

# Tutankhamun



Tutankhamun is possibly one of ancient Egypt's best known rulers. However, there are many things that are not known for certain about his life. Read on to find out some fascinating facts about the ruler commonly known as 'The Boy King'.

## Was His Name Really Tutankhamun?

Surprisingly, Tutankhamun was originally known as Tutankhaten. This is thought to have meant 'the living image of Aten'. The Aten was the disc of the sun in ancient Egyptian mythology. This meant that the name Tutankhaten had great religious meaning.

However, Tutankhaten did not think that the Aten should be worshipped as the only god of ancient Egypt. Therefore, Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun. This showed everybody that he did not support the idea of just worshipping the Aten as a single god.

## Who Were Tutankhamun's Parents?

The exact names of Tutankhamun's parents remain uncertain. However, **Egyptologists** have studied a mummy that was found in tomb KV55 in the **Valley of the Kings** and it was shown to be very similar to Tutankhamun. **Artefacts** also found in the same tomb make some people believe that this was the burial site of Akhenaten. Therefore, many people think that Akhenaten was the father of Tutankhamun.

In the past, many people believed that Nefertiti was Tutankhamun's mother. However, this is now thought by some to be untrue. Inside tomb KV55, along with the mummy of Akhenaten, Egyptologists discovered artefacts which suggested that he actually had many wives – one of whom was known as Kiya.

A female mummy that was found in a different tomb (KV35) has recently been proved to be Tutankhamun's mother through DNA testing. This mummy is informally referred to as 'The Younger Lady', but her exact identity remains unknown. Many people wonder whether Tutankhamun's mother was Queen Nefertiti, Kiya or someone else altogether.



### When Did Tutankhamun Become King?

Shortly before the death of Akhenaten, a mysterious person known as Smenkhkare ruled with him. Not much is known about Smenkhkare – not even whether they were male or female. Some people guess that Smenkhkare could have been Tutankhamun or another of Akhenaten's children. Other people think that Smenkhkare was Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti and that she helped him to rule.



After Akhenaten's death, a female **pharaoh** named Neferneferuaten ruled over ancient Egypt for two years. Some people think that this was also Nefertiti. It is thought by some that Nefertiti did this because Tutankhamun was too young to become pharaoh.

However, in around 1332 BC, Tutankhamun became pharaoh at eight or nine years of age. It is thought that, at first, he became the ruler under his birth name of Tutankhaten because a royal staff was found with this name carved into it.

### How Long Did Tutankhamun Rule For?

Many people believe that Tutankhamun ruled for ten years until his death in around 1323 BC. At this time, Tutankhamun was thought to have been around 19 years old.

After his death, Tutankhamun was buried in a lavish tomb within the Valley of the Kings. This tomb remained sealed and undisturbed for more than 3,000 years until it was discovered by archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922.



### Glossary

**artefacts:** Objects made by human beings, typically ones of cultural or historical interest.

**Egyptologists:** People who study the history of ancient Egypt.

**pharaoh:** A ruler in ancient Egypt.

**Valley of the Kings:** A place in Egypt where pharaohs were buried.

# Questions

1. What is the name Tutankhaten thought to have meant? Tick one.
  - ☐ in the image of the living Aten
  - ☐ the only god known as Aten
  - ☐ the living image of Aten
  - ☐ the image of the ancient Aten
2. What is the name of the pharaoh that many people think is Tutankhamun's father? Tick one.
  - ☐ Aten
  - ☐ Akhenaten
  - ☐ Tutankhaten
  - ☐ Nefertiti
3. According to the first paragraph of the text, by what name is Tutankhamun commonly known?

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4. Find and copy the name that Tutankhamun was originally known by.

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5. **... a royal staff was found with this name carved into it.**  
From the context of this sentence, what do you think a 'royal staff' is?

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6. Explain why it is not possible to say for sure who was the mother of Tutankhamun.

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7. Why might some people assume that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti?

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8. Summarise what you have learnt about Tutankhamun's reign in 20 words or fewer.

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# Answers

1. What is the name Tutankhaten thought to have meant? Tick one.

- ☐ in the image of the living Aten
- ☐ the only god known as Aten
- ☒ **the living image of Aten**
- ☐ the image of the ancient Aten

2. What is the name of the pharaoh that many people think is Tutankhamun's father? Tick one.

- ☐ Aten
- ☒ **Akhenaten**
- ☐ Tutankhaten
- ☐ Nefertiti

3. According to the first paragraph of the text, by what name is Tutankhamun commonly known?

**Tutankhamun is the ruler commonly known as 'The Boy King'.**

4. Find and copy the name that Tutankhamun was originally known by.

**Tutankhaten**

5. ... **a royal staff was found with this name carved into it.**

From the context of this sentence, what do you think a 'royal staff' is?

**Accept logical responses, such as: I think a royal staff could be a special item made of wood that belongs to pharaohs.**

6. Explain why it is not possible to say for sure who was the mother of Tutankhamun.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: It is not possible to say for sure who Tutankhamun's mother was because Akhenaten had many wives and the true identity of the mummy found inside tomb KV35 cannot be proven for definite.**

7. Why might some people assume that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Some people might assume that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti because she was the wife of the previous pharaoh and the two names are very similar.**

8. Summarise what you have learnt about Tutankhamun's reign in 20 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Tutankhamun's reign lasted for around ten years and began when he was either eight or nine years old.**



# Tutankhamun

Tutankhamun, who is thought to have reigned between 1332 and 1323 BC, is possibly one of ancient Egypt's best known rulers. Yet, there are many things that are not known for certain about Tutankhamun's life. Read on to discover some fascinating facts about the ruler commonly known as 'The Boy King'.



## Was His Name Really Tutankhamun?

Surprisingly, Tutankhamun (sometimes also given the nickname 'King Tut') was originally known as Tutankhaten. This is thought to have meant 'the living image of Aten'. The Aten was the disc of the sun in ancient Egyptian mythology and one part of the god Ra. Therefore, the meaning of the name Tutankhaten had great religious importance.

However, Tutankhaten did not think that the Aten should be worshipped as the only god of ancient Egypt. Therefore, after the death of the pharaoh Akhenaten in around 1334 BC, Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun. This showed everybody that he rejected the idea of just worshipping the Aten as a single god.

## Who Were Tutankhamun's Parents?

Due to damage to ancient stone artefacts, the exact parentage of Tutankhamun remains uncertain.

However, Egyptologists and scientists have examined the remains of a mummy found in tomb KV55 of the Valley of the Kings and it was shown to be very similar to the mummy already proven to have been Tutankhamun. Artefacts found in tomb 55 led some people to believe that this was the burial site of Akhenaten. Therefore, based on this evidence, many people think that Akhenaten was the father of Tutankhamun.



Historically, many people believed that Akhenaten's wife, Nefertiti, was Tutankhamun's mother. However, this is now believed by some to be untrue. Inside tomb KV55, alongside the mummy of Akhenaten, Egyptologists discovered artefacts which suggested that Akhenaten had multiple wives – one of whom was known as Kiya.

A female mummy that was found in a different tomb (KV35) has



recently been proved to be Tutankhamun's mother through DNA testing. This mummy is informally referred to as 'The Younger Lady', but her exact identity remains unknown. It is therefore widely debated whether the mummy proven to be Tutankhamun's mother is that of Queen Nefertiti, of Kiya or of someone else entirely.

### When Did Tutankhamun Become King?

Shortly before the death of Akhenaten, a mysterious figure known as Smenkhkare ruled jointly with him. Little is known for certain about Smenkhkare; it is even uncertain whether they were male or female. Some people guess that they may have been Tutankhamun or another of Akhenaten's children while others think that it was Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti who helped him to rule.

After Akhenaten's death, a female pharaoh named Neferneferuaten ruled over ancient Egypt for two years. Some people think that this, too, was Nefertiti. It is thought by some that Nefertiti did this because Tutankhamun was too young to become pharaoh.

Nevertheless, in around 1332 BC, Tutankhamun became pharaoh at eight or nine years of age. It is thought that he initially became the ruler under his birthname of Tutankhaten as a royal staff was found inscribed with this name.

### How Long Did Tutankhamun Reign For?

It is widely believed that Tutankhamun reigned for approximately ten years until his untimely death in around 1323 BC. At this time, Tutankhamun was thought to have been around 19 years old.

After his death, Tutankhamun was buried in a lavish, elaborate tomb within the Valley of the Kings. This tomb remained sealed and undisturbed for more than 3,000 years until it was discovered by archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922.





# Questions

1. Draw **three** lines to match each person to the fact that is thought to be true. Some facts could be matched to more than one person.

Kiya

Akhenaten

Nefertiti

They could have been Tutankhamun's mother.

They are thought to have been Tutankhamun's father.

2. In around which year did Tutankhamun become pharaoh? Tick one.

- ☐ 1323 BC  
☐ 1332 BC  
☐ 1334 BC  
☐ AD 1922

3. Find and copy **two** other names that Tutankhamun has been known as since his birth.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the name Tutankhamun thought to have meant?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Look at the section entitled **When Did Tutankhamun Become King?**

Find and copy one word or phrase used to describe Smenkhkare.

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6. Explain why Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun.

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7. Summarise the debate surrounding the identity of Tutankhamun's mother.

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8. Why do some people believe that Nefertiti acted as pharaoh under the name Neferneferuaten?

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9. Why might some people think that Tutankhamun's reign was unusual?

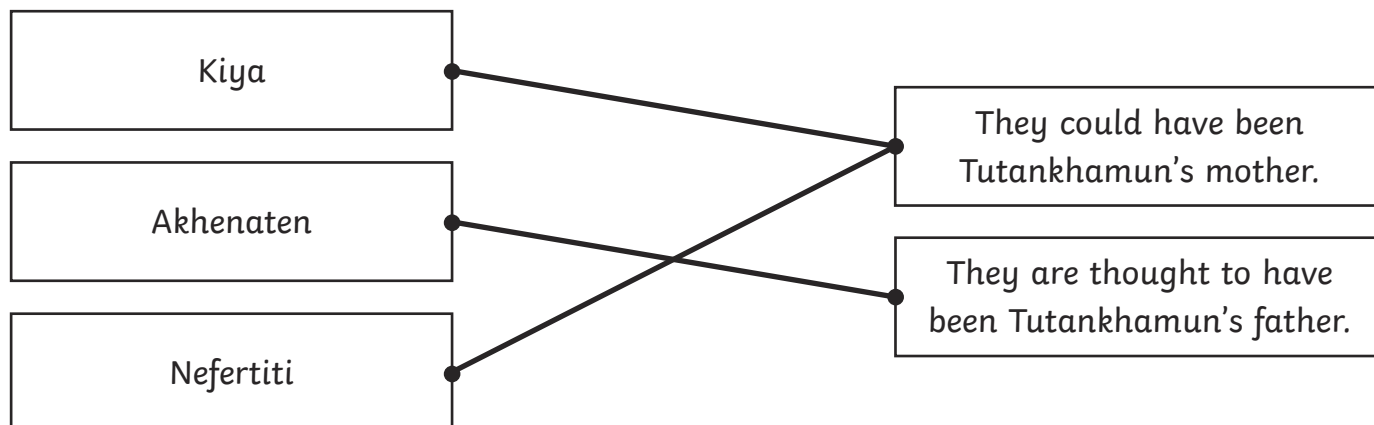
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# Answers

1. Draw **three** lines to match each person to the fact that is thought to be true. Some facts could be matched to more than one person.



2. In around which year did Tutankhamun become pharaoh? Tick one.

- ☐ 1323 BC  
☒ **1332 BC**  
☐ 1334 BC  
☐ AD 1922

3. Find and copy **two** other names that Tutankhamun has been known as since his birth.

**Accept any two of the following: The Boy King; King Tut; Tutankhaten.**

4. What is the name Tutankhaten thought to have meant?

**The name Tutankhaten is thought to have meant 'the living image of Aten'.**

5. Look at the section entitled **When Did Tutankhamun Become King?**

Find and copy one word or phrase used to describe Smenkhkare.

**Accept either 'mysterious' or 'a mysterious figure'.**

6. Explain why Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun to show everybody that he rejected the idea of just worshipping the Aten as a single god.**

7. Summarise the debate surrounding the identity of Tutankhamun's mother.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The identity of Tutankhamun's mother is debated because nobody knows the true identity of the mummy found in tomb KV35 – especially since artefacts found in tomb KV55 reveal that Akhenaten may have had more than one wife.**

8. Why do some people believe that Nefertiti acted as pharaoh under the name Neferneferuaten?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Some people believe that Nefertiti acted as pharaoh under the name Neferneferuaten because Tutankhamun was too young to become pharaoh and she wanted to give him time to grow up after the death of his father, Akhenaten.**

9. Why might some people think that Tutankhamun's reign was unusual?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Some people might think that Tutankhamun's reign was unusual because he became pharaoh at just eight or nine years of age and he died at around 19 years old. This is unusual compared to modern-day rulers and may have also been unusual at the time.**

# Tutankhamun

Tutankhamun, the ancient Egyptian pharaoh who is thought to have reigned between 1332 and 1323 BC, is arguably one of ancient Egypt's best known rulers. Despite this, due to the passage of time since his reign and the complexity of ancient Egyptian history, many areas of Tutankhamun's life are widely disputed. Read on to discover some fascinating facts about the ruler commonly known as 'The Boy King'.

## His Name

Surprisingly, Tutankhamun – often given the shortened nickname 'King Tut' – was originally known as Tutankhaten, which is thought to have meant 'the living image of Aten'. The Aten was the worshipped disc of the sun in ancient Egyptian mythology and one aspect of the god Ra. Thus, the meaning of the name Tutankhaten had great religious significance.

However, Tutankhaten did not think that the Aten should be worshipped as the sole deity of ancient Egypt. Therefore, after the death of the pharaoh Akhenaten in around 1334 BC, Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun upon ascending the throne. This showed everybody that he rejected the idea of just worshipping the Aten as a single god and that he wanted to return the country to worshipping Amun and other ancient Egyptian deities as well.

## His Parents

Due to damage to the ancient stone artefacts found in Akhetaten (the capital city during the reign of Akhenaten), the exact parentage of Tutankhamun remains uncertain.

However, Egyptologists and scientists have analysed the remains of a mummy found in tomb KV55 of the Valley of the Kings – a popular royal burial site – and discovered that this mummy was shown to share very similar physical characteristics with the mummy of Tutankhamun. Artefacts also found in tomb KV55 led some scholars to believe that this was the burial site of Akhenaten.



Therefore, based on both sets of evidence, many people have reached the logical conclusion that Akhenaten was the father of Tutankhamun.

Historically, many people have believed that Akhenaten's wife, the famous pharaoh Nefertiti, was Tutankhamun's mother. However, this is now believed by some to have been a misconception. Inside tomb KV55, alongside the mummy of



Akhenaten, Egyptologists discovered artefacts which suggested that Akhenaten had many wives – one of whom was known as Kiya.

A mummy discovered in a different archaeological site (tomb KV35) has recently been proved to be Tutankhamun's mother after thorough study and DNA testing. This mummy is informally referred to as 'The Younger Lady', but her exact identity remains unknown. It is widely debated whether this mummy proven to be Tutankhamun's mother is that of Queen Nefertiti, of Kiya or of someone else entirely.



### Becoming Pharaoh

Shortly before the death of Akhenaten, a mysterious figure known as Smenkhkare ruled jointly with him – a situation known as coregency. Little is known for certain about Smenkhkare; it is even uncertain whether they were male or female. Some people speculate that they may have been Tutankhamun or another of Akhenaten's children while others hypothesise that it was Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti who helped him to rule as his health declined.

After Akhenaten's death, a female pharaoh named Neferneferuaten ruled over ancient Egypt for two years. Some people speculate that this, too, was Nefertiti. It is thought by some that Nefertiti did this because Tutankhamun (Akhenaten's heir) was too young to assume the throne.

Nevertheless, in what is thought to have been around 1332 BC, Tutankhamun became pharaoh at eight or nine years of age. It is thought that he initially became the ruler under his birthname of Tutankhaten as regal artefacts, such as a royal staff, were found inscribed with this name.

### His Reign

It is widely believed that Tutankhamun reigned for approximately ten years until his untimely and unexpected death in around 1323 BC. At this time, Tutankhamun was thought to have been around 19 years old. After his death, Tutankhamun was embalmed and buried in an elaborate tomb within the Valley of the Kings. This tomb remained sealed and undisturbed for more than 3,000 years until it was discovered by archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922.

# Questions

1. Look at the section entitled **His Parents**.

Which word from this section means 'examined methodically'? Tick one.

- ☐ characteristics
- ☐ analysed
- ☐ suggested
- ☐ logical

2. In which tomb was the mummy thought to be Akhenaten found? Tick one.

- ☐ KV35
- ☐ KV55
- ☐ 1336
- ☐ 19

3. Find and copy **two** nicknames that Tutankhamun is still commonly given.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. ... **due to the passage of time since his reign...**

How else could the author have phrased this?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why might the author have chosen to start the **His Name** section with the word 'surprisingly'?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. State what Tutankhamun was originally called and explain its religious significance at the time.

\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Summarise the significance of Tutankhamun's decision to change his name.

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8. Discuss **two** reasons why the exact identity of Tutankhamun's mother is uncertain.

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9. 'It would be logical to conclude that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti.' Argue in support of this statement, providing reasons for your answer.

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10. Explore two reasons why Tutankhamun's reign was unusual.

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# Answers

1. Look at the section entitled **His Parents**.

Which word from this section means 'examined methodically'? Tick one.

- ☐ characteristics
- ☒ **analysed**
- ☐ suggested
- ☐ logical

2. In which tomb was the mummy thought to be Akhenaten found? Tick one.

- ☐ KV35
- ☒ **KV55**
- ☐ 1336
- ☐ 19

3. Find and copy **two** nicknames that Tutankhamun is still commonly given.

- **The Boy King**
- **King Tut**

4. ... **due to the passage of time since his reign...**

How else could the author have phrased this?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: ... because of how long it has been since he was pharaoh...**

5. Why might the author have chosen to start the **His Name** section with the word 'surprisingly'?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The author might have chosen to start this section with the word 'surprisingly' because it is not common for children to change their forename.**

6. State what Tutankhamun was originally called and explain its religious significance at the time.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Tutankhamun was originally called Tutankhaten. This was religiously significant because the Aten was a worshipped god of ancient Egypt and the name Tutankhaten was thought to have meant 'the living image of Aten.'**

7. Summarise the significance of Tutankhamun's decision to change his name.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Tutankhamun's decision to change his name was significant because it showed everybody that he rejected the idea of just worshipping the Aten as a single god and that he wanted to return the country to worshipping Amun and other ancient Egyptian deities as well.**

8. Discuss **two** reasons why the exact identity of Tutankhamun's mother is uncertain.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The exact identity of Tutankhamun's mother is uncertain because artefacts suggest that Akhenaten – Tutankhamun's supposed father – had multiple wives and no exact records can be read due to damage to ancient stone artefacts in Akhetaton.**

9. 'It would be logical to conclude that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti.' Argue in support of this statement, providing reasons for your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: It would be logical to conclude that Neferneferuaten was Nefertiti because of both the similarity of the two names and the fact that Nefertiti was the wife of the previous pharaoh and the potential mother of the subsequent one.**

10. Explore two reasons why Tutankhamun's reign was unusual.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Tutankhamun's reign was unusual because it began when he was either eight or nine years old. It was also unusual because it only lasted ten years until he was around 19 years of age. Modern-day monarchs tend to reign for much longer than ten years and from a much older age.**