

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.



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 Tutankhaten 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.

6. Explain why Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun.

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

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

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