

# Design your own Pyramid of Society

## What was the Pyramid of Society?

The Ancient Egyptians certainly knew their place. They were born into a level of society and it was very rare that they could move up to the next level. This is how it worked with just some of the people from top to bottom:

### **PHARAOH**

Ruler of Egypt and considered to be half human and half god. He, or she owned everything in Egypt including all the people!

### **ROYAL FAMILY AND VIZIER**

The family of Pharaoh. Including the Vizier who was the Pharaoh's chief adviser, a bit like a Prime Minister and would often be a member of the royal family.

### **GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

High Priests, senior administrators and chief of the military.

### **SCRIBES**

Not all Ancient Egyptians could read and write. Scribes were educated and part of their job was to record the stocks of foods, court proceedings, wills and other legal documents, tax records, and even magic spells. They worked at different levels including government, local officials and administrators.

### **MERCHANTS**

Merchants were really traders and Ancient Egypt had an amazing trading business. They would trade gold, papyrus, linen, and grain for cedar wood, ebony, copper, iron, ivory and lapis lazuli (a lovely blue gem stone.)

### **CRAFTSMEN**

The wonderful Ancient Egyptian objects you can see at RAMM were made by skilled craftsmen who worked with pottery, wood and metal including gold, silver and copper.

### **PEASANTS and SLAVES**

These were the lowest members of society and included manual labourers (builders) and farmers. Surprisingly, slaves were not considered much lower than free peasants.

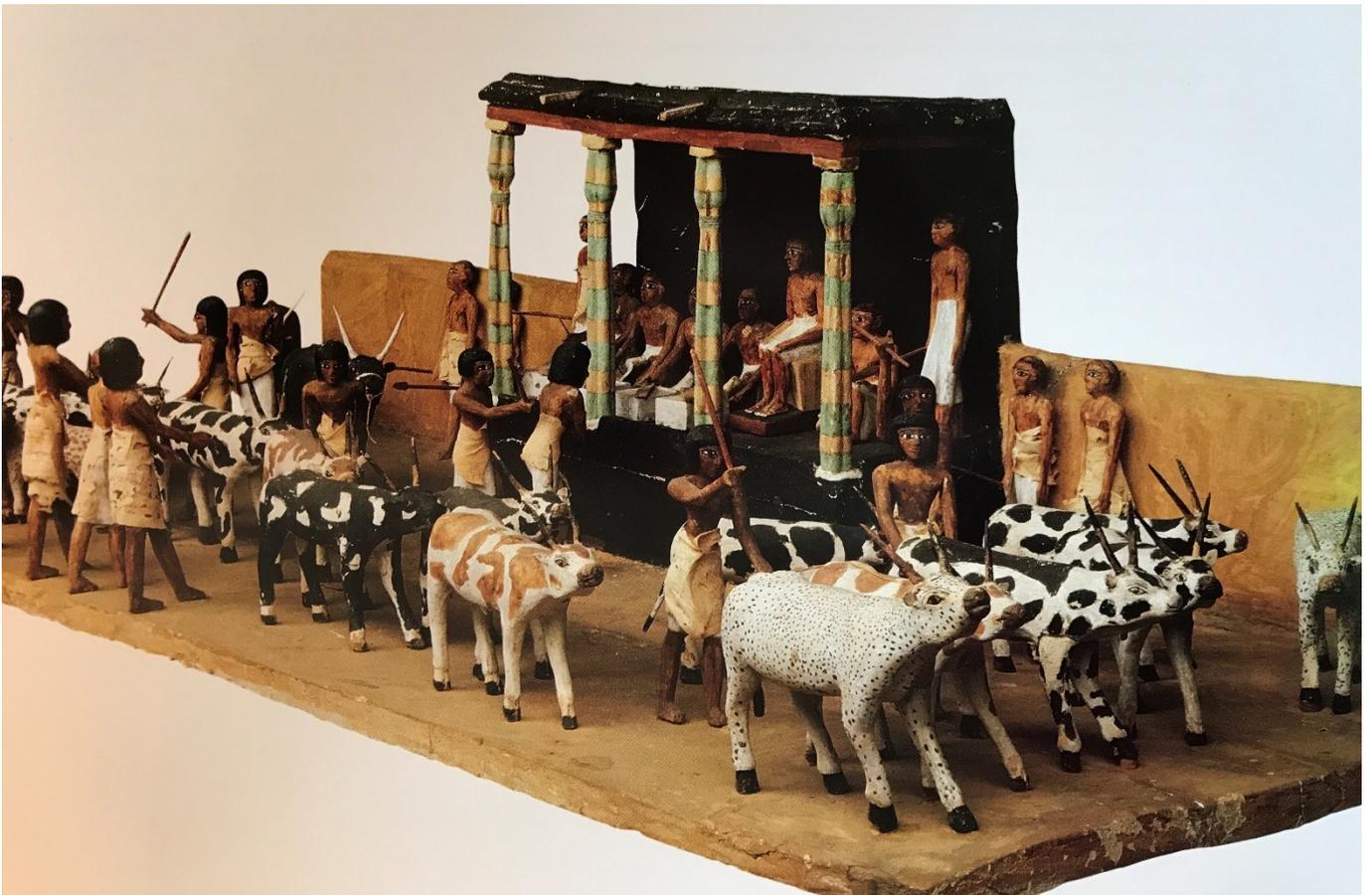
The reason we call it a pyramid of society is because there were many more peasants and slaves than those considered to be above them in society and the number of people were less as you move up to only one at the top – the pharaoh.

## What did they all look like?

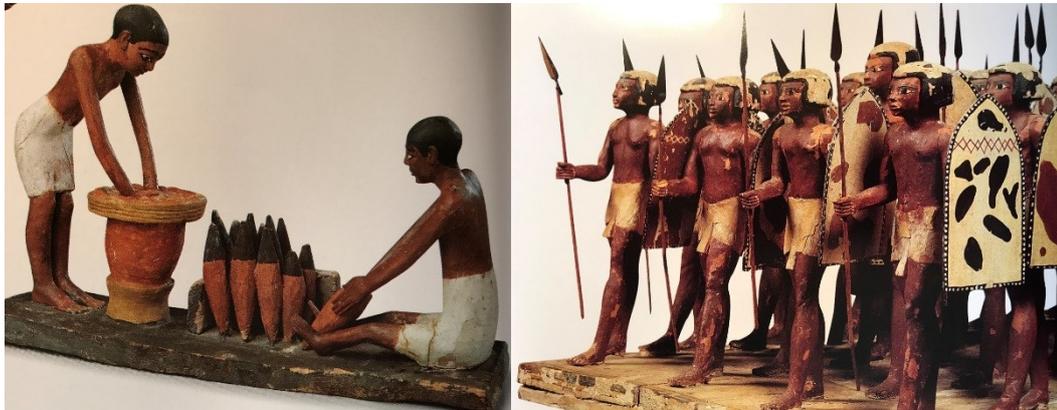
Have a good look at the following images. Some are paintings from tombs and were often found on the walls or on sheets of papyrus. Others are objects found in tombs.

- Who do you think these people are and what are they doing?
- What do you think their job was?
- Which level of society do you think they were part of?
- Where on the Pyramid of Society do you think they would fit?

Discuss with a friend or member of you family. Do they agree?



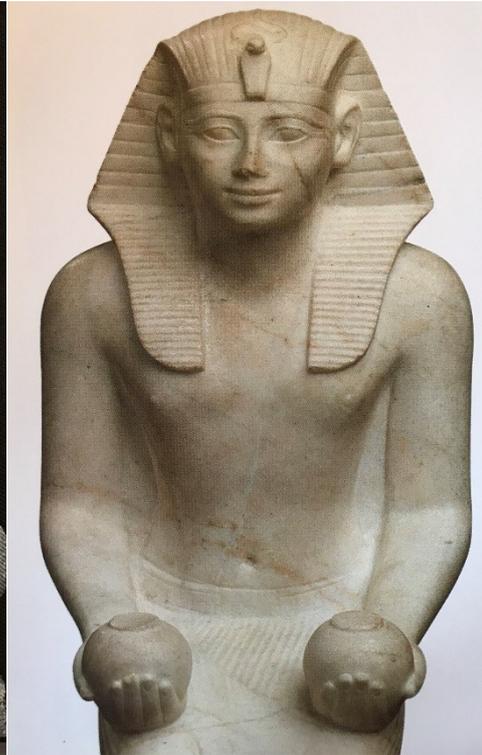
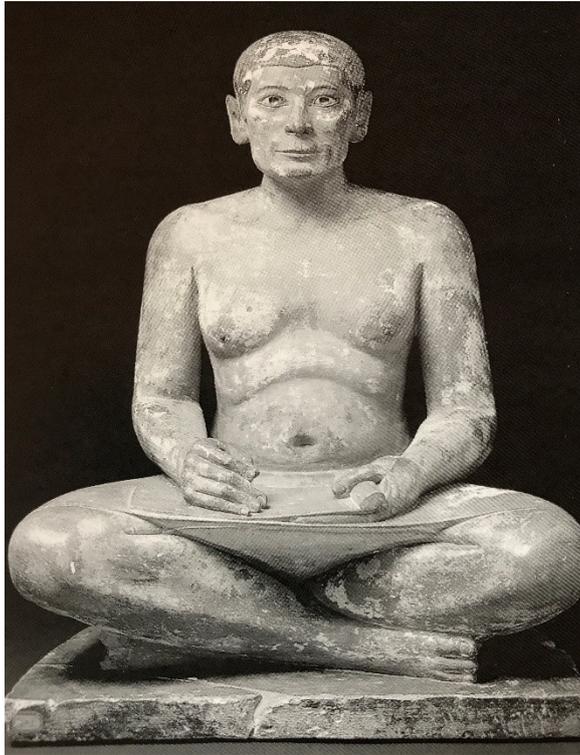
1 *The Cairo Museum Masterpieces of Egyptian Art 1999*



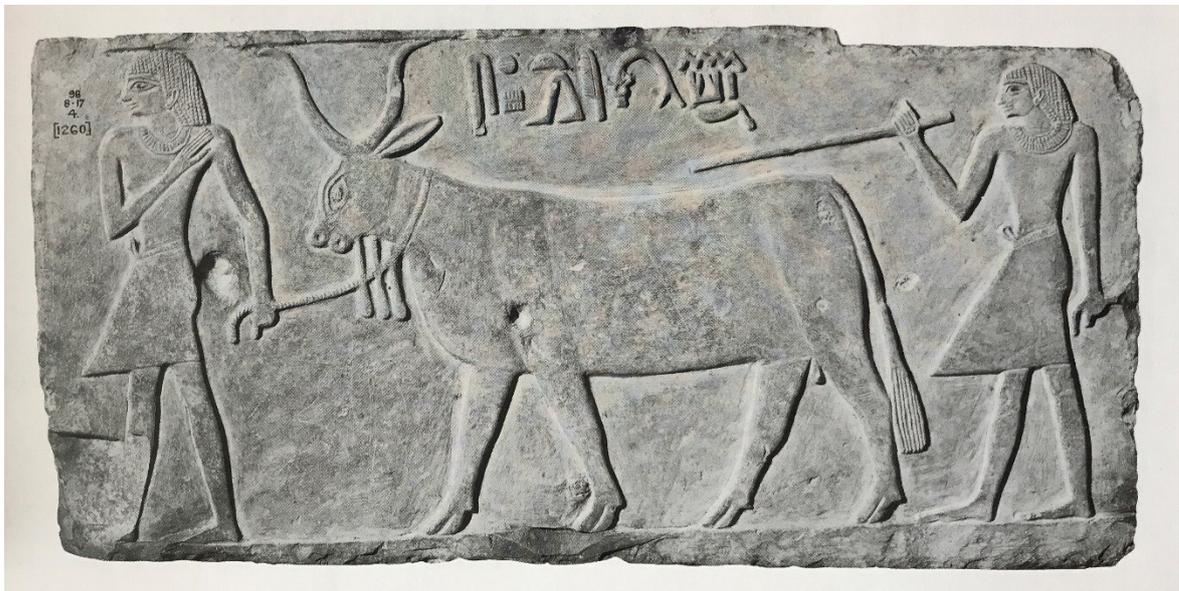
2 The Cairo Museum Masterpieces of Egyptian Art 1999



3 The Art of Ancient Egypt 2000



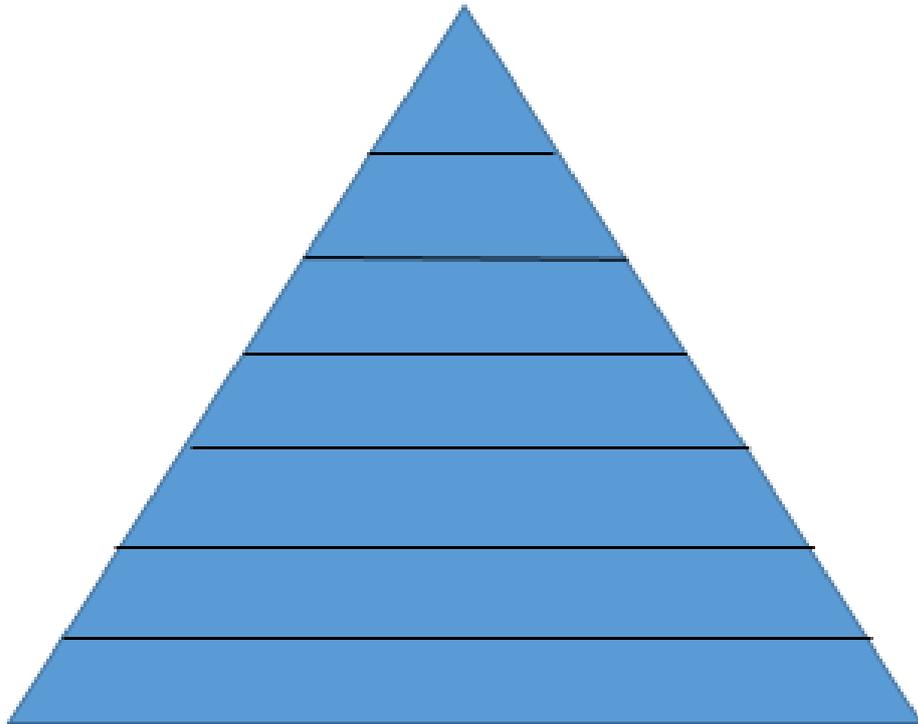
4 *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* 1999    5 *The Cairo Museum Masterpieces of Egyptian Art* 1999



6 *The Art of Ancient Egypt* 2000

# Design your own Pyramid of Society

- ▶ Draw a large triangle on a piece of paper and divide it into 7 sections.



- ▶ Now add in people's jobs or roles at each section of the pyramid.
- ▶ You could design a symbol (emoji) to represent the different roles or jobs that people did, or you could write who they are and colour in each section.
- ▶ Look at the tools and objects in the pictures above to give you some ideas for what symbol could represent each of the jobs.
- ▶ Which of the jobs or roles would you like to do?
- ▶ Can you draw yourself doing that role?