

Name: _____

Education in Ancient Egypt

In Ancient Egypt, only boys went to school. That doesn't seem fair! That's not how it is in America. Why could only boys go to school? What education did the girls receive? Let's see what we can discover.

Boys needed an education to be useful in Ancient Egyptian culture. When they were young, boys learned skills from their fathers. They learned to fish, hunt, and work in the family's fields. As a boy grew, his father would decide what type of education he would receive. For some of the poorer boys, all he could learn was his father's trade. However, some fathers wanted their sons to have a better life. But, this was very costly. School was not funded by the government. If a boy was to learn something other than his father's trade, there was a fee. If he could afford the fee, a father had two main options: an apprenticeship or school.

Artisans and craftsmen offered apprenticeships to boys. A father would pay a fee to have his son taught special skills. During an apprenticeship, a boy worked alongside the tradesman to learn from him. Apprenticeships lasted for many years. When a boy finished his training, he might be a weaver, goldsmith, butcher, or musician.

In schools, boys were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. They were able to participate in sports and learn hunting skills. Students were expected to be obedient in school. Discipline was rigid. Instructors used physical punishment when a boy would disobey the rules. If a boy worked hard in school, he could become a scribe or civil servant. These positions were highly valued.

Talented boys could also move up in society. A boy with artistic or musical talent could gain the favor of a priest, nobleman, or member the royal family. These talents were admired in Ancient Egypt. A boy with talent could achieve a better life.

While boys were off learning, girls stayed home with their mothers. They learned many different skills from their mothers. At an early age, they learned by imitating their mothers at work. As girls grew older, they began to help with small tasks in the home. Gradually, they would help with more and more complex jobs. Girls had to learn to work in the family's fields to grow wheat. They needed to know how to care for the livestock. They learned to bake bread, prepare meals, and spin flax into linen cloth. These skills were important to help them throughout their lives.

All Ancient Egyptian children were taught to be well-behaved. At first, it was the mother's job to teach the young children to be obedient and respectful. When children were four or five years of age, their dads took over. Fathers used *The Books of Instruction (or Wisdom)* to train their children. These books had proverb-like sayings



Name: _____

for children to learn. These sayings helped children learn good sense, charity, and rules for life. It was very important for parents to have children who were accepted in society.

Ancient Egyptian boys and girls received the education they needed for their society. It may not seem fair that the girls didn't go to school, but it worked for the Egyptians. They had a strong civilization for thousands of years.

Education in Ancient Egypt

Questions

- _____ 1. In Ancient Egypt, all children were required to go to school.
A. true
B. false
- _____ 2. Ancient Egyptian girls learned the skills they needed for life from their mothers.
A. false
B. true
3. Name two occupations that boys could learn in Ancient Egypt.

4. In addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, name one other thing boys did in school.

5. Name two things that girls learned to do in Ancient Egypt.

6. At what age did the fathers take over the children's education?

Name: _____

_____ 7. Who paid for a boy's education?

- A. the boy
- B. the boy's father
- C. the government
- D. the pharaoh

8. What was the textbook parents used to train their children to behave?
