



# Unlocking the secrets of a very famous pharaoh

The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb is one of the most famous finds of all time.

On the morning of 4 November 1922, Howard Carter and his team were searching for the tomb of Tutankhamun. After almost eight years of carefully scouring the Valley of the Kings, Carter and his team were ready to give up... until someone chanced upon an ancient stone step. This clue led Carter to make one of the most amazing archaeological discoveries of the century – Tutankhamun's tomb.

Inside the tomb, Carter and his team found several chambers that were crammed with thousands of amazing artefacts dating back more than 3,000 years. Astonishingly, one held the sarcophagus (a coffin) of the boy king himself.

The discovery of King Tut's tomb was described as "the archaeological triumph of the 20th century" and sparked a craze that would inspire books and films for many years to come.

## Who was Howard Carter?



Born in 1874 in London, Howard Carter first travelled to Egypt when he was 17. Carter was a keen artist and recorded the hieroglyphics (ancient Egyptian writing) on the tombs. In 1907 he met a wealthy aristocrat, Lord Carnarvon, who funded his biggest adventure yet: the search for Tutankhamun's tomb.



A digital impression of King Tut.

## The life of the boy king

Tutankhamun lived between 1,343 and 1,323 BC – that's around 3,500 years ago. He was nine years old when he became Pharaoh and ruled for about 10 years before he died. Many experts believe that Tutankhamun may have died of an injury or infection. After his death, his body was mummified and stored in a special coffin.



## WORD OF THE WEEK

Egyptology is the study of ancient Egypt's history including the literature, language, religion and objects that people used.

Carter examines the sarcophagus.

## What is mummification?

The afterlife was very important to the Egyptians. They preserved their dead by a process known as mummification. This involved removing a person's organs along with all the moisture from the body. The body was then wrapped in long strips of linen before being put in a coffin called a sarcophagus. They did this because they believed it would help prepare the body and spirit for the afterlife. The ancient Egyptians built more than 100 pyramids where the mummified remains of their rulers were kept in chambers.



## King Tut's curse

"Death shall come on swift wings to him who disturbs the peace of the king" were the words said to be engraved on King Tut's tomb. Ever since Carter's discovery, stories have circulated that those who opened the tomb were cursed. Although curses aren't real, some people who helped find the tomb did come to untimely ends. Lord Carnarvon died of a disease caused by a mosquito bite in March 1923, just a few months after the tomb was opened – although he suffered from poor health anyway. By 1929, 11 people connected to the tomb were said to have died early.

## Three treasures from Tutankhamun's tomb

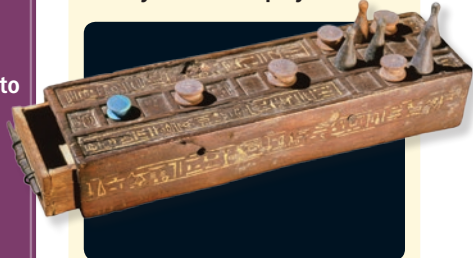
### The statue of Anubis

The statue of the god Anubis is made of wood, plaster and gold leaf. Anubis was the god of the underworld and was thought to protect graves. He is often shown with the head of a jackal.



### A board game

The board game, senet, is around 5,000 years old. It looks a bit like chess, but the rules have been lost to time so no-one knows exactly how it was played.



### The royal chariot

King Tutankhamun's chariot was dismantled and stacked inside his tomb. The chariot is partly made of gold and would have been pulled by horses. It has now been reconstructed and stands in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.



## A timeline of the discovery

### 1914

After studying an ancient cup with King Tut's name on it, which was found in 1905, Carter believed he would find the young pharaoh's tomb in the Valley of the Kings. The work was delayed by the First World War but Carter resumed it after the war ended in 1918.



Lord Carnarvon.

This casket was found in the tomb.

### 4 November 1922

It was a boy working as a water fetcher who spotted the step that would eventually lead to King Tut. It took a day and a half to remove the sand and find the stone doorway of the tomb.



Carter and Carnarvon in the tomb.

### 26 November 1922

Carter waited for Lord Carnarvon to arrive at the site before opening the tomb. Carter was the first to look inside and when he did, Carnarvon asked, "Can you see anything?" Carter replied, "Yes, wonderful things". It was the first time in more than 3,000 years that anyone had seen inside the ancient chamber.



A statue of the god Anubis.

### 16 February 1923

Within the tomb there were separate chambers and in one of these chambers Carter found the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun. The inner layer of the coffin was made of pure gold and covered in beautiful patterns and precious jewels. King Tut and his sarcophagus still lie in the tomb in a special box to protect them from any damage.



Carter at work on the coffin.

### 1932

It took 10 years for the team to excavate and catalogue the 5,398 artefacts identified by Carter in the chambers.

