

Howard Carter

1873–1939



WHY HE MADE HISTORY After many years of searching, Howard Carter made the most amazing archaeological find in the history of Egypt—the tomb of Tutankhamen.



As you read the biography below, think about how Howard Carter's perseverance helped him make his great discovery.

Almost everyone has heard of King Tut. There are many books and movies about the young Egyptian king, named Tutankhamen. There is also a famous legend about the “Curse of King Tut’s Tomb.” The tomb of King Tut is real, but the existence of a curse is very doubtful.

Archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the tomb in 1922. He had faith that the stories he had read about the tomb had a basis in fact and he was not willing to give up his search. Even before Carter began searching in the Valley of the Kings in Central Egypt, other archaeologists believed that there were no more tombs to be discovered. More than 60 tombs had already been excavated. Carter, however, believed that there was still one more tomb to be found and he would not give up until he found it. If Carter had not been so unwavering in his obsession to find the tomb, the greatest discovery in Egyptology might never have been made.

Howard Carter was born in England in 1873. His father was an artist and taught Carter how to draw at a young age. This early instruction came as a great benefit to Carter because it helped him get a job as a **tracer** for the Egyptian Exploration Fund. He made his first trip to Egypt in 1890.



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VOCABULARY

tracer person who copies drawings and inscriptions on paper for later study

antiquities relics from ancient times

Once in Egypt Carter became a field archaeologist and made several important finds. At age 25 Carter was appointed as the first Inspector General of Monuments for Upper Egypt, in charge of all excavations in the Upper Nile Valley. A few years later Carter began to work for a private **antiquities** collector, Lord Carnarvon.

In 1914 Carter and his team received permission to dig in the Valley of the Kings. Carter began searching for a tomb that he had heard about. After several years of searching, even Lord Carnarvon began to doubt the existence of the tomb. Lord Carnarvon was about to stop the excavation in 1922 when Carter at last uncovered the tomb of Tutankhamen. This turned out to be the most important discovery in the history of Egyptology.

Tutankhamen's tomb was the only Egyptian tomb that had not been disturbed since it was sealed more than 3000 years earlier. It took almost 10 years to study and catalog the tomb, which contained more than 5000 items. There were many beautiful objects made of gold, jewelry, statues, swords, toys, games, trumpets, and jars containing precious oils.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Recall** Where and in what year did Howard Carter discover Tutankhamen's tomb?

- 2. Make an inference** Why is Tutankhamen's tomb considered the most important discovery in the history of Egyptology?

ACTIVITY

- 3.** Imagine that you are a member of Carter's excavation team the day the tomb of Tutankhamen is first opened. Write a letter describing the opening of the tomb and some of the things that were found inside.