

# Cleopatra

Cleopatra VII was destined to rule Ancient Egypt from the moment she was born. Her father was the Pharaoh Ptolemy XII, and she was born into the Ptolemaic family. Her family had ruled Egypt for 300 years by that point. In fact, they could trace their family tree back to Alexander the Great. This meant that Cleopatra's family were originally Greek, rather than Egyptian. This also meant that she grew up speaking and writing Greek. She did learn Egyptian and Latin, which would help her when she took over the throne. Cleopatra was one of three names that Ptolemaic queens were given. Cleopatra VII became so famous that most people simply refer to her as Cleopatra.

In 51 BCE, Cleopatra's father died. This gave Cleopatra the chance to take over the ruling of Egypt. She ruled alongside her brother, to begin with. She was 18 years old at the time. It was very common in Ancient Egypt to marry a family member. Cleopatra was no different, and she soon married her brother. Over time, she grew tired of him and removed his face from coins and his name from documents.

Cleopatra was raised in Alexandria. This was the capital city of Ancient Egypt and was filled with artists and philosophers. Cleopatra was known in Europe as a beautiful and brave queen. In Africa, she was known as being well-educated and powerful. People still worshipped a statue of her 400 years after her death.

The end of Cleopatra's reign began when she waged war on Ancient Rome. Before he died, her father had struck a deal with Rome to keep him on the throne. When Rome invaded Cyprus,

Cleopatra's father didn't respond. This angered the Egyptians who removed him from power, leaving Cleopatra to retaliate. She realised that she needed help from Rome as Egypt was running out of money. When her brother kicked her off the throne, she turned to Egypt for help to get back.

During this time, Cleopatra became allies with Julius Caesar. She had a son with him named Caesarion. This means "little Caesar". This caused concern back in Rome. Julius Caesar was trying to get complete control over Rome. The senators were worried that the baby would give him control over two powerful empires.

Cleopatra and Caesar were so close that she was living in his house when he was assassinated in 44 BCE. She fled back to Egypt in fear of her life. She soon met and married a man named Marc Antony. Antony was also a powerful Roman, but his marriage to Cleopatra meant that he was soon outcast. In 30 BCE, Marc Antony went to war against the Roman leader Augustus.

When Antony lost the battle, he fled back to Cleopatra where he soon died. Cleopatra couldn't bear to be without him and allowed a venomous snake to bite her. Her death marked the end of the Egyptian Pharaohs. Augustus's victory over Egypt was celebrated with the naming of the month of August.

Now have a go at answering the questions about what you have just read. Make sure you answer in sentences. *The words in italics will help you to begin your sentences.*

1. For how long had Cleopatra's family been ruling Egypt?

*Cleopatra's family...*

2. True or false: Julius Caesar was Cleopatra's first husband.

*Julius Caesar...*

3. Where were Cleopatra's family from, originally?

*Cleopatra's family...*

4. With whom did Cleopatra have a son named Caesarion?

*Cleopatra...*

5. In which year did Cleopatra die?

*Cleopatra...*

6. Why was the month named August?

*The month of August...*

7. What evidence is there that Cleopatra didn't want to share power?

*Cleopatra didn't want to share power so she...*

8. What does the phrase "struck a deal" mean?

*'Struck a deal' means...*

9. Find and copy a word that tells you Cleopatra chose a dangerous snake to bite her.

*The snake that she chose...*

10. Which did Cleopatra do first: become Pharaoh or marry her brother?

*Cleopatra...*