

Google Arts & Culture

Preserving Egypt's Layered History

Lesson plan
created with



Introduction

Egypt's Layered History

Join us as we explore the layers of Egypt's ancient history and learn about some mysteries that have only been unlocked in the past few centuries.

This lesson plan is designed to support you as you explore Google Arts & Culture stories related to the lesson topic. This lesson is suitable for anyone but is recommended for students aged 9-12 years.

You can complete the lesson on your own working at home, with a group of friends, or in your classroom. They are designed so that you can work through them at a pace that suits you.

If you get stuck, you can talk to a teacher or parent.

Throughout the lesson you will find tasks to complete and questions to answer, so when you reach the end, you will have used a range of skills to create something on your own that demonstrates your knowledge and understanding of the subject.

All you need to get started is any device with internet access.

In the following lesson, discover more about ancient rulers, tombs, monuments and hieroglyphics, and learn about how these are preserved today.

Things you'll need to complete this lesson.



Tablet, laptop or computer with access to the internet.



Paper, or a notebook, and pen to make notes as you go.



Drawing materials, such as coloring pens and pencils, paper etc.



Scissors, glue, scrap paper and general stationery items.



Art materials, specifically paints and brushes.



A printer would be beneficial but not necessary – why not draw instead?

Explore & Discover

Egypt's Layered History

What can you expect to learn?

Egypt is a country with a rich and diverse history, full of traditions and mysteries that we will explore in this lesson. We will investigate what hieroglyphics are and how we can use artificial intelligence (AI) to help decipher them. Learn about the ancient tombs and monuments discovered and studied in the last few hundred years, and about what it takes to protect, preserve and conserve these historical sites.

Activities to complete

1. Test your knowledge of new terms in a special word search.
2. Learn more about hieroglyphics through the power of AI.
3. Design a tomb fit for a pharaoh.
4. Create a timeline showing Egypt's ancient history.
5. Create a storyboard to show what you have learned about the Cult of the Dead.

Outcomes you will achieve

- Learn about Egypt's ancient history and discover more about its culture.
- Appreciate the wide variety of monuments and items which help Egyptologists to understand the different aspects of ancient Egyptian history.
- Explore a range of projects to restore or conserve Egypt's interesting past.
- Understand what hieroglyphics are and create your own messages using symbols.
- Learn about successful efforts to help preserve historical places and objects.

Look out for the following tips which tell you what to do during the lesson.



Key information to remember and to help guide you through the lesson.



Estimated time to complete a section or activity within the lesson.



Optional headphones to listen to videos and audio recordings.



Explore online content. Discover videos, stories, and zoom into pictures.



Activity - time to design, make or write something of your own.



Vocabulary

Words to look out for in the lesson

afterlife, ancient, archaeology, archaeometry, art historian, artificial intelligence, book of the dead, codes, coffin, conservation, crack, cult, death mask, deceased, decipher, decoration, deity, desert, Egyptian, Egyptology, embalmer, Fabricius, false door, funerary mask, graveyard, Greco-Roman Period, Greek, hieroglyphics, hieroglyphs, historic, history, ideogram, intestines, judgement, Late Period, liver, lungs, Luxor, manuscript, Middle Kingdom, monastery, monument, mosaic, mosque, mourning, mummification, mummy, museum, mythology, New Kingdom, offerings, Old Kingdom, overseer, papyrus, pharaonic, pharaoh, Philologist, phonogram, Predynastic Period, preservation, pyramid, religious, restoration, Rosetta Stone, sarcophagus, sarcophagi, scribes, site, stomach, tomb, translate, underworld, vendetta

Preserving Egypt's Layered History

Introduction

Welcome to Egypt. A country so old that it has its own subject for scientists to study, called Egyptology. It is a land of contrasts, known for its sandy deserts, it also has fertile fields along the banks of the River Nile. The River Nile is one of the longest rivers in the world and people have lived around it for over 60,000 years. Civilization there began when people settled into villages around 8,000 years ago. This makes it one of the oldest nations in the world.

In this lesson you will study ancient Egypt. You will explore a very old tomb through a virtual tour and by looking at a 3D model of the tomb. You will also get a brief overview of Egypt's history. There is a chance to examine how Egyptians prepared for the afterlife. Here you will learn about the creation of the Book of the Dead and about different customs and traditions.

The Egyptians established their own written language, using symbols instead of words. For many years this proved difficult for people to understand. You will explore hieroglyphics through several activities, to help improve your understanding of the language and what different symbols mean.

The final part of the lesson will be learning about what it takes to preserve and look after historic sites. You will learn about the difference between restoration and conservation, and both are important.



If you make notes on the stories you read, this will help you for the end of lesson quiz.





[Cul Afri Egy Funerals Including Enbalming And Funeral Processions, LIFE Photo Collection](#)

What is this lesson about?

In this lesson we will explore ancient Egypt and learn more about the period. To do this, we will take a virtual tour of a tomb and learn about the different stages Egyptians went through to prepare for the afterlife. We will also look at hieroglyphics, the written language used in ancient Egypt, and you will get the chance to create your own hieroglyphic message, using artificial intelligence.

Then you will learn how people dedicate their lives to preserving and conserving monuments and art from Ancient Egypt, ensuring that we can continue to learn more for many years to come.



This lesson will take around 120 minutes.



Faience openwork collar, 1352/1336 BC, The British Museum

Ancient Egypt

Learn about ancient Egypt, the tombs, the afterlife and the experts who study it all.



This chapter will take around 45 minutes.



[Statue of Ramesses II, the 'Younger Memnon', The British Museum](#)



[Cult niche, Andreas Paasch, 2009, ARCE](#)



[Book of the Dead Papyrus, Nesshutefnut \(Papyrus Ryerson\), Ptolemaic Period, ca 250 BC, Oriental Institute Museum](#)



[Monica Hanna](#)

History

Learn about some of the ancient history of Egypt. You will learn more about the Pharaonic period between 3,500 BCE and 0 CE. This is the time of the Pharaohs and of art and architecture.

Tombs

The Tomb of Menna is situated in Luxor. You will learn more about how tombs are protected later in this lesson. You will take a virtual tour of this well-preserved tomb and get to see the inside, with its walls filled with paintings.

The Afterlife

In Ancient Egypt, there was a strong belief in life after death. Rulers and rich people were focused on what would happen them after they died and made many preparations for this. Some of these preparations happened before they died, and some were carried out by trusted servants after their deaths.

Egyptology

The study of ancient Egyptian history is so important and so varied, there is a whole area of study dedicated to it. People who are involved are known as Egyptologists. These people are experts, and they focus on ancient buildings, art and language.



Ancient Egypt civilisation began over 5000 years ago, when people built villages on the banks of the River Nile. They were able to plant crops there, growing food to live on and to feed their animals too. This was important as many parts of Egypt have a dry, desert landscape.

It was a civilisation rich both in wealth, but also in practical ways too. They invented papyrus, which is where the paper we use today comes from. They had their own calendar, based on the sun and they also invented their own complex language, called hieroglyphics.

Kings and queens, who were called pharaohs, were not just rulers of their lands. It was believed that they were chosen representatives of the gods on earth. They were treated like gods themselves.

Ancient Egyptians believed in life after death, in fact they believed that it was more important than their life before death. It was believed that they would take their wealth and status into the afterlife and pharaohs prepared for this in many different ways. This included building giant stone structures called pyramids. These were built to hold the bodies and wealth of the pharaohs after death. These are still standing today, 4000 years after they were built.

[Explore](#)



The Tomb of Menna is one of the most well-preserved ancient Egyptian landmarks. It was built over 3,500 years ago for a man named Menna and his wife Henuttawy.

Menna held important positions in the estates of the Temple of Karnak. He oversaw the agricultural lands, which were the source of wealth for the pharaoh. He was also a scribe and he worked in both the temple and palace administration, which was unusual at the time.

The tomb was built with a T-shaped chapel above ground and a burial chamber below the ground. The walls show different scenes which tell us about Menna's life and work and that of Henuttawy. From these pictures we have learned about who Menna was and why he was important.

Take a virtual tour of the Tomb of Menna and explore the structure and the different wall paintings.

[Explore](#)



Activity 1

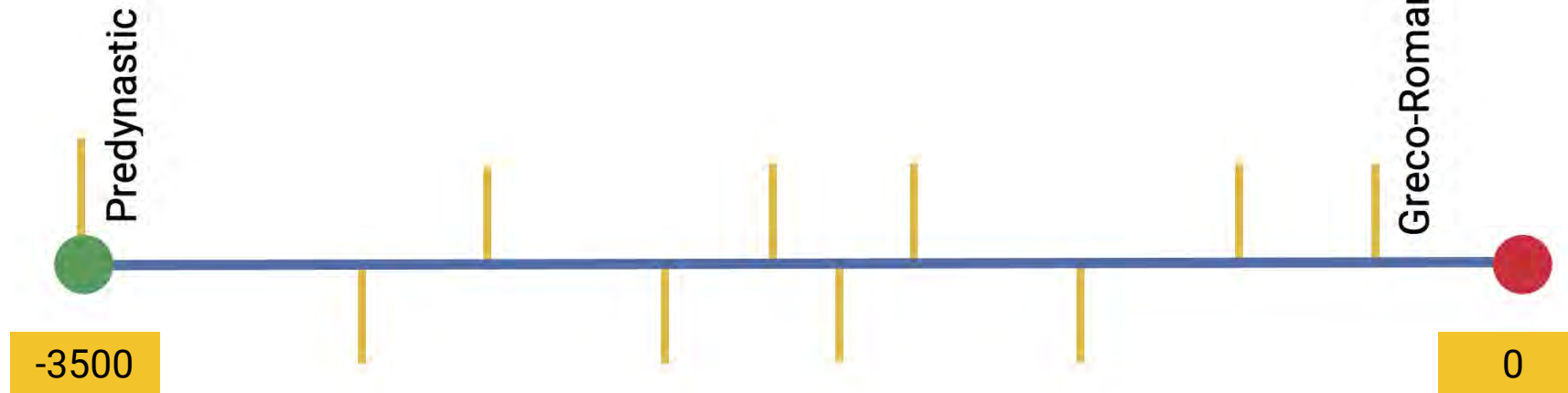
Create a Pharaonic Timeline



You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity



Watch this [video](#) and make notes. Then create a timeline that shows the major periods during this time. As a hint these include periods such as the Old Kingdom, Intermediate Period and so on.



[Giza Plateau, Kenneth Garrett, 2004-12-02, American Research Center In Egypt](#)



Extra Challenge

Carry out some research into Egyptian pharaohs. Then select five pharaohs you want to use. Add their timelines to the one you created already. You could add the year they were born or when they died. Or you can add them to the period that they lived in. Some rulers to consider would be Narmer, Tutankhamun, Rameses II the Great, Khufu, Cleopatra VII and Amenhotep I. You can also include Menna if you wish to.



15 to 20-minute activity



The many preparations for the afterlife were known as the Cult of the Dead. During life, preparations took the form of building temples and pyramids. However, there were many preparations that took place after death, like mummification.

It would take around 70 days to prepare the body and the tomb after death.

The Book of the Dead was an important element of preparation for the afterlife. It was not one single book, like its name suggests. It was a collection of texts brought together to help send people into the afterlife.

The texts were often written on papyrus, although in earlier times, these were inscribed on walls, objects in the tomb and even on the sarcophagus, a special type of coffin which held the mummified body.

[Explore](#)





You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity



Activity 2

Create a storyboard of the Cult of the Dead

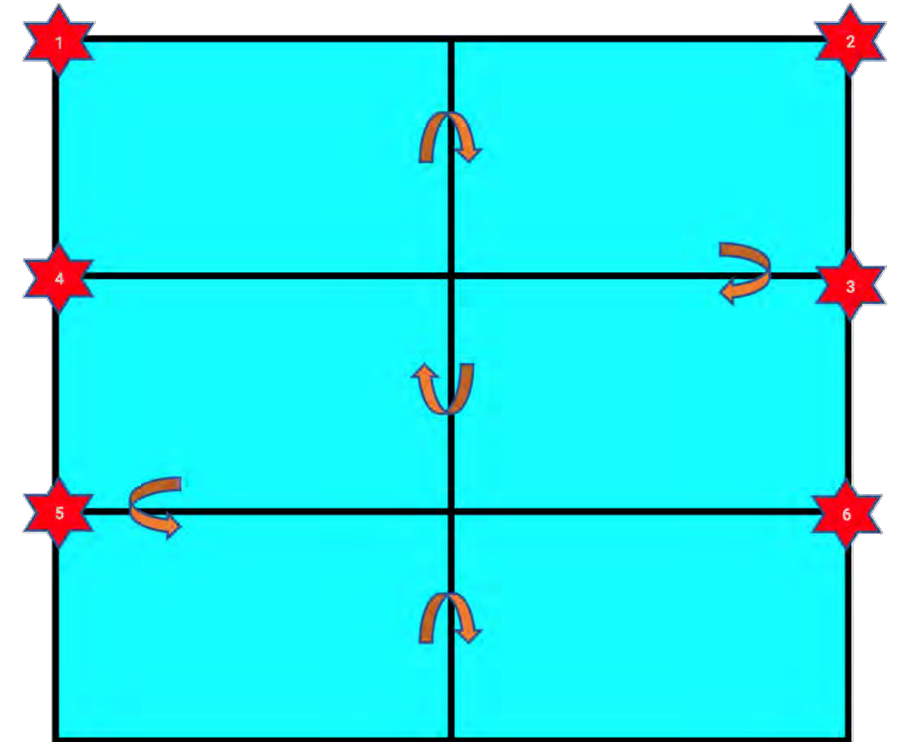


In this lesson you have learned about the Cult of the Dead. You have read about the various stages in helping an important person get ready for death. Can you create a storyboard on the six stages?



- Storing the internal organs
- Mummification
- Death mask and funerary mask
- Coffin
- Tombs and sarcophagi
- The Book of the Dead

The storyboard can be in words or drawings. Use your imagination to show your understanding of the Egyptian Cult of the Dead.



Mummification



Mummy of Ukhhotep, son of Hedjpu, The MET

Funerary Mask



Man's Mummy Mask, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

Tombs



Tomb Interior, Project Staff Photographer, 2009-12, ARCE



15 to 20-minute activity



The study of ancient Egypt is called Egyptology. You can study different areas of Egyptology at university and there are many scholars who focus on researching the history, language, buildings, and culture of ancient Egypt.

The study of the history of ancient Egypt goes back to the times of ancient Egypt itself and to Greek and Roman historical accounts from over 2500 years ago. However, modern studies of ancient Egypt date back to the 1800s.

Since then, the academic study of ancient Egypt has grown greatly and covers a wide range of approaches, including science and archaeology.

Watch this video to learn more about Egyptology.

[Explore](#)

Extended Learning

Why cats were important in ancient Egypt

Animals play an important part in ancient Egyptian culture. The most important animal was the cat. They were seen as protectors of the pharaoh, as they would kill venomous snakes and would also hunt rats, mice and scorpions.

People believed that cats would bring good luck to their households and they were well-loved and cared for. They were so important in ancient Egyptian culture, they were treated like royalty. Wealthy families would often decorate them with jewels and feed them expensive treats. When they died, their owners would grieve for them like they would a family member. The cats were mummified and even had their own cemeteries.

There are a number of different gods who took the form of a cat. The most well-known is the goddess Bastet. The Egyptians believed she could change into a cat and there are many drawings and sculptures of her. In these pieces of art, she is either a cat or she has a human body with the head of a cat.



Look at these pictures of mummies of a cat. [Photo1](#) and [photo2](#).



Read the descriptions alongside these pictures. Then write down 5 things about cats in ancient Egypt that you have learned. You may want some help from your parent or teacher.





[Papyrus from the Book of the Dead of Nakht, The British Museum](#)

Hieroglyphics

In this chapter you will learn about hieroglyphics. This is how ancient Egyptians wrote things down, in a language based on symbols and pictures. Discover more about them in the next few pages.



This chapter will take around 45 minutes.



That Which is In the Afterworld" (Amduat) of the priest Hor-em-chemmis, Artist unknown, 21st Dynasty, Neues Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

The ABCs of Hieroglyphs

An overview of these ancient symbols


Hieroglyphics is the name for the written language used in ancient Egypt. It is made up of over 700 symbols, pictures and signs that represent sounds, words, phrases and letters.

People believed for a very long time that the language was stories and scenes based only the actual pictures and symbols. The language was a great mystery, until the 1800s when there was a big breakthrough. Using the Rosetta Stone, which had the same text in multiple languages, different scholars were able to start deciphering the meanings and sounds behind the hieroglyphs.

The ancient Egyptians believed that hieroglyphs were invented by the gods. In fact, the word hieroglyph comes from a Greek word which can be roughly translated as holy carvings. The people who wrote hieroglyphics were called scribes. They trained from an early age and were well-respected.

Hieroglyphic symbols and signs can have multiple meanings. In some cases they are ideograms, which are symbols that show an idea. These are a bit like our emojis today. In other cases, the symbols can be phonograms, where a picture is used to show a sound.

Often languages have a specific direction you write in, for example in English you write from left to right and in Arabic from right to left. However, hieroglyphs could be written in every direction.

 Explore

The Rosetta Stone

Unlocking the Hieroglyphs

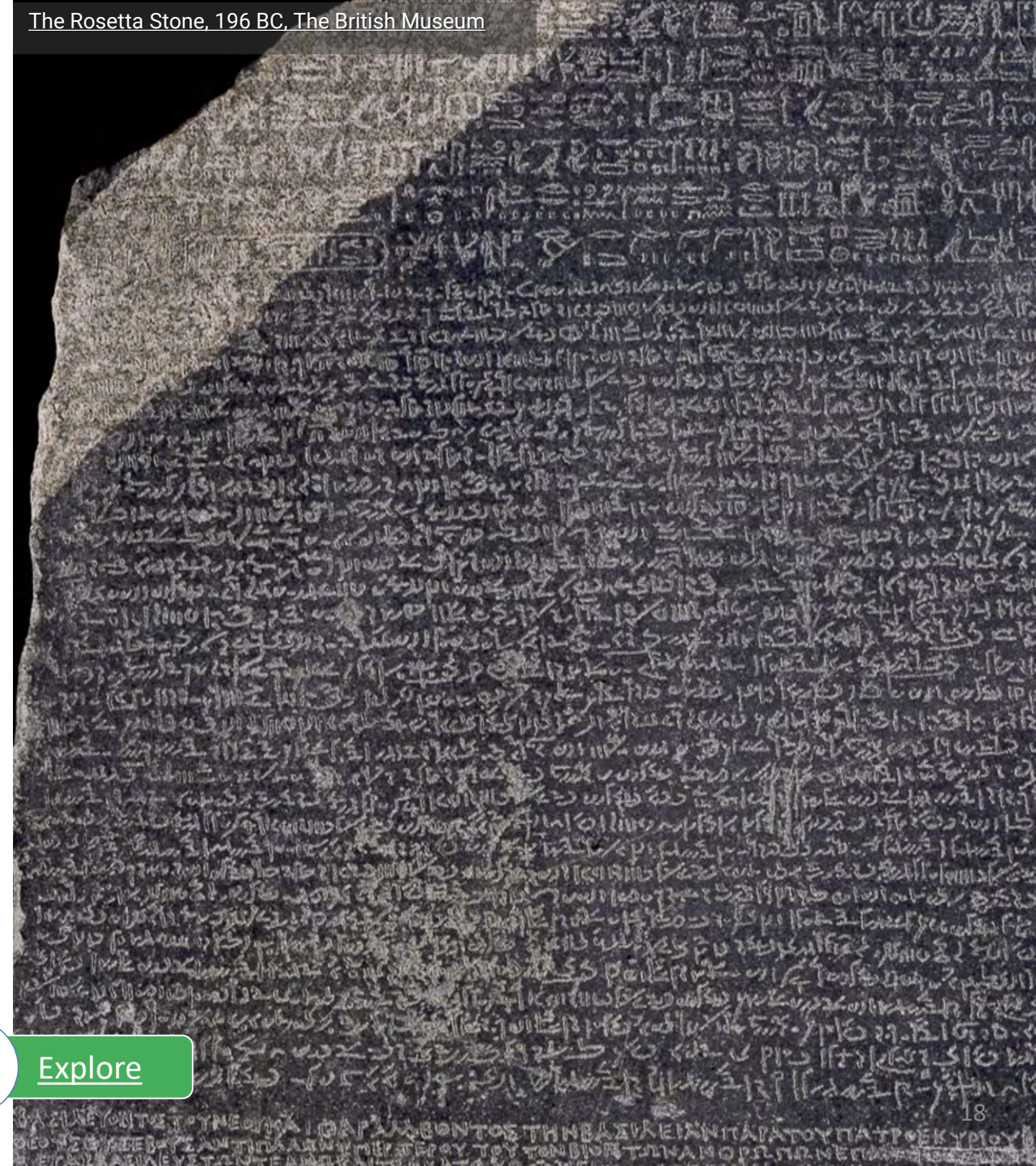
Today, Egyptologists use lots of methods to help with translating what hieroglyphics mean. We even have technology, like [Fabricus](#), to help with decoding texts.

However, for thousands of years hieroglyphics remained an unsolved mystery. When the Rosetta Stone was found in 1799, it gave scholars the keys to start unlocking what the symbols and signs meant.

The Rosetta Stone is made of black granite rock and contains the same text carved in three different written languages: hieroglyphics, Greek and demotic. It was the combination of these languages that helped scholars to crack the code.

Two academics, Thomas Young and Jean-François Champollion, played important roles in working out the meaning behind the different symbols. Through their work, Egyptologists are now able to translate the text from different hieroglyphic writings. This means we are able to learn more about the history and culture of ancient Egypt.

Click on the explore button to learn more about the Rosetta Stone and its important role in our understanding of hieroglyphics.



Explore



Activity 3

Learn how to use Google's Fabricius



Fabricius is a tool which uses machine learning to decode ancient languages. Machine learning is a type of artificial intelligence that learns and grows its understanding of a topic using the data we input.

In this activity, you are going to learn how to use Fabricius to help decipher various hieroglyphs. Click on this [link](#) to start Fabricius, and then click on the LEARN option. There are 6 stages to go through, and they are as follows:

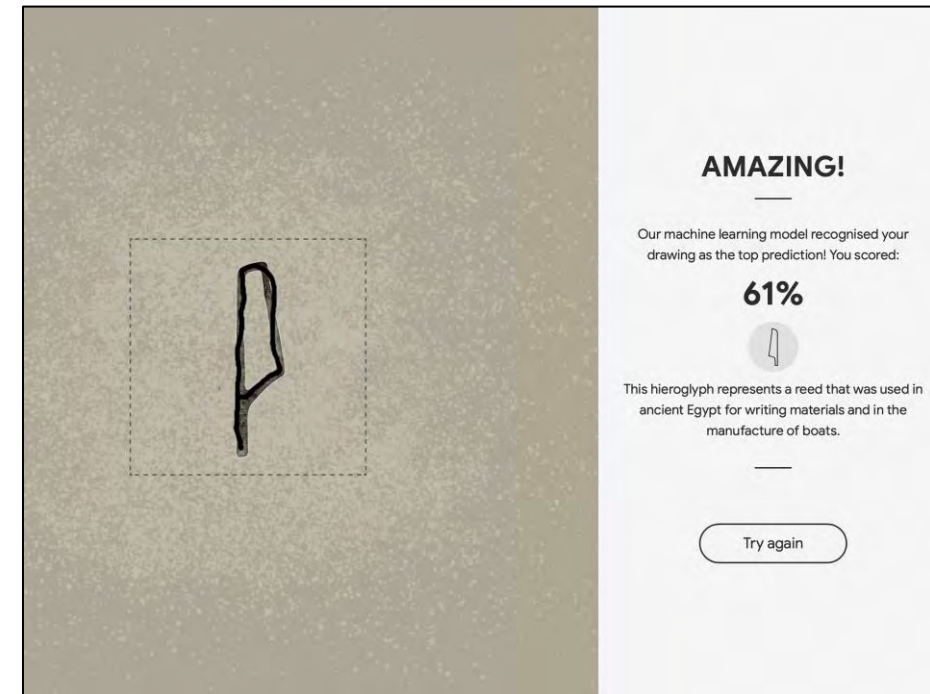
- Tracing hieroglyphics
- Drawing hieroglyphics
- Identifying hieroglyphics
- Reconstructing hieroglyphics
- Read order
- Translating hieroglyphics

Each stage will help you to learn more about hieroglyphics and you can even practice your own skills in drawing hieroglyphics.

See how many stages you can complete successfully.



You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity



[Fabricius, 2021, Google Arts & Culture](#)





Understanding The Book of the Dead

Guiding the dead through the underworld

The Book of the Dead was a collection of magic spells and stories. They were written on papyrus scrolls and would have been sold by scribes. The scrolls would have been kept with the body and they were seen as a very important part of making a successful journey into the afterlife.

In early ancient Egypt, the texts were carved into the walls of the tomb and on objects that were placed inside the tomb. This made the texts only available to the royal family, since they were the ones who had the money to build tombs and pyramids.

By creating the texts on papyrus, it made them more available to a wider group of people. Although, they still needed to be rich to afford the cost of the scrolls. This was because writing was only carried out by a small, special group of people.

Egyptologists have yet to find a complete Book of the Dead. However, they have found over 190 different spells. These were written to help with traditions and rituals, like the 'Weighing of the Heart' and 'The Opening of the Mouth'. They also included different protection spells and spells to help with transforming from human into animal forms.

Click the 'Explore' button to take a tour of the Book of the Dead of Hunefer.



Explore



Activity 4

Use Fabricius to send hieroglyphic messages



Now you have learned how Fabricius works, the next activity is to use it to create your own messages. You can share the messages with friends and family as well.



Launch Fabricius by clicking on this [link](#), then select the PLAY option. Read through the first few slides and then you are ready to create some messages.

1. Try some of the sample, pre-prepared phrases. You might notice that the translated text is a bit different to how we say things today. For instance, we would say 'good luck' and this translates to 'good fortune upon you'.

2. Next create a message of your own, using the text bar at the bottom of the screen. You can add to the pre-prepared phrases, make your own phrase, or use the range of emojis that are available in the program. Remember the translation will be a little bit different to how you might write a phrase today, so think about what you might need to change.



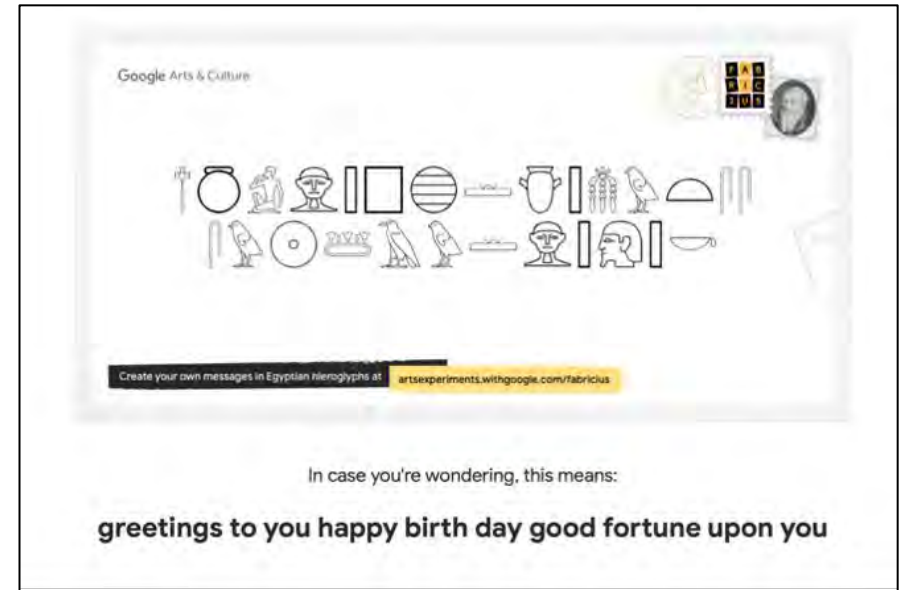
Extra Challenge

You are working as the pharaoh's scribe, and you need to send a message to the master builder of the pharaoh's tomb. The key words in your message must have matching hieroglyphs. The master builder needs to understand what the pharaoh wants based on your message. It must include the following information:

- The tomb has to be built inside a pyramid.
- It needs to be made of gold.
- It must have more than one entrance.
- It must have a statue of a crocodile and a dog
- The mummy casing needs to be in silver.



You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity



[Fabricius, 2021, Google Arts & Culture](#)



15 to 20-minute activity

A solution can be found on page 34.



Wood restoration of door, Matjaž Kačičnik, 2007-11, ARCE

Preservation

The ancient Egyptians left many architectural and artistic things behind. These could be as large as pyramids or as small as a necklace. Learn more about the people who repair, preserve or restore these important items.



This chapter will take around 30 minutes.

Restoration and Conservation

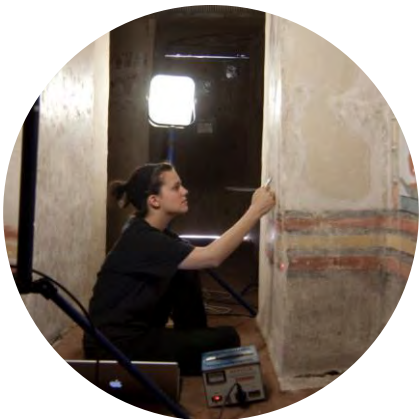
What is the difference?

People who look after old buildings and artwork like sculptures and drawings, often focus on two different areas: conservation and restoration. Conservationists look at ways to protect and preserve a building or object, including different options to prevent future damage.

Restoration is where specialists work on a building or object to try to repair any damage and return it to its original state.

Both methods involve lots of different areas of study. These include research about the history of the object or building at the time it was created, and scientific research to understand the materials that were used and how best to look after them.

Conservation



[Surveying points for digital epigraphy, Project Photographer, 2008, ARCE](#)

Restoration



[Wood restoration, close up, Matjaž Kačičnik, 2008-10, ARCE](#)



Explore





Preservation – the people and the processes involved



The People

[Conservator working in tomb, Project Photographer, 2009, ARCE](#)



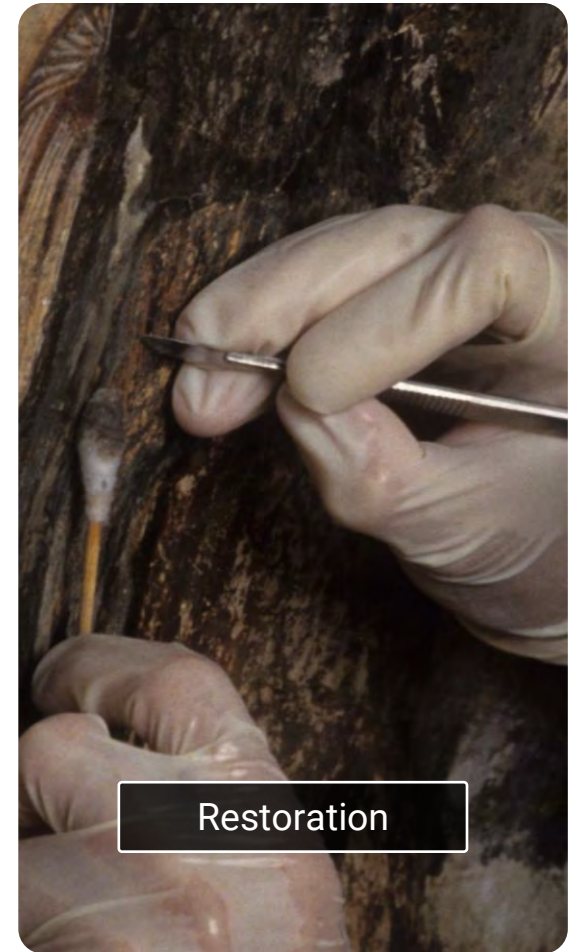
Repairing

[Bird Mosaic after Restoration, Edwin C. Brock, 2006-12, ARCE](#)



Preservation

[Surveying points for digital epigraphy, Project Photographer, 2008, ARCE](#)



Restoration

[Head conservator Adriano Luzi cleaning a wall painting, Patrick Godeau, 1998-05, ARCE](#)



Find out about four modern Egyptologists and what they find interesting about exploring the history of ancient Egypt. Click the 'Explore' button to learn more.

Explore

Activity 5

Egypt Word Search



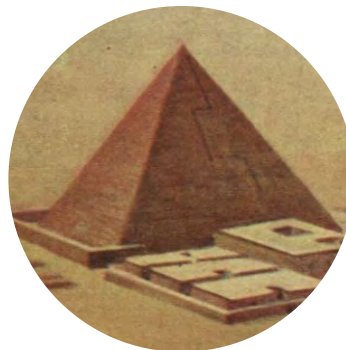
Print out a copy or recreate the word search grid yourself, and then find the terms listed on the right. The terms are found in the Vocabulary section on page 4 of this lesson.

The answer is shown on page 35.



Extra Challenge

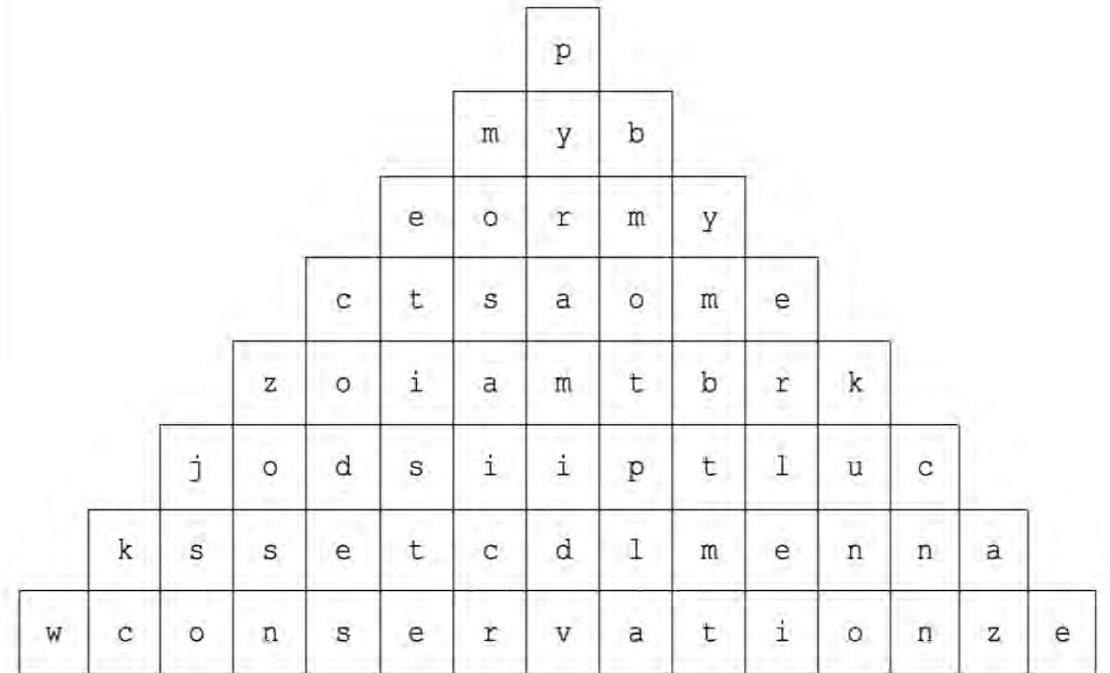
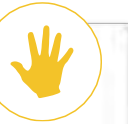
Now create your own pyramid word search. You can use graph paper or draw your own grid. Then, using words from the list of vocabulary on page 4, design your own word search. See if you can make it more challenging by having words appear diagonally.



[Arc Reco Seven Wonders 2](#)
[Pharos Of Alexandria Pyramids](#)
[Temple Diana Zeus Olympus,](#)
[LIFE Photo Collection](#)



You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity





Can you find the following words in the grid above?

pyramid
 site
 codes
 menna
 conservation
 tomb
 mosaic
 cult

Remember - Words may be running, vertical, horizontal, or even backwards. Answer on page 29.



10 to 15-minute activity



Learn more about how people repair ancient objects. Click the 'Explore' button to see how people are restoring an 1,800 year old mosaic.

[Explore](#)





See how an ancient tomb is being preserved. Click the 'Explore' button to read about the conservation of the Tomb of Menna.

Explore



Learn more about restoration. Click the 'Explore' button to see how paintings have been restored in an ancient monastery.

[Explore](#)



You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity



Activity 6

What can you do to help?



Explore the area where you live. Talk to your family about any old buildings, tombs, monuments that are near you. Can you find an old building nearby? If you can, visit the old building and see if you can learn more about when and why it was built.



When visiting use the points below to help you to evaluate the site.

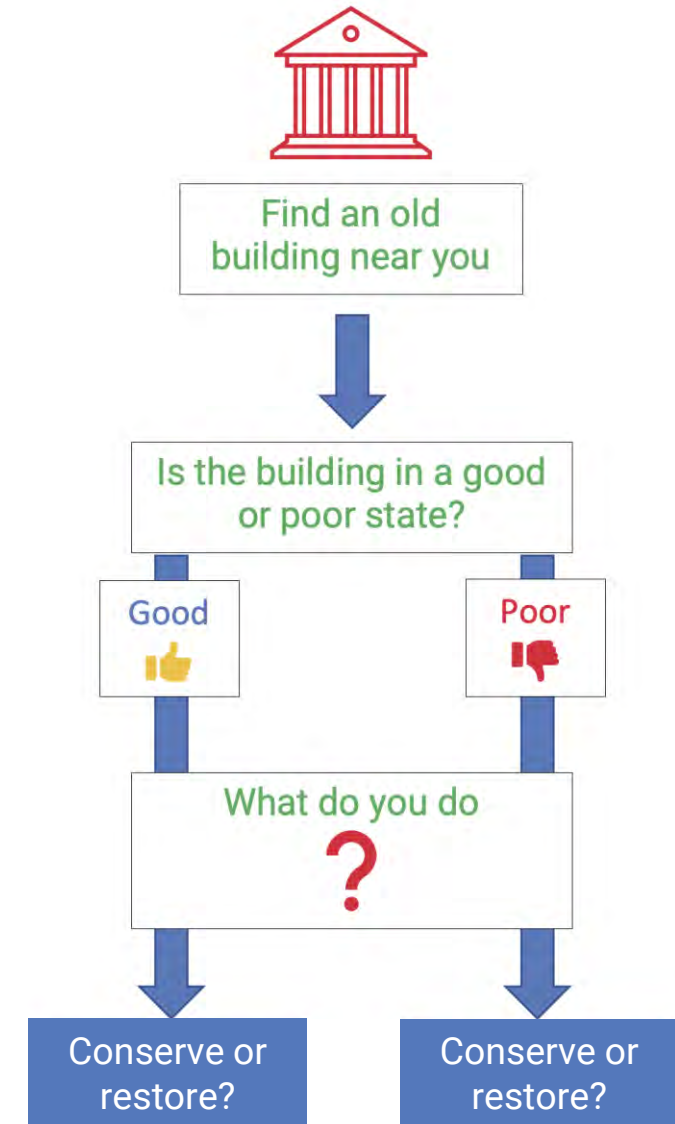
Looking at the old building, complete these tasks:

- Describe the building, is it a tomb, monument, old religious building, or something else?
- Draw a picture of the building.
- Look at what state it is in. Is it in a good or poor condition? Is some of it good and some of it damaged?.
- Which parts are in good condition and which parts are in poor condition?
- Can you draw a picture of any of these areas?

Thinking about what you know about conserving and restoring. What do you think would be best for this old building?

- Do you think it needs to be **conserved** or **restored**? Write down your answer and explain your reason. If you think some parts need conservation and some need restoration, explain this as well.

Consider what would be the first thing you would work on? Explain why.






Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

See if you can recall what you have learned from this lesson. How many blank words can you fill without going back through the pages.

1. The Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt is a 3D shape. It consists of triangles, edges and Square.
2. In Egyptian history the Old Kingdom is a time the Early Dynastic period. Use either BEFORE or AFTER to complete this sentence.
3. The Rosetta Stone is an important archaeological item in helping us understand hieroglyphics. It has three versions of the same text. One is in hieroglyphics, then in, and finally in
4. The Tomb of Menna depicts Menna and his wife
5. was a goddess in cat form and daughter of the sun god Ra. Hint: Cats section on page 15
6. The study of ancient Egyptian history is called
7. A is an Egyptologist who specializes in languages.
8. Use Fabricius (link [here](#)) to write a message for 'Hello'. These are the hieroglyphics created, . The translation of these hieroglyphs is: (Hint: it is not 'hello').



[arcade game: Computer Quiz Nutting Associates, 1968, The Strong National Museum of Play](#)





Bonus Activity

Design a tomb for a Pharaoh



Now that you have learned a lot about ancient Egypt, hieroglyphics and studied a tomb. It is time to use your imagination and design your version of a tomb for an Egyptian pharaoh.



[Tomb of Nefertari, Kenneth Garrett, 2009-04-09, ARCE](#)



You may need help from your parents or teacher with this activity



[Tomb of Menna in 3D, Luke Hollis, Mohamed Abdelaziz, Ayman Damarany, ARCE](#)

Things to consider:

- The tomb can be in a pyramid or underground.
- You need to consider secret rooms and passages to help deter grave robbers from stealing the Pharaoh's precious gifts for the afterlife.
- You can also introduce up to 3 traps, again to help deter grave robbers.
- Consider how many rooms you want in your tomb. Where will you place your mummy and items you need for the pharaoh's afterlife?
- You can sketch your tomb or draw a map of your tomb on squared paper.



20 to 30-minute activity



Giza Pyramids, Kenneth Garrett, 2006-02-07, ARCE

Want to Learn More?



Now you've completed this lesson you may want to continue to find out more about ancient Egypt, [this](#) is a good place to start. To find out about the work in conserving the stories of the past, click [here](#).

Activity 4 - Answers

Fabricius message

Did you manage to create the correct message to send to the master builder?



In case you're wondering, this means:

the tomb to Be made of gold inside a pyramid it needs to Be more than one opening the best quality statue of a crocodile and a dog the mummy case covering in silver

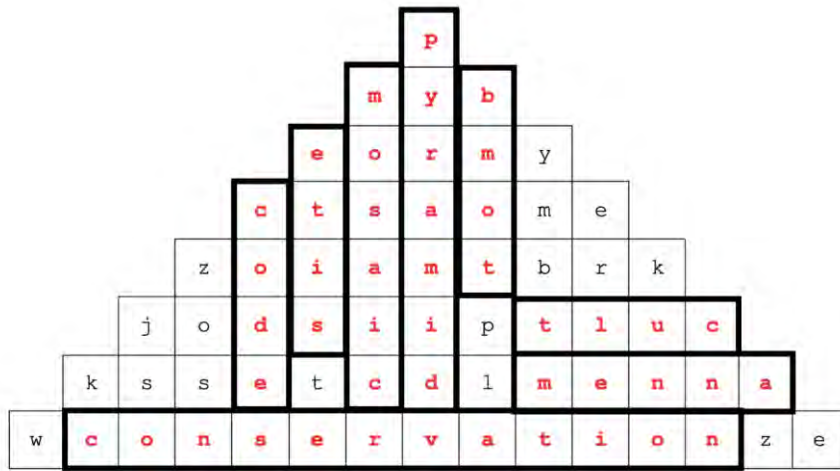


Page from the Book of the Dead of Hunefer, 19th Dynasty, the British Museum

Activity 5 - Answers

Egypt Word Search

Here are the answers to the word search. Did you manage to find all the words?



Quiz Answers

End of Lesson Quiz

Here are the answers to the quiz. How did you do?

1. 4 triangles, 8 edges, 1 square
2. After
3. Egyptian (demotic), Greek
4. Henuttawy
5. Bastet
6. Egyptology
7. Philologist
8. greetings to you

