

Ancient Egyptian Adventure

Guidelines on how to use workshop activity notes

The notes are for the two KS2 workshops to be held in the afternoon when the *Ancient Egyptian Adventure* team visits your school.

Pupils will get most from the workshops if two teachers or classroom assistants can be present to help the two members of the *Ancient Egyptian Adventure* team running it.

The notes are for teachers not pupils. Please read them beforehand to acquaint yourself with the themes in order to provide a greater experience for the children.

The notes can be used during the workshop to help answer pupils' questions about the replica artefacts.

Ancient Egyptian Adventure – The Secret of the Jewelled Heart
A National Museums Liverpool and Hope Street Partnership for Find Your Talent



NATIONAL MUSEUMS **LIVERPOOL**

Workshop notes: activity one – Daily Life

What did they eat and drink?

- **Barley** was the main ingredient used in brewing beer. It is thought that the barley was made into dough, part-baked, crumbled into water and left to ferment slowly. Spices and honey were used to flavour the beer. Egyptian beer was not the clear smooth beer we have today but a lumpy concoction, often drunk through a sieve or strainer.
- **Bread** was a staple food in Egypt. Usually it was flat bread, (unleavened), shaped by hand or sometimes cooked in a mould. ‘Emmer’ wheat was usually used. Bread was traded, used as a ration paid to workers and in offerings to the gods. Bread that has survived – thanks to the dry climate – comes mainly from tomb or ceremonial locations.
- **Carob** pods were used mainly as animal food but were known to be useful for human digestion. The pods were dried and ground, removing the seeds in the process.
- **Cattle** – Meat was not eaten every day as cattle were more useful trampling the fields and as pulling tools rather than food. On certain occasions cattle were killed and eaten, any meat left over was salted or dried to preserve it.
- **Chickpeas** – There is no evidence for how the Egyptians processed chickpeas for eating. Evidence for chickpeas comes from texts and charred remains that have been found in archaeological sites.
- **Coriander** is a spice used in modern Egyptian cooking and was likely to have been used in the same way in ancient times. Coriander also has many medicinal uses such as easing stomach problems and coughs. In antiquity it was considered a useful insecticide in stored products and was found as part of the offerings in Tutankhamun’s tomb.
- **Cumin** is a spice and was often used to flavour bread and pressed for oil. Today it is used to cure headaches and other pains but there is no evidence for this in the past. Cumin has been found in both tombs and town sites.
- **Figs** provided fresh fruit in the summer and could be dried for use all year. Figs were often used in bread to add flavour. Fig trees are very common in tomb scenes and figs are mentioned in Egyptian texts.
- **Fenugreek** is often grown with other plants used as animal fodder. It is a herb which can be used raw or cooked. Its seeds were used to flavour bread. Like coriander it is an effective insecticide and was found in Tutankhamun’s tomb.
- **Garlic** – The Egyptian garlic was usually smaller and not as strong as the European type. Garlic was often used for flavour, preserving meats, and garlic oil was valued for medicinal purposes. Garlic was placed in tombs as an offering and used in mummification, possibly as a preservative.
- **Lentils** were a good source of protein. Lentils have been found as offerings in tombs and are common at town sites such as Giza and Amarna.
- **Onion** – Both fully grown onions and smaller (‘spring’) onions are depicted in Egyptian tomb scenes. They were shown on most tables, often accompanied by bread. Onions were sometimes placed inside the body during mummification, the idea being to stimulate the dead person to breathe. One mummy was even found to have an onion in each eye cavity.
- **Tiger nut** – Tiger nuts are small tubers that have a sweet, nutty flavour, similar to coconut. They can be roasted, baked, ground into a powder, eaten raw or dried.

What did they use?

- **Comb** – For comfort in the hot climate many Egyptians had shaved heads. On certain occasions wigs were worn made from real hair. To keep wigs (and occasionally natural hair) as neat as possible combs were used. Many were made from bone and some from wood.
- **Baskets** woven from plant materials were common. They were used to store many things including food. Examples have been found in tombs containing offerings of bread, dried fruit and vegetables, or grain.
- **Frankincense** was used in temple ceremonies. A dried tree resin, it was burned to create a cleansing smoke which would perfume the sacred spaces. Frankincense was brought into Egypt from abroad.
- **Grinding pebbles** were used to break down materials of different kinds. Large pebbles were used to grind wheat into flour. Smaller pebbles were used to grind minerals for use as make-up and pigments (paint).
- **Limestone** was used for many monuments and tombs. The great pyramid at Giza is made from two types– a local yellow limestone for the inside and a white limestone from further away for the outer layer. The white limestone, called Tura limestone, must have made the pyramid look very striking.

What did they wear?

- **Amulets** were worn during life and in death to signify different things. Scarab beetle amulets or heart scarabs were used in death to protect the heart during the weighing of the heart ceremony to help the deceased reach the afterlife.
- **Beads** were made in many shapes and sizes from various materials. Some were semi-precious stones that were intricately carved, others were made from faience or other less precious stone and were more crude in design. Holes were bored through the middle and sand/quartz was often used to help the grinding process.
- **Linen** – Egyptians used many different types of linen. Most Egyptians would wear nothing at all or if necessary a very coarse linen which was made into loin cloths or nightdress-type shapes. Rich people would have finer more expensive linen which was often shown as looking nearly see-through.

What was dangerous?

- **Cobras** were dangerous and aggressive snakes and there are medical texts explaining how to deal with their bites. Cobras are seen in Egyptian hieroglyphs and art. Pharaohs are often shown with a cobra on their forehead – this was for protection and to show them as a representative of Wadjet the goddess of Northern Egypt. The goddess Meretseger was also a cobra and there are records describing the effects she had on dishonest people.
- **Crocodiles** – At the weighing of the heart ceremony, which the deceased went through before going on to the afterlife, the demon Ammut (who was part crocodile) ate their heart if they failed the test. An Egyptian needed a body to get into the afterlife - if someone fell into a river and was eaten by a crocodile they didn't reach the afterlife. It was recorded in a papyrus that a magician used a crocodile to eat a man who was 'hanging round' with his wife!

Workshop notes: activity two – Appearance



Object 1 – Head of Tutankhamun

This head can be identified as Tutankhamun as the statue is shown wearing a headdress with the cobra goddess Wadjet.

The cobra protected the pharaoh from his enemies.



Object 2 – Fragment of a face of Amun-Re

This object shows Egyptian eye make-up and how it was applied.

Kohl, made from soot, galena (lead ore) and other ingredients, was ground down and mixed with oil or paste to apply it to the eyes.



Object 3 – Nefertiti's daughter

The hair on the statue shows the girl's age.

The 'side-lock of youth' was a way of showing that someone was not yet independent or 'of age'.



Object 4 – Seated scribe

This seated scribe shows how status is reflected in the shape of a person.

The scribe is overweight because he can afford to eat rich foods.



Object 5 – Torso of Nefertiti

The clothing on this statue is extremely fine linen.

To own fine linen meant that you were of great importance, eg a member of the royal family including the pharaoh.



Object 6 – Bust of Nefertiti

Occasionally in Egyptian history women held the same power as the pharaoh.

In the case of Nefertiti she wore this particular crown with a cobra on the front as a sign of kingship.



Object 7 – Statue of Lady Tuy

This statue of Lady Tuy shows her wearing a long braided wig.

Wigs like this were only worn by married noble women.



Object 8 – Flies necklace

Golden flies were often awarded to noblemen by the pharaoh. They would be awarded to recognise success and bravery on behalf of the king.

Discussion Points

1. **Make-Up** – What was the make-up around the eyes actually for? It could be that it was purely decorative, as with make-up today. However, the properties of the eye make-up are antiseptic, and by putting it around the eye Egyptians helped prevent infection from dust and sand. Wearing the black eye-liner make-up also kept the glare of the sun away from the eyes.

What do you think eye make-up is for?

2. **The ‘side lock of youth’** – Can hair reveal anything about a person? For the ancient Egyptians a lock of hair that came down the side of a person’s head was significant. This was normally the only hair when a person was still in his/her youth - the rest was shaved. Once they were capable, children began learning their roles from their parents – for example, running a household. This meant that their ‘childhood’ as we know it did not exist.

What does childhood mean to us and to other cultures?

3. **Being Fat** – Can status be seen in the weight of an Egyptian? In ancient Egyptian art many noblemen were depicted with rolls of fat in their old age. This was a sign that they were successful enough to be able to afford the richer foods. This included animal fats, meat and wine, things not available to the average Egyptian. Scribes were part of this ‘noble society’ and were often shown with a fatter than average stomach.

How is being fat viewed in other cultures?

Workshop notes - activity three – Gods



Object 1 – Horus Falcon

(See object 5)

Horus, a hawk god, was connected with the living king.

Kingship is shown by the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt on the hawk's head. Upper Egypt is the south and Lower Egypt is the north of the country.



Object 2 – Anubis

Anubis, a jackal god, helped the deceased in the afterlife.

A priest would often dress as Anubis during the mummification process.



Object 3 – Bastet

(See object 4)

Bastet, a cat goddess, was considered to be a protector. She protected both the pharaoh and the household.

In this case Bastet is part human and shown holding various items, for example a sistrum, a musical instrument used in ritual.



Object 4 – Bastet

(See Object 3)

This statue of Bastet is in full feline form showing the goddess at rest. The part cat - part human form was used to show the goddess in action.

Object 5 – Horus Falcon

(See Object 1)



This statue of Horus the falcon with its large wings reflects his protective nature.

In other statues the wings reach around the pharaoh's head.



Object 6 – Hippo/Taweret

Statues of hippos were often used as votive objects reflecting fertility and rebirth.

The goddess Taweret is normally shown standing on two legs and pregnant.

Discussion Points

- **Biodiversity** – Why do some animals seen in ancient Egyptian art no longer exist in Egypt? For example – hippos, lions, crocodiles and other animals of the savannah. Was it the influence of human beings on the environment or natural developments. For example, Egypt used to be savannah country with wide open plains for grazing, where lions, hippos and other animals thrived. Once the climate changed these animals left and followed the resources they needed to survive. In the case of crocodiles, this is a man-made issue. When the Great Aswan Dam was built it stopped the river Nile from flooding. This in turn stopped the crocodiles from coming up river.

What other problems has climate change caused?

- **Seth and Taweret** – How did the Egyptians distinguish between Seth and Taweret? Seth was a male hippo. Taweret, the female hippo, was associated with fertility and rebirth and in the figurines was often shown pregnant and painted in lotus flowers. Female hippos had smaller tusks, were not territorial and were not as aggressive as male hippos.

Can you list all the attributes for a male hippo, like Seth?

- **Part human/Part animal or all animal** – Why are some gods shown as animals in one scene and then animal-headed humans in another? The way in which a god was depicted depended on three things. The first was whether the presentation allowed a god to be shown one way or the other. The second depended on why the god was being shown. If the god was holding something then it couldn't be depicted as just an animal - it needed hands. Finally, how a god was depicted depended on the space available. Animals need a lot; if there was only a tall narrow space then only an animal-headed figure would fit.

Can you think of any more gods shown in both ways?

Workshop notes: activity four – Pyramids

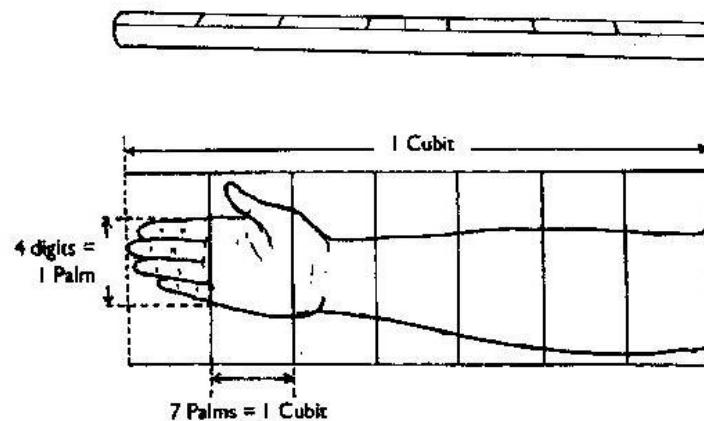
The cubit

The cubit was the main unit of measurement used by the Egyptians during the construction of monuments. It was used when building the pyramids to ensure that all the blocks were the correct size and were in proportion with each other.

A cubit was normally the length from a person's elbow to fingertip.

The cubit was divided into palms, which was the distance across the four fingers.

The palm was divided into digits, the width of each finger.



There is a cubit measuring stick on display in World Museum's Egypt gallery. Cubit sticks like this were issued at the beginning of a building project so that all the measurements would be consistent.

The 3/4/5 triangle

Each of the corners at the base of a pyramid would have to be a right angle. Any slight mistake at the bottom would become a catastrophic mistake at the top.

To create a right angle the Egyptians used a 3/4/5 triangle or what we call the Pythagorean triangle. This is a triangle with three units on one side, four units on the other side and five units on the long side. A triangle with these measurements will always give a right angle.

It is possible that the Egyptians also used set squares to ensure the angle on each corner of a pyramid was 90 degrees (or a right angle), although being a small instrument it could make measurements further away from the corner prone to large errors.

Ramps

The Egyptians used ramps to get the large blocks needed for pyramid construction up to the place where they were required. These ramps were edged in mud brick and filled with quartz rubble, limestone flakes and sand to create a stable surface. This was covered in a mud slip to create a smooth slippery surface for the sledge carrying the stone blocks.

There are two types of ramp which can be discussed using the model of the pyramid – these ramps are the perpendicular ramp and the spiral ramp.

- **The perpendicular ramp**

This type of ramp covered all or part of one side of a pyramid. It was made taller and longer as the pyramid grew. This would have slowed down the work considerably.

The other disadvantage was the space needed to keep the 1:10 incline - this was the steepest slope up which it was possible to push blocks of stone. At Giza there just isn't the space for a perpendicular ramp to reach the top of the pyramid. Even with these disadvantages, some Egyptologists think that, because it does not completely surround the pyramid, a perpendicular ramp would make it easier to keep a pyramid square and the correct shape.

- **The spiral ramp**

This type of ramp saved space and time compared to the perpendicular ramp. It was either a single ramp going from one corner or a series of ramps, one going up from each corner of the pyramid. It saved on materials and man-power, although it covered up more of the pyramid and, some suggest, it made it harder to ensure the pyramid was built to the correct shape.

Angles

The angle at which the pyramid was constructed was crucial to its overall stability and look. Most well constructed stone pyramids have an average angle of 52 degrees.

There is a famous example called the 'bent' pyramid which was begun at a steeper angle. Part way up the masonry began to fail. The angle was altered and the pyramid completed, although it was never used as a burial. Other pyramids have also been found where the masonry has failed after a miscalculation in the angles.