

Symbols and Meanings in Ancient Egypt: Inquiry-Based Student Activity

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Introduction: This activity-based unit uses ancient Egyptian jewelry as primary sources which will engage students in critical thinking and inquiry-based learning. The activities may serve as stand-alone projects or may be used in their entirety.

Outcomes for Students:

- Inquiry based learning related to content;
- Critical thinking and exploration of ideas and content through engagement with activities focused on thinking about content of PowerPoint (PPT)
- Active student engagement in reflecting on the material and learning from the PPT

Geographic Connections: Content can be used and integrated into the study of world cultures, world history, world languages, world geography, map skills/cartography, art, art history, crafts and other related coursework. It also addresses:

- Ancient Egypt and environs
- Jewelry of Ancient Egypt --connections to tombs and historical areas
- Mythology in Ancient Egypt – reflections of geography and spacial relationships

Vocabulary: Discuss the terms from the PowerPoint with your students (jewelry, funerary artifacts, burial customs and procedures, Adornment/personal). Go through the PPT and select vocabulary with which they may be unfamiliar. Ask students to research the meaning of these unfamiliar words. Share vocabulary research with the class. Structure an important word board/vocabulary wall in your room or instructional area when working on the Egyptian PPT.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Common Core Content Standard(s):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 determines the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.2 determines the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

<p>Understanding (s)/Goals: Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art and artifact can teach us about the past, values of a culture, and belief systems 	<p>Essential Question(s) Related to Theme(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did early Egyptians design and make intricate jewelry? What was the purpose? • How did early Egyptians use the jewelry in their daily lives and in the afterlife? • What are the significance of the designs in jewelry shown in the PPT?
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<p>Student Objectives (Outcomes): Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the primary sources and infer meaning • Identify ancient Egyptian symbols and explain their significance
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Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

<p>Performance Task(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to transfer their knowledge of ancient Egyptian symbols and jewelry to create a modern interpretation or connection to belief systems 	<p>Other Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate activity • Superstition activity • Art activity • Professions activity (art history, curation, etc.)
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Stage 3 – Learning Plan

<p>Learning Activities:</p> <p>Activity 1: After studying the PowerPoint, Symbols and Meanings in Ancient Egypt, construct a debate concerning the art through jewelry of ancient Egypt. Study the topic to debate using the PowerPoint as well as additional resources, and ask students to construct arguments pro as well as con regarding the topic listed below.</p> <p><i>Ancient Egyptians were skilled artists and craftspeople who displayed their talents through the construction of beautiful jewelry. It was a sensible and rationale concept to bury these luxurious goods with the deceased upon their death.</i></p> <p>Activity 2: The material indicates that the amulets were signs of protection and used to also ward off evil events and happenings to the person wearing the amulet. Review the amulets shown and then design via a group of 2-3 students a new design of your making of an amulet that contains symbolism and would be helpful to you in your life today. Reflect on the purpose of the amulet in Egyptian life as well as amulets people you know might use today.</p> <p><i>Examples might include:</i> a lucky horseshoe over a house door, a rabbit’s foot in your pocket for good luck when running a race, and so on. Share your amulet design with your classmates and</p>
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detail how and why you designed the amulet and how you might put it to use. Write a personal statement from the artists/amulet designers and developers that explains this information.

Activity 3: Select 3 museums that have significant Egyptian collections from the list provided as a resource/reference. Study a portion of their collection that is of particular interest to you. Design a multi-media presentation that summarizes some of the artifacts and resources that are contained within the museum collection. Share this multimedia presentation with students in an elementary school classroom. Ask the elementary students what captures their interest and interest? Use this information to write a short list of suggested topics that you could teach/introduce to the elementary aged students.

Activity 4: Several of the pieces presented in the PowerPoint include the delicate technique of cloisonné. Research the following about the cloisonné technique: origin of the technique, objects that can include cloisonné, artisans experienced in cloisonné, ancient application of cloisonné techniques, present day artists incorporating cloisonné techniques. How is cloisonné made? How is the material formed? How difficult is the application of this technique?

Activity 5: The Pectoral of King Senusret II contains cloisonné inlaid with 372 carefully cut pieces of semi-precious stones. The work is masterful and indicative of a master craftsman's work. Design a complementary piece of jewelry to accompany the pectoral. It can be similar or very different in style, but explain how you have designed the piece to be complementary to the pectoral piece. Put together a model of your design using clay, or pieces of paper in collage, or any technique that would show the jewelry piece you have designed.

Activity 6: Select an ancient Egyptian belief or custom that has special meaning to you. Detail its use and explain how it is similar or dissimilar to traditions of today.

Activity 7: Acting as a travel agent, design a trip to a museum known for its Egyptian collections to view some of your favorite Egyptian artifacts. Plan the itinerary and what you most want to see in the museum collection. What are the highlights or the museum collection that are of interest to you? Develop a virtual tour of the collection you would like to view in person. Discuss with your teacher if it is possible to plan to see in person the collection of interest to you.

Activity 8: Study the vocation of art history. What can you do in the world of work with a degree and interest and background in art history? Does this interest any of your peers? Why or why not? List the advantages and disadvantages of a degree in art history. What colleges in your state offer art history degrees? Are there other areas of academic studies that can work in museums and with collections? What are these positions?

Activity 9: Look up descriptions of the jobs of people who work with museum collections in some fashion. Review and study the roles of: archeologists, curators, museum directors, security guards, and so on. Make a list of skills and abilities needed for each of the positions researched.

Activity 10: Research the use and purpose of jewelry in ancient Egypt. Compare and contrast on a 2-columned list the uses of jewelry today and also the purpose of wearing of jewelry both in ancient Egypt and in our current culture and time. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

Resource List/Bibliography:

This LiveBinder has been set up with tabs for various resources, including links to digital museum collections. <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=829127>