

# ANCIENT EGYPTIAN



# ANIMALS



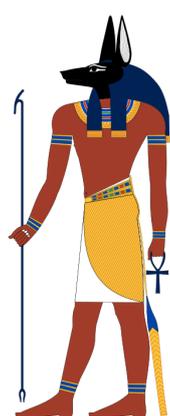
For ancient Egyptians, the animals that lived alongside them played a very important role in their spiritual beliefs! Animals were also reared for food and some were kept as pets too.

Animals of all kinds were important to the Ancient Egyptians. They understood the animals' characteristics and admired them, especially those that were dangerous or had powers human beings lacked!

Many animals were closely connected to one or more of the over 2000 gods and goddesses. Animals often formed part of their representation in images and symbols too. The spiritual significance of an animal could be connected to its character traits and attributes, such as a lion for its strength, but it could also be due to its role in the story of individual gods or goddesses.

Animals were also deeply connected to the ancient Egyptian's beliefs, both in life and after death. Some believed that various gods and goddesses could be reincarnated as the animals that lived alongside them! These sacred animals would often live in temples where they formed part of daily and annual rituals and festivals.

Some images of ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses show them with human bodies and the head of a bird or animals. These animals were chosen to represent the powers of the gods



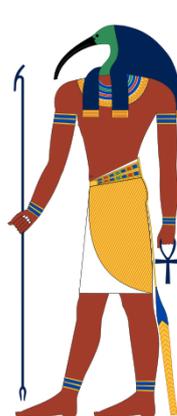
Jackal  
Anubis



Falcon  
Horus



Lioness  
Sekhmet



Ibis  
Thoth



Crocodile  
Sobek



Cow  
Hathor

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## Animals & their significance

### Jackals

The ancient Egyptians realised that these dogs are able to find the good part of old meat, eat it & not die. They also ravaged the desert graves in ancient times. The jackal was used as a symbol in the judgement death scene - where a heart is weighed by Anubis (the god with a jackal head) to tell the good and bad heart.



© Manchester Museum

### Cats

Cats were very important animals in Ancient Egypt, they were both pets and symbols of cat gods such as Bast.

The domesticated cat was a symbol of grace and poise because of the way it hunts its prey.

The ancient Egyptians also mummified some cats, including this one which was displayed at Ely Museum in 2010, on loan from The British Museum.



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### Scarab Beetle

The most famous Ancient Egyptian insect is the Scarab Beetle. The Egyptian name for the scarab was Kheper.

The scarab beetle was the most important amulet, worn by ancient Egyptians to protect against evil.

The Egyptians believed that Scarabs were associated with the Egyptian god, Khepri. It was Khepri that pushed the sun across the sky, just like a Scarab beetle would roll a ball of dung.

The scarab beetle became an ancient Egyptian symbol for rebirth, the ability to be reborn. The scarab beetle was also a symbol of rebirth after death.

When the Egyptians mummified a body they would remove the heart and put a stone carved like the beetle in its place.



© The Brooklyn Museum

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## Design your own animal god

These are some examples of animals and their sacred significance. Have a go at designing your own god & choose an animal head for it. What characteristics will it have?

Scorpion - Poison and protection	Ostrich - Order	Crocodile - Respect and justice
Vulture - Royalty and leadership	Lion - Strength and leadership	Frog - Resurrection and childbirth
Ram - Strength and birth	Antelope - Royalty and overseer	Falcon - Royalty and strength
Scarab Beetle - Resurrections and creation	Bull - Power and regeneration	Goose - Strength
Pig - Sacrifice and sight	Baboon - Fairness and responsibility	Hippo - Justice and strength
Snake - Danger and cure	Cat - Protector and defender	Ibis - Knowledge
Monkey - Renewal and rebirth	Cobra - Justice and royalty	Jackal - Judgement and guidance

My animal is called: \_\_\_\_\_

Its characteristics are: \_\_\_\_\_