

EGYPT'S GOLDEN EMPIRE

Egypt Lesson Plan 1: Hieroglyphs and Communication

Introduction:

The focus of this lesson is on the use of hieroglyphs as a form of communication, record keeping, and as a means for preserving and passing down history. Students will learn basic information about the alphabet, common Egyptian words, and how to read hieroglyphic messages. Students will also practice using hieroglyphs to create messages of their own.

Subject Areas:

World History, Social Studies, Communication Arts, Art History, and Art students

Grade Level: 6-12

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. Make comparisons between modern day text messaging techniques and the use of hieroglyphs as forms of communication.
2. Analyze how hieroglyphs were used to record history, promote international relations and create power for the pharaohs.
3. Learn how hieroglyphic messages were used to guide the dead to their next life as part of Egyptian custom and religion.
4. Become familiar with how to correctly read and translate simple hieroglyphs.
5. Use a hieroglyph name generator to write their names.
6. Practice translating hieroglyphic messages by taking a multiple choice quiz.
7. Write their own messages in hieroglyphs, accurately drawing the symbols in the correct order. They will also translate what they have written.
8. Present their hieroglyphic messages to the class.
9. Translate hieroglyphic messages written by classmates and check their work for accuracy.
10. Complete a written response activity related to how the use of hieroglyphic messages helped Egypt become a superpower.

Relevant National Standards:

McRel Compendium of K-12 Standards Addressed:

World History

Standard 3: Understands the major characteristics of civilization and the development of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley.

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Language Arts

Writing

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

Reading

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts.

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

Art

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Working with Others

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

Estimated Time:

This should take two 90-minute class periods or three to four 50-minute class periods, plus additional time for extension activities.

Materials Needed:

- Video clips necessary to complete the lesson plan are available on the Egypt's Golden Empire Web site [<http://pbs.org/empires/egypt/index.html>]. If you wish to purchase a copy of the program, visit the PBS Shop for Teachers [<http://teacher.shop.pbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=1406375>].
- Poster board or large sheet of butcher paper for each student.
- Assorted art supplies for creating hieroglyphs.

Procedures:

1. To create student interest, use a resource such as Text Messaging Abbreviations [<http://www.techdictionary.com/chatsms.html>] or NetLingo [<http://www.netlingo.com/emailsh.cfm>] to write a series of text messages on the board or overhead. Have this prepared before class begins so it is the first thing students see when they enter the classroom. Some suggested messages are included below. Note: do not include the translation when recording on the board or overhead.
 - HRU (How are you?)
 - WRUD 2DAY (What are you doing today?)
 - B HOME L8ER (Be home later.)

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- G2G (Got to go.)
 - CALL ME 2NITE (Call me tonight.)
2. When students arrive in class, facilitate a short discussion about the messages on the board using questions such as:
 - Where might you see the types of messages that appear on the board/overhead?
 - What makes this type of communication different from the normal written word?
 3. Have students work individually and give them a minute to translate the messages from the board/overhead into complete sentences. Have students take turns sharing the translation for each phrase.
 4. Facilitate another short discussion about this form of communication by asking:
 - Why do people use this form of communication rather than writing complete words and sentences?
 - What are the advantages of using this type of communication?
 5. Show students an example of hieroglyphs. This could be done by accessing pictures such as those available in the Virtual Egypt section [http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/virtual_egypt/index.html] of the Egypt's Golden Empire Web site, particularly Madinet Habu [http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/virtual_egypt/medinet.html], Second Pylon and Minor Chamber.

Ask students questions such as:

- What are these pictures showing?
 - Where would these forms of communication typically be found?
 - What similarities are there between the use of hieroglyphs and the way we communicate today when we use text messaging on our cell phones or in e-mail?
6. Explain to students that they will be learning about Egyptian hieroglyphs and how they were used in the everyday life of the ancient Egyptians. Also, explain why hieroglyphs are historically significant in teaching us about Egypt's history, customs, and life in ancient Egypt.
 7. Have students view the video clips Episode 2: Amenhotep's diplomatic strategies [[insert pbs video link](#)] and Episode 2: Amenhotep's newspaper [[insert pbs video link](#)] to see examples of how Amenhotep used hieroglyphs to document history, promote international diplomacy, and keep himself in power. Discuss these clips using questions such as:

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- How did Amenhotep use hieroglyphs to promote international diplomacy between Egypt and neighboring countries?
 - How did Amenhotep use his hieroglyphic messages to promote his own power and popularity with the people of Egypt?
 - In what ways was Amenhotep's use of hieroglyphic messages historically significant at the time as well as today?
8. To help students understand the religious and customary significance of hieroglyphs, have them view the video clip Episode 3: Tombs and the Afterlife [insert pbs video link [insert pbs video link](#)] to learn about the role of the tomb builders and the use of hieroglyphic text to guide the dead to their next life.
 9. Learn more about hieroglyphs by accessing the hieroglyph features on the Egypt's Golden Empire Web site [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/introduction.html>]. Guide students through the information presented by having them read about hieroglyphs and view the hieroglyphic alphabet. Note: providing students with a printed version of this page would be useful for later activities.
 10. Show students how Egyptians would have written their names by using the Spell Your Name feature [http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/name_spell.html]. Have students use the name generator to write their names and become more familiar with the language.
 11. Select Kamose Stela [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/kamose.html>] to show students actual hieroglyphic messages. Practice reading and translating them as a group by choosing Extract 1 [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/kamose01.html>] or Extract 2 [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/kamose02.html>].
 12. Discuss determinatives by selecting Egyptian Words [http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/egyptian_words.html] and viewing the twenty Egyptian words that have been translated for students. Note: providing students with a printed version of this page would be useful for later activities.
 13. Have students test their translating ability by choosing the Egyptian Quiz [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/quiz.html>]. In taking this multiple choice quiz, they will practice translating Egyptian phrases by choosing the best answer from the options provided.
 14. Once students have become familiar with how hieroglyphs are written, read, and translated, have them complete the following assignment:

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- Create a one to two sentence message using Egyptian hieroglyphs. Use a large poster board or a piece of butcher paper to write the message with the same symbols that would have been used by the ancient Egyptians. Encourage accuracy and precision in the way symbols are drawn. Encourage students to use words from the Egyptian Words section [http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/egyptian_words.html] of the hieroglyph feature. For other words, remind students to use the Alphabet [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/alphabet.html>] provided as part of the hieroglyph feature.
- On the back of the poster, students should record what the message says.
- When all messages are complete, post them on the walls around the classroom and have the class translate each poster. Then have each student present his/her message for the group and ask for their translations. Students should check their answers for accuracy and see which student(s) were most successful in communicating through hieroglyphs and translating them.
- Leave posters up for others to see and study.

15. To close the lesson, have students complete the written response activity below.

- Write two to three paragraphs that address the following:
 - In today's technologically advanced world, the use of hieroglyphs to record history and send messages from place to place seems ineffective and cumbersome, yet Egyptians were considered a very advanced society at the time. Discuss the historical significance of hieroglyphs as a form of communication and how you think this form of communication helped the ancient Egyptian Empire to become a superpower.

Assessment Suggestions:

1. Students could receive participation grades for class discussion activities.
2. Students could be graded on their accuracy when completing the multiple choice quiz on the Web site's hieroglyph feature and for their accuracy in translating the hieroglyph posters created by their classmates.
3. A scoring guide could be created to assess the hieroglyphic messages created by each student. Areas for assessment could include accuracy of hieroglyphic drawings, accuracy of hieroglyphic translations, neatness/visually pleasing and whether the message is written correctly (right to left).
4. Students could receive a completion grade for their answers to the written response activity.

Extension Activities:

1. Have students research other cultures that have used pictures and symbols as a means for recording messages and history. Compare the various cultures to see what impact this form of communication had on each culture/society.

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2. Think about how we communicate today using symbols to represent words. Using resources from your everyday surroundings, create illustrations of these symbols and explain their meaning. (Hint: think of some of the common signage you see in your neighborhood.)

Related Resources:

NOVA: Hieroglyphs: Say What? [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pyramid/hieroglyph/>], provides a discussion of how hieroglyphs are read and translated. There is also a detailed alphabet and practice activities.

NOVA: Interview with Mark Lehner, Archaeologist, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and Harvard Semitic Museum [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pyramid/excavation/lehner.html>] is a discussion about his work in Egypt. There is also general information about reading and interpreting hieroglyphs.

Virtual Egypt [<http://www.virtual-egypt.com/newhtml/hieroglyphics/>] provides a detailed description of how to read and pronounce hieroglyphs.