

## Tutankha-whom?

Tutankhamun is one of the most famous Ancient Egyptian pharaohs. His gold burial mask is one of the most iconic images from the period.

### A Boy King

Born in Akhetaten around 1346 BC, Tutankhamun became pharaoh at the age of 9. He is often referred to as the boy king of Ancient Egypt. He reigned during the 18th Dynasty of the Egyptian period. This was when the Empire was at its height.

### Life and Death

Ancient Egypt was a dangerous place to be king. Tutankhamun died after only 9 years on the throne. At first, scientists thought he might have died from a head injury. New evidence suggests that he suffered from malaria and had a broken leg. Both of these combined could have weakened him enough to cause his death. Ultimately, we are unlikely to ever know the exact cause.

The cause of his death is unclear and the circumstances of his birth are even less certain. He was born with the name Toutankhaton. This means 'living image of Aton'. Aton was one of the Egyptian sun gods. When he grew up, Tutankhamun wanted to be known as the 'image of Amon', and so changed his name when he took the throne. Amon was the king of the gods, and so this name was much more powerful.

### Family Life

In 2010, German scientists carried out DNA tests on several mummies who they believed were linked to Tutankhamun. Unfortunately, the evidence was inconclusive. There is evidence that Tutankhamun was the son of the reigning pharaoh Amenhotep IV. The name of his mother is unknown, but scientists think it is a mummy known only as Young Lady. If these were his parents, then DNA evidence shows that they were related as brother and sister. Marrying members of your own family was considered a good way to keep the royal blood pure during this time.

Tutankhamun married his half-sister, Princess Ankhesenamon. They had two



daughters although neither survived and were eventually buried with their father in the Valley of the Kings. Little is know about his wife's fate after his death.

## Afterlife

Because Tutankhamun died suddenly, his funeral and tomb were built hastily. Despite this, he was still buried with all of the other pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings. His tomb was sealed and remained undisturbed for thousands of years. In 1922, a British archaeologist named Howard Carter discovered it. The entrance to the tomb was nearly 4 metres below the entrance to the tomb of Ramses VI. Ramses's tomb had been built at a later date on top of Tutankhamun's.

By the time the tomb was discovered, the expedition had cost nearly £1million. The whole thing was funded by a wealthy Englishman named Lord Carnarvon. When it was eventually found, Howard Carter had to wait three weeks for Lord Carnarvon to travel from England to witness the opening of the tomb.



## VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. Which word tells you that something wasn't explained with a definite answer?
2. What does the word "iconic" tell you about his burial mask?
3. Which phrase tells you that we know little about Tutankhamun's birth?
4. Find a word or phrase that is closest in meaning to "the future events of somebody's life"
5. How do you know that nobody else had found the tomb before Howard Carter?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

- I** Why was Tutankhamun referred to as the "boy king"?
- R** What material was used to make the burial mask?
- I** Why do you think Tutankhamun's mother's mummy is simply known as the Young Lady?
- S** What were the key events, in order, in the life of Tutankhamun?
- E** Why has the author chosen the title for this text?