

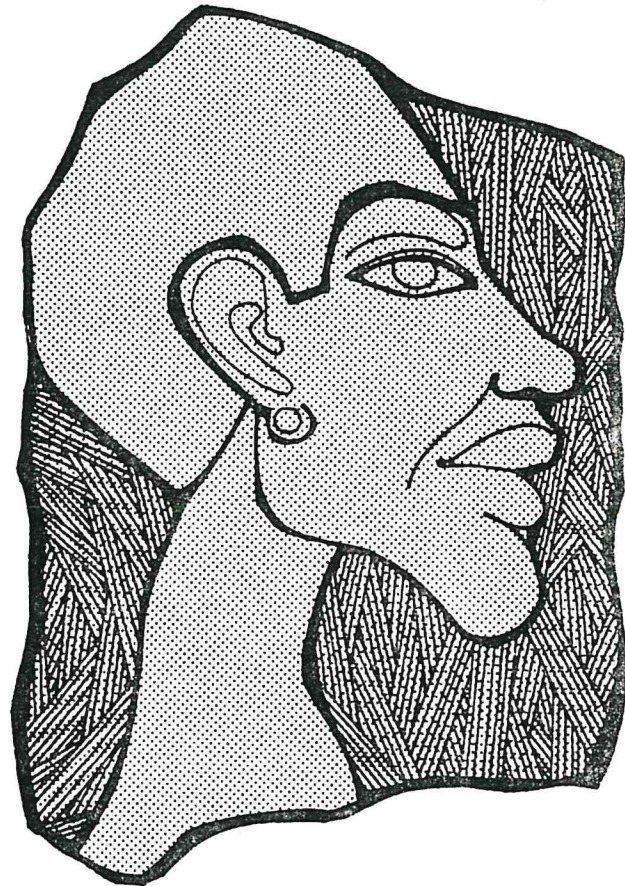
## He Who Served Aten

Amenhotep IV was a pharaoh with revolutionary ideas who took Egypt in many new directions. After Amenhotep began his reign (c. 1370 B.C.), he founded a new capital, made radical changes in Egyptian religion, and encouraged equally drastic changes in Egyptian art.

Amenhotep was deeply religious. Unlike other Egyptians, who believed in many gods, he believed in only one, Aten. Aten was represented in Egyptian art as a solar disk from which descended rays that terminated in hands. To those who worshiped him, Aten was the giver of light and the source of all life.

In honor of Aten, this Egyptian king changed his name from Amenhotep (meaning "Amon is satisfied") to Akhenaton (meaning "He who serves Aten"). He established Aten as the chief god of Egypt and sent workmen throughout the country to erase other gods' names from all buildings and to replace them with Aten's. Akhenaton abandoned the capital of Egypt at Thebes, a city dedicated to Amon, and established another in honor of Aten. Called Akhetaten, this city was built around the magnificent Temple of the Sun's Disk and contained spacious gardens, sparkling lakes, magnificent palaces, and luxurious villas.

During Akhenaton's rule, aesthetic taste changed also. Paintings and sculptures realistically portrayed people who were informally posed or engaged in everyday activities, a style that departed sharply from traditional, more formal Egyptian art. Akhenaton, himself, seems to have submitted willingly to this less formal style and, perhaps, to have encouraged it. In fact, there are some pictures of him and his family that are too informal and realistic to be flattering.



Many Egyptians were angered by Akhenaton's changes. Soon after his death, his magnificent city was abandoned, Aten's name was erased, and the old gods were reinstated. Akhenaton's successor even changed his own name from Tutankhaten (meaning "living image of Aten") to Tutankhamon (meaning "living image of Amon").

### Activities

1. Egypt has had many capitals. Draw a map of Egypt on which you show the names and locations of its capitals. Date or color code them to indicate the periods of their active use.
2. An **epithet** is a characterizing word or phrase used with or in place of the name of a person. For example, Eric the Red is an epithet. Think of several epithets that would be appropriate for Akhenaton or for other rulers of ancient Egypt.
3. Akhenaton and his wife Nefertiti had six daughters. Imagine a conversation between Akhenaton and one or more of his daughters. What might they discuss—politics, religion, art, or fashion trends? Write the scene you have imagined.