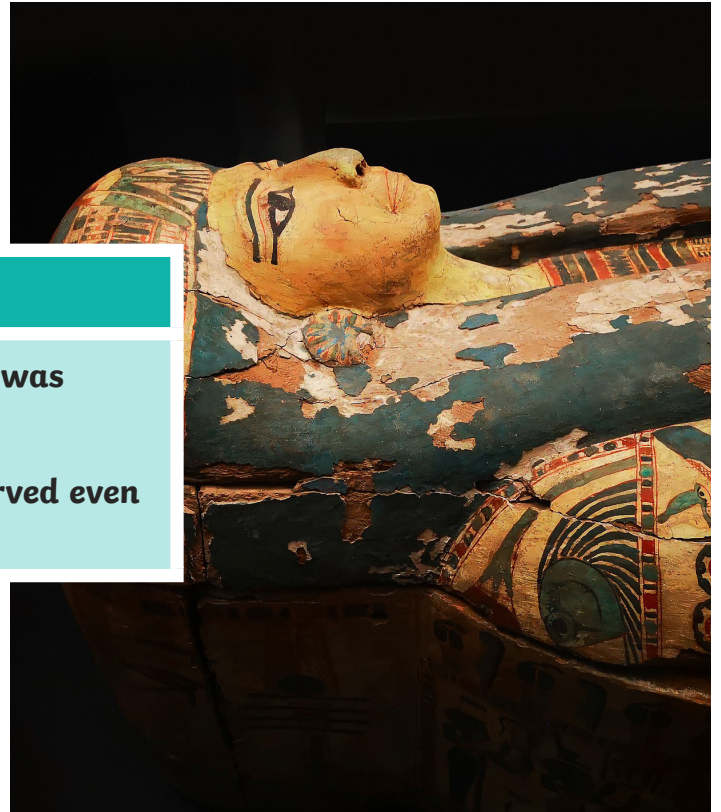




## Ancient Egyptian Coffins Unearthed in Luxor



### What was mummification?

- The ancient Egyptians believed that the soul was trapped in the body.
- Mummification meant a body could be preserved even in the hot temperatures of Egypt.

Archaeologists have discovered 30 perfectly preserved mummies in Egypt. They were found in colourful coffins in Luxor, on the western side of the river Nile.

They were decorated with hieroglyphics, which was ancient Egyptian writing. The coffins belonged to men, women and children from a period lasting between 945 BC and 715 BC.

Zahi Hawass, an expert on ancient Egypt, told BBC News that the coffins will “enrich our knowledge”.

Archaeologists say the people were related to priests. Priests looked after the temples, where people prayed to the gods.

Preserving the body after death was really important to ancient Egyptians.

Experts believe a member of this family hid the coffins because he or she feared that they would be looted.

During Ancient Egyptian times, priceless goods were buried in the tombs of wealthy people. Tomb robbers would then come and steal the goods because they were very valuable.

So what was mummification and why was it so important to the ancient Egyptians? They believed that the body needed to be in good condition for the afterlife.

Mummification meant a body would not decay as a result of the warm weather in Egypt. Powerful people, such as the pharaohs (the rulers of Egypt), were determined to make it to the

Photo: An ancient Egyptian coffin.

afterlife, where they would live with the gods. They made sure they were mummified and even built huge tombs and pyramids to make sure no one could interfere with their bodies.

The coffins will be displayed at the Grand Egyptian Museum. It’s a new museum which will open next year, close to the Great Pyramid. It will showcase world-famous ancient Egyptian objects, such as the treasures of Tutankhamun.

He was a pharaoh whose tomb was discovered in 1922 by Howard Carter, a British archaeologist.

### Glossary

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>archaeologists</b> | People who study history through looking at physical remains. |
| <b>preseved</b>       | Kept in a good condition.                                     |
| <b>looted</b>         | To steal valuable items.                                      |
| <b>interfere</b>      | Involved in something without being asked.                    |

# Ancient Egyptian Coffins Unearthed in Luxor

## Questions

1. Find and copy three facts given about the coffins.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. 'The coffins will "enrich our knowledge".'

Tick the word that is closest in meaning to 'enrich'.

- confuse
- improve
- prevent
- unravel

3. What do you think tomb robbers did with the goods they stole?

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4. Why do you think the ancient Egyptians were so determined to enter the afterlife?

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5. Do you think many people will visit the Grand Egyptian Museum? Explain your answer.

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6. Summarise the news story in 20 words or fewer.

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# Answers

1. Find and copy three facts given about the coffins.

**Accept any three from the following: they were found in Luxor; they were decorated in hieroglyphics; 30 coffins were found; the mummies inside were perfectly preserved; the coffins were of men, women and children; they belonged to a family of priests.**

2. 'The coffins will "enrich our knowledge".'

Tick the word that is closest in meaning to 'enrich'.

- confuse  
 **improve**  
 prevent  
 unravel

3. What do you think tomb robbers did with the goods they stole?

**Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the story, e.g. I think they would have sold the goods as they were valuable and they could have made money from them.**

4. Why do you think the ancient Egyptians were so determined to enter the afterlife?

**Accept any reasonable answer that refers to the story, e.g. I think they were so determined to reach the afterlife because they would be able to live with the gods who would protect them.**

5. Do you think many people will visit the Grand Egyptian Museum? Explain your answer.

**Accept any answer which refers to the story, e.g. I think many people will visit the Grand Egyptian Museum because it will contain the treasures of Tutankhamun which are very famous.**

6. Summarise the news story in 20 words or fewer.

**Accept any reasonable summary that is 20 words or fewer, e.g. 30 perfectly preserved coffins have been discovered near Luxor in Egypt. An expert says these coffins will enrich our knowledge.**