arrived in 332 BC and established a new capital in Alexandria.

Under the Greeks, Alexandria became a great city. The Greeks ruled Egypt as pharaohs for 300 years to be followed by the Romans for another 300 years. The Roman Empire fell apart in the 3rd and 4th centuries, and Nubians, North Africans and Persians invaded. Despite this, Egypt was relatively stable until AD 640 when the Arabs arrived. The Arabs brought Islam to Egypt and established Cairo as the seat of an unstable government. Egypt prospered and Cairo became a thriving metropolis.

Western European Christians seized much of the weakening Fatimid Empire in the Crusades of the 11th century, but in 1187 the Syrian-based Seljuks sent an army into Egypt and Salah ad-Din (Saladin) fortified Cairo and expelled the Crusaders from Jerusalem. Salah ad-Din enlisted Mamluks (Turkish mercenaries), but they ended up overthrowing his dynasty and ruled for two and a half centuries before Egypt fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1517.

Since most of the Mamluks were of Turkish descent, the Turkish Ottoman sultans, based in Constantinople, largely left them in place as rulers of Egypt and restricted themselves to collecting taxes. This continued until Napoleon invaded in 1798, only to be ousted by the British in 1801, who were in turn expelled by Mohammed Ali, an officer in the Ottoman army. Said Pasha, Ali's grandson, opened the Suez Canal in 1869.

Crippling national debt enabled the British and the French to control the government in 1879, and the British threw out the Ottoman Turks. During WWI Egypt aligned itself with the Allies. After the war, King Fuad I was elected head of the constitutional monarchy and for the next 30 years the British, the monarchists and nationalists contended for power. The Arab League was founded after WWII by seven Arab countries, including Egypt, but the war had left Egypt in a shambles, and its defeat in Israel's 1948 War of Independence saw the chaos escalate.

In 1952 a group of dissident military officers, led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, orchestrated a bloodless coup. The British and French were reluctant to relinquish control, so they invaded. The USA and the Soviet Union joined the United Nations and insisted that the invaders should leave. Nasser became a hero, particularly among Arabs. Egypt tilted increasingly toward the Soviet Union, and received much Soviet military and economic aid.

Nasser attempted unsuccessfully to unite Egypt, Syria, Yemen and later Iraq in the late 1950s, in a United Arab Republic. Following months of heightening tension between Egypt and Israel, the Jewish state attacked on 5 June 1967, starting the Six Day War. Israel destroyed the Egyptian air force, captured Sinai and closed the Suez Canal.

Anwar Sadat, Nasser's vice president, took over from Nasser when he died in 1970, and set about improving relations with the West. On 6 October 1973, the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Egypt launched a surprise attack on the Israeli occupiers of Sinai. Its army successfully crossed into the Sinai, and a favorable ceasefire brokered by the United States and the Soviet Union allowed them to remain in the Sinai. In 1977 Sadat shocked the world as he made a trip to Jerusalem and began making peace with Israel, leading to the 1979 Camp David Agreement. Israel agreed to withdraw from Sinai, and Egypt officially recognized Israel. The United States now became Egypt's benefactor, beginning a large aid program. Many in the Arab world felt Sadat had betrayed them, and he was assassinated on 6 October 1981.

Husni Mubarak, Sadat's vice president, was sworn in and has been the country's leader ever since. Mubarak has sought to improve relations with Israel and other Arab states. Mubarak has had to contend with a weak economy. This has given rise of fundamentalism. The fundamentalists are against the West, Israel, and believe in a strict reading of the Koran. Some of the extremist elements have taken to terrorizing tourists and attempting to overthrow the government. Mubarak has suffered numerous attempts on his life. Mubarak sent 35,000 troops to fight against Iraq in the Gulf War, and although many in the Arab world saw the war as western imperialists fighting Arabs, Egypt's commitment was necessary to improve its relations with the West.

# Appendix

## Flag of Egypt



# EGYPT FACTBOOK

## Introduction

### Background:

Nominally independent from the UK in 1922, Egypt acquired full sovereignty following World War II. The completion of the Aswan High Dam in 1971 and the resultant Lake Nasser have altered the time-honored place of the Nile River in the agriculture and ecology of Egypt. A rapidly growing population (the largest in the Arab world), limited arable land, and dependence on the Nile all continue to overtax resources and stress society. The government has struggled to ready the economy for the new millennium through economic reform and massive investment in communications and physical infrastructure.

### Location:

Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip

### Geographic coordinates:

27 00 N, 30 00 E

### Map references: Africa

Area: total: 1,001,450 sq km

### Area -comparative:

Slightly more than three times the size of New Mexico

Land boundaries: 2,665 km

Border countries: Gaza Strip 11 km, Israel 266 km, Libya 1,115 km, Sudan 1,273 km

Coastline: 2,450 km

Continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

Exclusive economic zone: 200 NM

Climate: desert; hot, dry summers with moderate winters

Terrain: vast desert plateau interrupted by Nile valley and delta

Elevation extremes:

Lowest point: Qattara Depression -133 m

Highest point: Mount Catherine 2,629 m

Natural resources:

petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc

Land use:

arable land: 3%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 97% (2007 est.)

Irrigated land: 34,220 sq km (2004 est.)

Natural hazards:

periodic droughts; frequent earthquakes, flash floods, landslides; hot, driving windstorm called khamsin occurs in spring; dust storms, sandstorms

Environment - current issues:

agricultural land being lost to urbanization and windblown sands; increasing soil salination below Aswan High Dam; desertification; oil pollution threatening coral reefs, beaches, and marine habitats; other water pollution from agricultural pesticides, raw sewage, and industrial effluents; very limited natural fresh water resources away from the Nile which is the only perennial water source; rapid growth in population overstraining the Nile and natural resources

Geography - note:

controls Sinai Peninsula, only land bridge between Africa and remainder of Eastern Hemisphere; controls Suez Canal, shortest sea link between Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea; size, and juxtaposition to Israel, establish its

major role in Middle Eastern geopolitics; dependence on upstream neighbors; dominance of Nile basin issues; prone to influxes of refugees

## People

Population:

79,712,345 (July 2009 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 31.4%

15-64 years: 63.8%

65 years and over: 4.8% (2009 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.03% (2009 est.)

total population: 1.02 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 27.4 deaths/1,000 live births (2009 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: total population: 72.2 years

Total fertility rate: 3.05 children born/woman (2009 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Egyptian(s)

adjective: Egyptian

Ethnic groups:

Eastern Hamitic stock (Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers) 99%, Greek, Nubian, Armenian, other European (primarily Italian and French) 1%

Religions: Muslim (mostly Sunni) 94%, Coptic Christian and other 6%

Languages: Arabic (official), English and French widely understood by educated classes

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 71.4%

male: 83%

female: 59% (2008 est.)

## **Government**

Country name:

conventional long form: Arab Republic of Egypt

conventional short form: Egypt

local short form: Misr

former: United Arab Republic (with Syria)

local long form: Jumhuriyat Misr al-Arabiyah

Government type: republic

Capital: Cairo

Administrative divisions:

26 governorates (muhafazat, singular - muhafazah); Ad Daqahliyah, Al Bahr al Ahmar, Al Buhayrah, Al Fayyum, Al Gharbiyah, Al Iskandariyah, Al Isma'iliyah, Al Jizah, Al Minufiyah, Al Minya, Al Qahirah, Al Qalyubiyah, Al Wadi al Jadid, Ash Sharqiyah, As Suways, Aswan, Asyut, Bani Suwayf, Bur Sa'id, Dumyat, Janub Sina', Kafr ash Shaykh, Matruh, Qina, Shamal Sina', Suhaj

Independence:

28 February 1922 (from UK)

National holiday: Revolution Day, 23 July (1952)

Constitution: 11 September 1971

Legal system:

based on English common law, Islamic law, and Napoleonic codes; judicial review by Supreme Court and Council of State (oversees validity of administrative decisions); accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Executive branch: chief of state: President Mohammed Hosni MUBARAK (since 14 October 1981)

head of government: Prime Minister Ahmed Mohamed NAZIF (since 9 July 2004)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president

elections: president nominated by the People's Assembly for a six-year term, the nomination must then be validated by a national, popular referendum; national referendum last held 7 September 2005

election results: national referendum validated President MUBARAK's nomination by the People's Assembly to a fourth term

Legislative branch:

bicameral system consists of the People's Assembly or Majlis al-Sha'b (454 seats; 444 elected by popular vote, 10 appointed by the president; members serve five-year terms) and the Advisory Council or Majlis al-Shura - which functions only in a consultative role (264 seats; 176 elected by popular vote, 88 appointed by the president; members serve NA-year terms)

Judicial branch:

Supreme Constitutional Court

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chancery: 3521 International Court NW, Washington, DC 20008

consulate(s) general: Chicago, Houston, New York, and San Francisco

FAX: [1] (202) 244-4319

telephone: [1] (202) 895-5440

Diplomatic representation from the US:

embassy: 5 Latin America St., Garden City, Cairo

mailing address: Unit 64900, APO AE 09839-4900

telephone: [20] (2) 797-3300

FAX: [20] (2) 797-3200

Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black with the national emblem (a shield superimposed on a golden eagle facing the hoist side above a scroll bearing the name of the country in Arabic) centered in the white band; similar to the flag of Yemen, which has a plain white band; also similar to the flag of Syria, which has two green stars, and to the flag of Iraq, which has three green stars (plus an Arabic inscription) in a horizontal line centered in the whiteband

## **Economy**

Economy - overview:

In 2005, Prime Minister Ahmed NAZIF's government reduced personal and corporate tax rates, reduced energy subsidies, and privatized several enterprises. The stock market boomed, and GDP grew about 5% per year in 2005-06, and topped 7% in 2007-08 before slowing to 4.5% in 2009. Despite these achievements, the government has failed to raise living standards for the average Egyptian, and has had to continue providing subsidies for basic necessities. The subsidies have contributed to a sizeable budget deficit - roughly 6.3% of GDP in 2009 - and represent a significant drain on the economy. Foreign direct investment has increased significantly in the past two years, but the NAZIF government will need to continue its aggressive pursuit of reforms in order to sustain the spike in investment and growth and begin to improve economic conditions for the broader population. Egypt's export sectors - particularly natural gas - have bright prospects.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$470 billion (2009 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 4.5 % (2009 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$6,000 (2009 est.)

GDP composition : agriculture: 14% ; industry: 38% ; services: 48%

Inflation rate(consumer prices): 10% (2009)

Labor force: 26.1 million (2009 est.)

Labor force -by occupation: agriculture 32%, industry 17%, services 51%

Unemployment rate: 9.7% (2009 est.)

Industries:

textiles, food processing, tourism, chemicals, hydrocarbons, construction, cement, metals

Industrial production growth rate: 3.9% (2009 est.)

Agriculture -products:

cotton, rice, corn, wheat, beans, fruits, vegetables; cattle, water buffalo, sheep, goats

Exports: \$22.9 billion (f.o.b., 2009 est.)

Exports -commodities:

crude oil and petroleum products, cotton, textiles, metal products, chemicals

Exports -partners:

EU 30% (Italy 9.4%, Spain 6%, Germany 4.5%), US 7%, India 6%, Syria , Saudi Arabia , Other Middle East, Japan (2009)

Imports: \$43.9 billion (f.o.b., 2009 est.)

Imports -commodities:

machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, wood products, fuels

Imports -partners:

EU 26% (Germany 6.8%, Italy 7.3%, France 5%), US 10%, China 10%, Asian countries 12%, , Middle East 11% (2009)

Currency: Egyptian pound (EGP)

Exchange rates:

Egyptian pounds per US dollar - market rate – 5.6 (2009), 5.67(2007), 5.78 (2005), 4.5000 (January 2002)

Fiscal year: 1 July - 30 June