**Tutankhamen**

King Tutankhamen (or Tutankhamun) ruled Egypt as pharaoh for 10 years until his death at age 19, around 1324 B.C. Although his rule was notable for reversing the tumultuous religious reforms of his father, Pharaoh Akhenaten, Tutankhamen’s legacy was largely negated by his successors. He was barely known to the modern world until 1922, when British archaeologist Howard Carter chiseled through a doorway and entered the boy pharaoh’s tomb, which had remained sealed for more than 3,200 years. The tomb’s vast hoard of artifacts and treasure, intended to accompany the king into the afterlife, revealed an incredible amount about royal life in ancient Egypt, and quickly made King Tut the world’s most famous pharaoh.

**King Tut: Royal Lineage**

Genetic testing has verified that King Tut was the grandson of the great pharaoh Amenhotep II, and almost certainly the son of Akhenaten, a controversial figure in the history of the 18th dynasty of Egypt’s New Kingdom (c.1550-1295 B.C.). Akhenaten upended a centuries-old religious system to favor worship of a single deity, the sun god Aten, and moved Egypt’s religious capital from Thebes to Amarna. After Akhenaten’s death, two intervening pharaohs briefly reigned before the 9-year-old prince, then called Tutankhaten, took the throne.

**Did You Know?**

Carter’s patron, Lord Carnarvon, died four months after first entering the tomb, leading journalists to popularize a “Curse of the Pharaohs,” claiming that hieroglyphs on the tomb walls promised swift death to those who disturbed King Tut. More than a dozen deaths have been attributed to the curse, but studies have shown that those who entered the tomb on average lived just as long as their peers who didn’t enter.

Early in his reign Tutankhamen reversed Akhenaten’s reforms, reviving worship of the god Amun, restoring Thebes as a religious center and changing the end of his name to reflect royal allegiance to the creator god Amun. He also worked in concert with his powerful advisers Horemheb and Ay—both future pharaohs—to restore Egypt’s stature in the region.

**King Tut: Illnesses and Death**

King Tut was tall but physically frail, with a crippling bone disease in his clubbed left foot. He is the only pharaoh known to have been depicted seated while engaged in physical activities like archery. Traditional inbreeding in the Egyptian royal family also likely contributed to the king’s poor health and early death. DNA tests published in 2010 revealed that Tutankhamen’s parents were brother and sister and that his wife, Ankhesenamun, was also his half-sister. Their only two daughters were stillborn.

Because Tutankhamen’s remains revealed a hole in the back of the skull, some historians had concluded that the young king was assassinated, but recent tests suggest that the hole was made during mummification. CT scans in 1995 showed that the king had an infected broken left leg, while DNA from his mummy revealed evidence of multiple malaria infections, all of which may have contributed to his early death.

**King Tut: Mummy and Tomb**

After he died, King Tut was mummified according to Egyptian religious tradition, which held that royal bodies should be preserved and provisioned for the afterlife. Embalmers removed his organs and wrapped him in resin-soaked bandages, a 24-pound solid gold portrait mask was placed over his head and shoulders and he was laid in a series of nested containers—three golden coffins, a granite sarcophagus and four gilded wooden shrines, the largest of which barely fit into the tomb’s burial chamber.

Because of his tomb’s small size, historians suggest King Tut’s death must have been unexpected and his burial rushed by Ay, who succeeded him as pharaoh. The tomb’s antechambers were packed to the ceiling with more than 5,000 artifacts, including furniture, chariots, clothes, weapons and 130 of the lame king’s walking sticks. The entrance corridor was apparently looted soon after the burial, but the inner rooms remained sealed. The pharaohs who followed Tut chose to ignore his reign, as despite his work restoring Amun, he was tainted by the connection to his father’s religious upheavals. Within a few generations, the tomb’s entrance had been clogged with stone debris, built over by workmen’s huts and forgotten.

**King Tut’s Tomb: Rediscovery and Renown**

By the time he discovered Tutankhamen’s tomb in 1922, British archaeologist Howard Carter had been excavating Egyptian antiquities for three decades. At the time of the discovery, archaeologists believed that all the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings, across the river from ancient Thebes, had already been cleared. Excitement about the new tomb—the most intact ever found—quickly spread worldwide. It took Carter and his team a decade to catalogue and empty the tomb.

Artifacts from King Tut’s tomb have toured the world in several blockbuster museum shows, including the worldwide 1972-79 “Treasures of Tutankhamun” exhibitions. Eight million visitors in seven U.S. cities viewed the exhibition of the golden burial mask and 50 other precious items from the tomb. Today the most fragile artifacts, including the burial mask, no longer leave Egypt. Tutankhamen’s mummy remains on display within the tomb, his layered coffins replaced with a climate-controlled glass box



**King Tut Death Mask**

**King Tut Mask - The Golden Death Mask of Tutankhamun
The Ancient Egyptians were obsessed with the prospect of life after death - the eternal afterlife. The Ancient Egyptians used elaborate masks to great effect. Egyptian masks were generally used as Death Masks and Ritual Masks. The fabulous King Tut Mask was a death mask. Royal death masks or burial masks such as the fabulous death mask of Tutankhamun, the boy King Tut, were made of gold in the image of the deceased. The King Tut mask was used to cover the face of the mummy of the pharaoh and ensure that his spirit would be able to recognize the body.**

**Gold King Tut Mask - Description of the Death Mask of Tutankhamun
The King Tut Mask, which is pictured above, depicts an actual likeness of the young Tutankhamun. The King Tut Mask weighs ten kilos, 24lbs and measures 54 cm (21 in) in height and 15 inches wide.  The workmanship is quite exquisite and its value is priceless. It is made of gold which is inlaid with semi-precious stones, coloured glass paste and the eyes are made with obsidian and quartz. The back of the mask is chased with a series of spells and texts from the Book of the Dead. The mask was placed directly on the mummy of King Tut inside the third coffin housed in the sarcophagus.**

**Description of the King Tut Mask - The Use of Gold - The Flesh of the Gods
The death mask of King Tut was not made of gold just as a sign of the immense wealth of the pharaoh. Gold was also believed to have a magical potency containing significant religious properties. Gold did not tarnish or deteriorate. But more importantly gold shone like the sun god and was therefore credited with the powers of the sun god. Gold was therefore referred to as the 'Flesh of the Gods'. This explains the use of gold in the artefacts found in the tomb of Tutankhamun including the King Tut mask.**

**Description of the King Tut Mask - The Nemes, Cobra and Vulture
The design depicts the traditional nemes headdress. The nemes was the striped head cloth which would have been worn by the Pharaoh Tutankhamun. The nemes was worn tight across the forehead and has lappets falling forward over each shoulder. The top of the nemes displays the uraeus and the vulture on the brow. The uraeus was a rearing cobra emblem associated with the "eye" of the sun and meant to protect the pharaoh by spitting fire at his enemies. The cobra snake and the vulture were emblems of the deities Wadjet and Nekhbet. The goddess Wadjet was the patron goddess of Lower Egypt and was associated with the land where the cobra was present. The goddess Nekhbet (the embodiment of Hathor) was the patron goddess of Upper Egypt and was associated with the vulture. These two goddesses were together known as the 'two ladies of the pharaoh' whose special purpose was to protect the Pharaoh. The figures of a vulture and a cobra therefore sit on the king's forehead on the nemes headdress. The headdress has yellow stripes of solid gold, broken by bands of glass paste, coloured dark blue imitating lapis lazuli.**

**Description of the King Tut Mask - The Make-up
The King Tut mask has blue lapis lazuli around his eyes in imitation of the kohl make-up he would have worn in life. The eye make-up worn by the Ancient Egyptians such as Tutankhamun was extremely elaborate and created the almond eye look which has become synonymous with the Ancient Egyptians. Kohl was made from a mixture of soot and galena. The Egyptian eye make kohl was stored in richly decorated containers called kohl pots and examples of these were found in the tomb of King Tut.**

**Description of the King Tut Mask - The Beard of the Pharaoh
The King Tut mask depicts the boy king wearing the traditional false beard of the Pharaoh. Beards were  considered to be sacred to the gods and therefore the Pharaohs. The false beard depicted on the King Tut Mask was therefore a divine symbol of the gods, emphasizing his status as a living god. The bizarre false beards were tightly knotted and plaited and hooked behind the ears. The beard on the King Tut mask is a long, narrow beard plaited like a pigtail with the end jutting forward. King Tut would have worn the false beard of the Pharaoh on important religious and other ceremonial occasions.**

**Description of the King Tut Mask - The Crook and the Flail
The King Tut mask shows Tutankhamun holding the Crook and Flail which were part of the royal regalia and the symbols of kingship. The crook and flail are shown in images of the god Osiris, lord of the underworld and this was imitated by the divine pharaoh. The crook was called the hega and flail was called the nekhakha.  are made of cylindrical sections of dark blue glass, obsidian and gold mounted on a copper rod.**

**Description of the King Tut Mask - The Collar
The King Tut mask has a highly elaborate collar which is decorated with feldspar, quartz, lapis lazuli and colored glass. The ends of the golden collar are decorated with the head of a falcon encrusted with obsidian and semi-precious stones.**

**Gold King Tut Mask
Each section of this King Tut Mask website addresses all topics and provides interesting facts and information about the Golden Age of Pharaohs and of Egypt. The Sitemap provides full details of all of the information and facts provided about the fascinating subject of the Pharaoh King Tut Mask - Tutankhamun!**