

Assignment Discovery Online Curriculum The Hidden History of Egypt

Curriculum Focus

World History

Grade level:

6-8

Duration

One or two class periods

Objectives

Students will

- work in small groups to research one aspect of daily life in ancient Egypt, such as food, housing, and religion ;
- present their findings to the class, using artifacts to illustrate their presentations; and
- use details from the presentation to write a one-page, mock journal entry from the point of view of an ancient Egyptian.

Materials

- Paper and pencils
- Computer with Internet access

Procedures

1. Ask students to brainstorm images and people that come to mind when they think of Ancient Egypt. Their answers may include the well known: pyramids, the Sphinx, the Nile, mummies, and pharaohs such as Tutankhamun and Ramses the Great. Explain that these reflect the height of the ancient Egyptian civilization, from about 3000 to 1000 B.C., when pharaohs ruled Egypt.
2. Next, find Egypt on a classroom map. Ask students to find the body of water that runs through the country (the Nile). Explain that although most of the country is desert, the area along the Nile is rich and fertile. In ancient times, as well as today, Egyptian civilization was based along this river. People have always depended on it for food, transportation, and agriculture.
3. Tell students that in this lesson, they will learn about everyday life in ancient Egypt, or the common people, not the famous pharaohs. Divide the class into groups of about two or three students. Assign each group one aspect of daily life in ancient Egypt:
 - gods and religion
 - farming and the Nile
 - food and drink

- housing
 - clothing, cosmetics, and jewelry
 - fishing, hunting, and herding
 - entertainment (song, dance, games)
 - funerary customs
 - writing
4. Explain that each group will give a brief presentation about an assigned aspect of daily life. The presentations should include as many details as possible. In addition, they should include pictures or drawings of at least five relevant artifacts. (Examples: a sickle used to harvest crops, reed sandals, intricate earrings, or a tablet with hieroglyphs.) Provide students with appropriate print and online resources for their research. Suggested books and Web sites follow:

Books

Eyewitness: Ancient Egypt, by George Hart (DK Publishing, 2000)

How Would You Survive As an Ancient Egyptian?, by Jacqueline Morley (Franklin Watts, 1995)

The Ancient Egyptians (Cultures of the Past), by Elsa Marston (Benchmark Books, 1996)

Ancient Egypt, by Ruth Akamine Wassynger (Scholastic, 2000)

Art and Civilization Ancient Egypt, by Neil Morris (NTC/Contemporary Publishing Co., 2000)

Web sites

Life in Ancient Egypt (Carnegie Museum)

<http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/cmnh/exhibits/egypt/index.htm>

Ancient Egypt

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/menu.html>

Life in Ancient Egypt (Kent School District)

http://www.kent.wednet.edu/curriculum/soc_studies/Egypt/life.html

Daily Life in Ancient Egypt (Minnesota State University)

<http://emuseum.mnsu.edu/prehistory/egypt/dailylife/dailylife.html>

Ancient Egypt (History for Kids)

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/egypt/index.htm>

Egypt: Gift of the Nile (Seattle Art Museum)

<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/Exhibit/Archive/egypt/discover/>

Ancient Egypt: The Eternal Voice (Artifacts)

<http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/pernex/egypt/egypt.htm>

5. Have each group make their presentation, which includes sharing pictures or drawings of artifacts. Encourage students to take notes and ask questions about each aspect of daily life.
6. To conclude the lesson, have each student write a one-page journal entry from the point of view of a common person in ancient Egypt. The entries should include as many details as possible from the class presentations.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; created a comprehensive presentation, including several relevant facts and at least five illustrations of artifacts; and wrote a detailed, thoughtful journal entry.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions; created a somewhat compressive presentation, including some facts and at least three illustrations of artifacts; and wrote a complete journal entry with a few details from the presentation.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; created a simplistic presentation with few or no facts or illustrations of artifacts; and wrote an incomplete journal entry.

Vocabulary

artifact

Definition: An object such as a tool or ornament showing human work and representing a culture or a stage in the development of a culture

Context: Archeologists study artifacts to learn about life in ancient Egypt.

hieroglyphic writing

Definition: A system of writing mainly in pictorial characters or symbols; the picture script of the ancient Egyptian priesthood

Context: Scientists have found hieroglyphic writing on ancient Egyptian temples and tombs, and in religious documents.

pharaoh

Definition: A ruler in ancient Egypt; sometimes called a king

Context: In ancient Egypt, the pharaoh was considered a god.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following national Standards:

- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- XI. Global Connections

Credit

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