

Unit 10 What can we find out about ancient Egypt from what has survived?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children find out about the way of life of people living in ancient Egypt from archaeological discoveries. Children will develop their understanding of characteristic features of a society; identify the different ways the past is represented; and use sources of information to make simple observations, inferences and deductions.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit introduces children to a non-European society. It builds on the study of homes and household objects in Unit 2 by enabling children to apply the skills they learnt to a different society, a very long time ago. Unit 16 focuses on another non-European society and shows how enquiry skills and understanding of archaeological evidence can be developed with older children.

ADAPTING THE UNIT FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Year 5 and 6 children could:

- broaden their study of ancient Egypt by finding out about the Pharaohs – Tutankamen, Akenaten Tumsis III, Ramesses II and Hatshepsut, Horemheb
- discuss which are the most significant pharaohs and why
- find out about and discuss the different representations of Cleopatra
- be critical of the evidence that we have, *eg the Bible as a source of information about ancient Egyptians*

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- used a range of sources of evidence, including artefacts, pictures and written sources
- sorted historical sources into categories
- studied the way of life of people living a long time ago

VOCABULARY

In this unit, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with the passing of time, *eg ancient, modern, BC, AD*
- words associated with aspects of society, *eg food and farming, science, technology, architecture, beliefs*
- words associated with Egypt, *eg Nile, Pharaoh, Sphinx, hieroglyphics*
- words associated with life after death, *eg god, goddess, tomb, pyramid, canopic jar*

RESOURCES

- maps of ancient Egypt
- a class time line from 3,000 BC to present day
- information about life in ancient Egypt, *eg videos, pictures of artefacts, history books, postcards*
- replicas of ancient Egyptian objects, available from the British Museum

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

recognise that the past can be divided into periods, *eg ancient, modern*; demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of characteristic features of life in ancient Egypt; identify some of the different ways the past is represented; ask and answer questions about the past by using sources in ways that go beyond simple observations; communicate their learning, making appropriate use of specialist terms

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

describe different representations of the past; answer questions about the past by making simple observations about sources of information

some children will have progressed further and will:

make a reasoned judgement about the validity of different representations of the past; answer questions about the past by selecting and combining information from sources and giving reasons for their selection

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to locate ancient Egypt in time and place
- that information can be classified in different ways

- to observe an object in detail and to make inferences and deductions
- to record information about an object accurately

- to make deductions about life in the past from pictures of the landscape
- how much of the life of Egypt depended on the Nile

- to classify information in various ways
- about the range of objects which have survived from ancient Egypt
- to make inferences from objects about the way of life in ancient Egypt

- about aspects of life in ancient Egypt
- to make inferences and deductions from objects and pictures
- that what we know about the past is dependent on what has survived

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

What do we already know about ancient Egypt?

Ask the children what they already know about ancient Egypt. Help them to group existing knowledge under headings *eg daily life, houses, death*.

Use maps and a class time line to locate ancient Egypt in time and place. Establish what is meant by 'ancient' and 'modern'.

What can we learn about ancient Egypt from one object?

Show the children a picture or a replica of an object from ancient Egypt. Ask them to make a detailed drawing of the object and to describe it.

Ask the children to use information from the object and what they have learnt about ancient Egypt to decide, *What does this source tell us about life in ancient Egypt?* Ask them to think about why it is important for historians to consider a wide range of sources of information.

What does the landscape tell us about what life might have been like in ancient Egypt?

Give the pupils pictures of the Nile and of the Egyptian landscape. Ask them to complete a grid with two headings: 'What can we see that would make living in Egypt easy?' and 'What can we see that would make life difficult?'

Discuss as a class how the Nile provided water and a method of transport. Look at an atlas with children and tell them about the physical features of the Nile and how it flooded annually.

What objects survive from the time of the ancient Egyptians?

Give children pictures/postcards of ancient Egyptian objects. Ask them to sort these in different ways, *eg Which are made from wood, paper, pottery, stone etc? Which tell us about food, death, daily life, clothes, houses? Which tell us about rich people, poor people?*

Discuss with the children what they have found out and why they think these objects have survived. *Do we know more about rich or poor people? Why?*

What do objects that have survived tell us about ancient Egypt?

Give groups of children a topic, *eg food and farming, art, buildings, writing, technology*. Ask them to find three pictures and/or objects that they think can tell us the most about their topic. Ask the children to decide what they know for certain from their objects, what they can guess, and what they still need to find out. Ask groups to record their findings and talk about their topic to the rest of the class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- locate ancient Egypt on a map and place it on a time line
- group information in appropriate categories

- describe an artefact accurately
- make inferences and deductions from objects

- extract information about the landscape from pictures
- provide answers that show the relationship between the geography of Egypt and the way of life in the past

- sort information into different categories
- ask and answer questions about what has survived from ancient Egypt and what it reveals about the past

- select pictures illustrating aspects of a chosen topic
- infer and record information about a topic from pictures

POINTS TO NOTE

Children could read stories about ancient Egypt including those in the Bible to provide additional material for their discussion.

The purpose of this activity is to establish the children's prior knowledge. It may also be necessary to start to draw distinctions between myths and facts, *eg the curse of the Pharaohs*.

This activity requires children to apply what they have learnt about artefacts as a source of information.

The objective of this activity is to help pupils understand that the Nile provides food, water, transport, and the desert was the place of burial. The activity could be linked to Unit 14 'Rivers' in QCA's scheme of work for geography.

Pictures from books are easier to handle and sort if mounted on card.

The teacher should demonstrate that the same object can answer multiple questions about the past. It is important to ask what we still need to know and in that way maintain the sense of mystery.

This activity is designed to help children collect information in a structured way. The teacher may need to model the activity with the children before they begin to work on their own.

This activity could be adapted by giving the children some 'sentence-starters' to record their findings, *eg:*

The objects I chose were...

This evidence tells me for certain that...

This evidence suggests that...

I now need to find out...

This activity could be extended by asking the children to use reference books to see if they can find out more about their objects. As a conclusion, children could make 'books' with drawings of their objects and what the evidence tells us.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- about Egyptian tombs, pyramids and burial sites
- to use sources of information in ways which go beyond simple observation

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- what we can find out about ancient Egypt from what has survived
 - to produce a structured account about life in ancient Egypt

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

What did the ancient Egyptians believe about life after death?

Give the children information on ancient Egypt beliefs about life and death. Ask the children to select pictures of objects which provide evidence about what the Egyptians believed about life after death or about what happened when people died. Ask them to draw the objects and label them showing what the object might tell us, *eg a mummy – the body was necessary for life after death.*

Ask the children to create a museum by selecting pictures about death and mummification and by producing captions giving interesting information for the audience to read.

What can we learn about ancient Egypt from what has survived?

Discuss with the children what they have learnt about ancient Egypt. Discuss not only what is known but what is not known from what has survived.

Ask the children to produce a wall display on ancient Egypt covering all the topics they have found out about.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- select pictures about Egyptian beliefs
- draw and label objects accurately
- create a museum display on ancient Egyptians' beliefs about the after-life

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- make a display that shows understanding of the characteristic features of Egyptian society

POINTS TO NOTE

Teachers will need to be sensitive to the needs of their children if any of them are coming to terms with the death of a relative or friend.

The British Museum has an extensive ancient Egyptian collection. Some local museums also have mummies and other Egyptian exhibits.

The teacher may need to help the children to infer from the objects what they can tell us about Egyptian beliefs.

The teacher could play the role of the museum curator and visit each display asking questions to find out what the children have discovered.

This activity can be adapted by giving the children a fact sheet with captions to match with objects.

This activity provides opportunities to discuss the beliefs and practices of people from different cultural traditions and at different times and can contribute to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

This activity is designed to draw together the information the children have acquired. It could be extended by producing a final piece of written work.

The written activity could be adapted by providing the children with a writing frame.

Generate the structure of the writing frame through discussion with the class. Ensure that it is supportive and enables the key information to be presented.

Alternatively, the discussion could be the culmination of the activity.



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