Ramses the Great or Ramses II ruled Egypt from 1304 to 1237 BC. Some historians even suggest he might’ve been the pharaoh referred to in the biblical story of Moses. What we do know is that Ramses II married about 200 wives and fathered over 100 children. As a young man he co-ruled Egypt with his father, Seti I. He also successfully led Egypt in a series of wars against the Hittites and greatly expanded Egyptian territory. One of the most impressive structures he had built to honour his main wife and himself was the majestic Abu Simbel temple (shown at left). Each statue seen here gracing the entrance is about 22 metres high. Ramses II also supervised the construction of the biggest tomb so far uncovered in Egypt. It held the mumified remains and treasures of around 50 of his royal sons. The mummy of the great Ramses II is on display in the Cairo Museum.

1. The power of the pharaoh

Explain in one paragraph why Egyptian pharaohs held so much power in Egypt.

2. Buildings and temples

(a) Suggest why ancient Egyptian pharaohs erected such huge and inspiring monuments and temples.

(b) Select any ancient structure erected by a pharaoh and conduct enough research to allow you to draw a labelled sketch of it below.

3. Construct a profile

From information in this sheet and other sources, construct a profile of Ramses II.

Likely appearance:

Likely personality:

Main achievements:

References: SOSE Alive 1, pp25-48 • Retroactive 1, pp20-43 • SOSE for Queensland 1, pp46-63
Jacaranda SOSE 1 2E, pp20-47 • SOSE Alive History 1, pp25-48