

Long Live the King!

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School: St. Rita School, Hamden, CT

Subject Area: Ancient Egypt

Grade Level(s): Sixth grade; introductory World History course

Time Frame to Allow for Lesson/Unit: Two 40-minute periods

Introduction: Brief Description of the Lesson/Unit

This lesson will focus on the role and power of kings in Ancient Egypt. Ancient Egyptian beliefs in gods and the afterlife will also be part of the lesson. Most student work will be done in small groups. The lesson will include a brief play set in the time just after the death of King Tutankhamun.

Geographic Connections: Related to Summer Institute Themes

The lesson is inspired by information presented during the Institute about religious beliefs in Ancient Egypt and about the history of Egypt's rulers, especially Akhenaton, Nefertiti, and Tutenkhamun.

Vocabulary: Terms, Concepts and Actors

Terms: King, queen, priest, vizier, regent, citadel, temple
Amun-Re(Ra), Aton
Amarna, Thebes
Akhenaton, Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Horemheb

Concepts: Absolute power, afterlife, cult, leadership, monotheism, mummification, polytheism, royal succession

• Stage 1 – Desired Results

Common Core Content Standard(s):

6-8.2: Determine central idea or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

6-8.8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Understanding (s)/Goals:

Students will understand that:

- Even in a society with an "absolute ruler", other centers of power can develop to

Essential Question(s) Related to Theme(s):

- What qualities does an effective leader need?
- What is the proper use of governing power?

<p>compete (or cooperate) with the ruler.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Egyptian kings varied in success as they pursued their royal goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How powerful were the "absolute rulers" of Ancient Egypt?
<p>Student Objectives (Outcomes): Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the dialogue of a play, briefly summarize the play and develop a set of facts about the times of Akhenaton, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun. • Identify the characters by the opinions they express. • Apply these facts and opinions to an analysis of the rule of King Akhenaton. 	
<p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p>	
<p>Performance Task(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will identify and defend what their priorities would be if they had the opportunity to assume a role of elected leadership. • Students will summarize and take notes, using a provided form. • Using this form, students will assess the rule of King Akhenaton. • Students will discuss their findings in small groups. • Students will write a report about the lesson. 	<p>Other Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to writing prompts from day 1 will be collected and graded. • By the end of day 2, all students should have participated in the whole class discussions. Students who do not volunteer will eventually be called on. • Students will submit a report about the lesson.
<p>Stage 3 – Learning Plan</p>	
<p>Learning Activities:</p> <p>Before Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This lessons includes small groups. Decide in advance which students will be in which groups. Keep in mind having a mix of academic strengths and weaknesses in each group. Avoid grouping students together if you have reason to believe that together they will keep the group from being productive. <p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce the groups and have the students sit at their assigned group location. • Begin with a general class discussion about areas of responsibility that governments have. Write the students' contributions on the board (or use a laptop/iPad and projector). • Present the following writing prompt: You have taken the oath of office as President of the United States and are about to give your first address to the nation as President. Explain what your top three priorities as President 	

will be. For each priority, write at least one sentence explaining why the issue is so important for the country.

- After adequate time for reflecting and writing, allow the students to discuss their ideas in their small groups.
- If you believe there will be enough time in the period, you might open up to a general class discussion. (There probably won't be time for a general discussion.)
- Collect the responses.
- As part of the general class discussion (or after collecting the responses if there is not time for a class discussion), make sure to point out to the students that a President (or governor or mayor, etc.) typically has to work with other branches or agencies of government in order to achieve her/his goals. "If our President/governor/mayor could rule with absolute power, like the kings of Ancient Egypt, what might we gain and what might we lose?"
- Finish up by tying today's discussion about modern democracy to tomorrow's class on Ancient Egypt. "You'll be in these same groups tomorrow when you'll learn about a particular ruler of Ancient Egypt and how he governed." Review key terms and concepts that will come up tomorrow. This should be review; the students should already be familiar with the terms, etc.

Day 2:

- Have students get in assigned groups. Briefly review key terms and concepts.
- Hand out papers for taking notes and writing about the play. Explain that the setting of the play is Ancient Egypt just after the untimely death of King Tutankhamun and that the characters are tomb workers.
- Present the play. (The actors should be selected from a older grade. They should have had time to rehearse before today.) Applaud.
- Students can discuss the play together in their small groups. However, each student is responsible for keeping his/her own notes from the discussion. The actors should hang around to answer questions from the groups.
- Homework: Each student will hand in (or submit via Google Drive) her/his reflections on what they have learned today from the play, focusing on the role and power of the king, religious beliefs, and the afterlife.

Resource List/Bibliography:

Nefertiti Resurrected, Discovery Channel program (www.discovery.com) 2003; running time: 98 minutes; available on DVD or at "Echoes of Egypt" Live Binders link (<http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=829127>).

Egyptian Secrets of the Afterlife, www.nationalgeographic.com/channel, DVD, 2009. Running time: 50 minutes.

Harl, Kenneth W. **Origins of Great Civilizations** . The Great Courses, course number 3174, 2005. Lecture series on DVD, with accompanying course book. Episodes 5,6,7,8, and 9.

Rossi, Renzo. **The Egyptians: History Society Religion**. Barron's,1999.

Secrets of the Dead: Ultimate Tut, www.pbs.org , DVD, 2013. Running time: approximately 120 minutes.

How Are You Going to Use This Unit?

I will use this two-day lesson roughly half-way through a unit in sixth grade Social Studies, after the students have been exposed to some basic material on Ancient Egypt. The time of year will most likely be late November or early December. The location will most likely be Room 13 at St. Rita School in Hamden, CT.

Appendix A:

The King's Power Lunch

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Setting: Ancient Egypt, 1325 BCE, Valley of the Kings
Lunchtime for workers who prepare burial chambers

Please note: Any anachronisms are intentional.

[The scene opens with three workers sitting in a group on one or two large slabs of stone. Each worker has a bag containing the lunch that the workers have been given today. As the play proceeds, actors can eventually be “pretend eating” their lunches as they talk.]

PEPI: [Turning to Mentu] So, Mentu, what do you think they gave us for lunch today?

MENTU: What do *I* think? Open your bag and find out!

PEPI: Well, people have told me you're the most experienced worker here and that you've been on the job so long you can predict every move the bosses make.

REKH: I heard the same thing, Mentu!

PEPI: So I wanted to see if you could predict today's lunch.

MENTU: Okay, Pepi. Let's see. [Pauses, raising his hand thoughtfully to his chin] It's the third day of the week. [Another thoughtful pause] I predict we will be eating bread, grapes, a piece of fish, and some carob cake.

PEPI: [Opening his own bag and peering in] Wow, Mentu! You're good! You got everything right! Chalk that up to experience, huh?

MENTU: Yeah, chalk it up to experience. And chalk it up to looking in my bag soon as they handed me my lunch. [Chuckles, and others join in]

REKH: So, Mentu, I guess our crew is going to be busy for the next forty days.

PEPI: Why is that, Rekh?

REKH: Because the king died. You know about that!

PEPI: Oh, yeah, right. [Pauses briefly] But why forty days?

MENTU: We all have to pull together now to prepare the king for the afterlife. The embalmers will work on his body and we'll be getting the burial chambers ready for the mummy. The embalmers will have him mummified in forty days. And we'd better have those rooms ready when the mummy is ready.

PEPI: What a shame about King Tutankhamun. He was only nineteen. That's not much older than me! [Pauses] What did he die of?

REKH: I heard that he died in a chariot accident. He fell off and got caught under the wheels. I guess he had too many injuries for the doctors to cure.

PEPI: That's tough. [Pause] Ten years as king. Not much time to make an impact.

MENTU: Just ten years. Good thing we don't build pyramids for the king's tomb anymore. We'd only be half-way done with that kind of project.

REKH: I heard that the vizier was making a lot of the decisions for Tut. Maybe not so much now, but definitely at the beginning. Tut was *only* nine years old when he was crowned.

PEPI: What's a vizier?

MENTU: The vizier is the king's right hand man, the power behind the power. He makes sure that the governors of all the regions are carrying the king's orders. He's also in charge of the courts and other government departments.

PEPI: He sounds important.

MENTU: He *is* important. And for at least the next forty days, he'll probably be even *more* important. He'll probably be making all the decisions.

PEPI: Why is that?

REKH: Because King Tut has no sons to take over for him. [Pauses] I heard that the next king will be General Horemheb. King Tut always had great faith in him.

MENTU: Yes, the king had great faith in the general, but the general is far away right now, in a foreign land with the army. [Pauses] The priests will have something to say, I'm sure. At times, they seem as powerful as the king. [Counts off on his hand] There's the king, the vizier, the governors, the priests, the army. [Pauses] Lots of different kinds of power in a great nation like ours.

PEPI: But the king is *all*-powerful, right? I mean the king is god. Am I right or am I right? [Mentu and Rekh look at each other, but do not reply to Pepi.]

REKH: You know what I heard, Mentu, about Akhenaton and the priests in Thebes?

MENTU: [Smiling and gently nodding his head] You probably heard the same thing that I heard, but go ahead, Rekh. Tell me what you heard.

PEPI: Wait a minute. "Akhenaton": Where have I heard that name?

MENTU: You're too young to remember him. He was king before Tut. He was King Tut's father.

PEPI: [Excited] Now I remember! I heard my father mention that name one time when I was little, and my mother asked him not to talk about Akhenaton. When I asked why not, no one answered me. Then they told me to go play outside.

REKH: That's not surprising. A little boy wouldn't need to hear about Akhenaton.

MENTU: But now, Pepi, you will get to learn what our friend Rekh heard about Akhenaton and the priests of Thebes.

REKH: Well, I'm not absolutely sure it's true...

MENTU and PEPI: [Together] TELL US!!!

REKH: Okay. [Pauses, then leans forward] I heard that King Akhenaton was not happy with all the power that the priests of the temple at Thebes had. Sometimes they acted like...well, *Akhenaton* believed the priests thought they were more important than the king. He felt they had their hands in too many parts of the government.

PEPI: Was Akhenaton right? Were the priests taking power from the king? [Mentu and Rekh look nervously at each other and then laugh.] What? Did I say something funny?

MENTU: I don't think either of us wants to be overheard answering those questions. But I *will* tell you what Akhenaton did as king. One thing was he moved the capital city to a brand new location about 200 miles north of Thebes, to a place he called Akhetaton.

PEPI: So my parents sent me outside to play when his name came up because Akhenaton moved the capital from Thebes?

REKH:: Probably not. Remember what I started to say before about Akhenaton and the priests at the temple in Thebes? Moving the capital from Thebes was one of the ways he tried to take power from the priests.

MENTU: You know that there are many gods, and the temple of Thebes is dedicated to the god Amun. So Akhenaton declared that there was only one god: Aton, a sun god. This took power away from the priests in Thebes, who led a cult dedicated to Amun. Akhenaton even had his soldiers go from house to house to break up the shrines to other gods that people still had in their homes.

PEPI: Sounds like they were bad times if you didn't want to give up the old gods.

REKH: It was more than that. Akhenaton and Nefertiti were totally focused on their new capital, the worship of Amun, and taking power from the priests in Thebes. They weren't giving enough attention to things like the economy and the military. Other kingdoms and empires began attacking Egypt's territories because they saw Egypt as being weak. It seemed like all that Akhenaton cared about was that everyone would worship Aton. Did you know that Tut's original name ended with "-aton"? Tut changed it to "Tutankhamun" after Akhenaton died.

PEPI: But now we worship many gods, and I don't really hear people talk about worshipping Aton. So, how did we go back to the old ways?

MENTU: When Tut changed his name to "Tutankhamun", he was trying to make up with the priests in Thebes, because they worshipped Amun. Things had gone badly in so many ways under his father, Tut realized he needed to go back to the traditions that most Egyptians missed. He also gave more attention to the needs of the generals, and he moved the capital back to Thebes.

PEPI: But he was nine years old when he became king. How could a nine year old figure all of that out?

MENTU: Like Rekh said before, Tut probably received a lot advice from the vizier.

PEPI: Oh, yeah. The vizier: the king's right hand man. I forgot about him.

REKH: You know what I heard about the vizier? [Looks at one and then the other, in an attempt to create suspense.] I heard the vizier would like to be the next king. [Crosses arms and leans back in a self-satisfied way]

MENTU: You could be right about that. Now I'll tell you what *I* heard. [Looks at one and then the other, similar to the way that Rekh just did] The burial chambers we'll be preparing for the king's afterlife? We'll be preparing the rooms they were going to use for the vizier when he died.

REKH: [Surprised to hear this] Really? Those chambers are a bit on the small side for a king's final resting place. Okay for a vizier; kind of small for a king. We put lots of things in a king's tomb to keep him strong and healthy and happy in the afterlife. Will there be enough room for a king's stuff in the vizier's chambers?

MENTU: We might have to knock down part of a wall to get everything in. You know, it's not like this king was old and sick for a long time. His death was not expected, and I get the feeling some of these decisions are being rushed through. I know he wasn't king for very long, but things have been better under Tutankhamun than they were under Akhenaton. Tut deserves a decent send-off.

REKH: Agreed!

PEPI: Agreed! [After a pause] Is it true there have been tomb robberies here in the Valley of the Kings?

MENTU: Sadly, there have been. Generally, robbers take things that they can sell in the marketplace, but they usually leave anything the king or queen would need to survive in the afterlife. And they usually leave the mummy alone.

REKH: Yeah, but I heard some people got into Queen Nefertiti's chamber and took an axe to the mummy so she would have a bad afterlife.

PEPI: [Shocked and appalled] Why would anyone do such a terrible thing?

REKH: Nefertiti and her husband made many enemies in their time on the throne.
There are people who hope that Akhenaton and Nefertiti will be lost to history.

PEPI: Still, there's no excuse for disrespecting a mummy.

MENTU: Yes, let's agree on that. [Pauses, then turns in Pepi's direction] Why were you asking about tomb robbers?

PEPI: Well, I was thinking. Burying King Tut in the smaller chambers sounds like a kind of power grab by the vizier. But maybe that's a good thing for King Tut.

REKH: How is that?

PEPI: If King Tut is buried in the vizier's chambers instead of the fancier chambers that the king should have, and if some tomb robbers come along in the future, they won't find where the king was buried, so they won't rob the tomb or disrespect the mummy. King Tut will have an undisturbed afterlife forever and ever.

REKH and MENTU: [Together] Yeah, talk about power!

The End

Appendix B: Lesson Form

NAME _____ SOCIAL STUDIES
HR ____ PERIOD ____ DATE _____

PLAY: The King's Power Lunch

Recently we have been discussing the responsibilities and priorities of government and the balance of powers in our government. You have learned previously that the king, or pharaoh, of Ancient Egypt was not merely a king, but also a god. Officially, the king of Egypt had absolute power. It was expected that his commands would be obeyed.

You will be seeing a play today that is set in Ancient Egypt in the year of the death of King Tutankhamun (a.k.a. "King Tut"). The three characters are Mentu, Pepi, and Rekh, workers in the Valley of the Kings. As you listen to their lunchtime conversation, pay special attention to what they have to say about the power of the ruler at that time in Egypt. Use this form to take notes.

Briefly describe each character. (Do this after the play has ended.):

Mentu _____

Pepi _____

Rekh _____

List facts about Ancient Egypt that are spoken of by the characters. Take special note of comments by the characters about people in power and how they exercise the power to rule.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Key Terms: King, queen, priest, vizier, regent, citadel, temple
Amun, Aton, Thebes, Akhetaton
Akhenaton, Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Horemheb

Key Concepts: Absolute power, afterlife, cult, leadership, monotheism, mummy,
polytheism, royal succession

