

The Many Faces of Egyptian Gods

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Subject Area: Social Studies, 6th Grade

Time Frame to Allow for Lesson/Unit: Three 45 minute class periods

Introduction: This lesson is designed to help sixth grade students understand the nature of Egyptian deities and their roles in the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. At this point in the year the students are familiar with the concept of religion, monotheism, polytheism, and the role of religion in society. Students are quick to categorize the Egyptian gods and goddesses into having domain over singular areas of the universe and/or the lives of their worshippers as the Greeks and Romans did. They become frustrated when the Egyptian deities don't fit into these neat boxes. In this lesson will have the students will rotate through a series primary source evidence stations in order to uncover the varied ways in which the Egyptians viewed and interacted with their gods and goddesses. By the end of the rotation students will have a better understanding of ancient Egyptian religious beliefs.

Geographic Connections: This lesson is related to the Summer Institute theme of Egyptian Religion, specifically our session on the Egyptian concepts of gods taught by Professor Manassa. The end result for this lesson will be students writing Exhibit Text for a group of artifacts. The aspects of curating an exhibit and providing comprehensive information for visitors were an important part of discussion during our visits to the Echoes of Egypt exhibit at the Peabody Museum.

Vocabulary:

- Primary source
- Polytheism
- Henotheism
- Deity
- abstract
- complex

1. Stage 1 – Desired Results

Common Core Content Standard(s):

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1b** Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.2** Write informative/explanatory texts, including the

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| <p>narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.</p> | |
| <p>Understanding (s)/Goals: Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Egyptians used gods and goddesses to represent abstract forces they believed to be in the cosmos. • Purposes of gods and goddesses are fluid in the minds of the ancient Egyptians and domains of control may overlap, repeat, or be multi-faceted. | <p>Essential Question(s) Related to Theme(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the “job” of a god or goddess? • What is the role of religion in a society? • When do people feel the need to “interact” or turn to a higher power? • Do animals have “personality traits”? |
| <p>Student Objectives (Outcomes): Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze photographs of various ancient Egyptian artwork to determine what the people believed about their deities. (Artifact Reports) • Work cooperatively in small groups to create a profile or scenario of a time when an Egyptian would need to rely on his or her belief in this god or celebrate/ worship the deity • Compose “Exhibit Text” for a collection of items to be featured in an exhibit on ancient Egyptian religion | |
| <p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p> | |
| <p>Performance Task(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual completion of Artifact Reports – questions and answers based on the primary source evidence. • Brainstorm with group members to determine a time when ancient Egyptians “interacted” with their gods/ goddesses • Creation of “Exhibit Text” for exhibit • Summarize understanding of topic in an individual “Time Traveler Journal” entry | <p>Other Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers to “Do Now” question • Monitoring of group work • Group presentation of material |

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Introduction (or “Do Now”) activity:

- Students will answer the following question individually using at least three complete sentences: “What is the “job” of a god or goddess?”. Answers may pertain to any time period/ religion.
- Students may pair-share their answers
- Teacher makes a brainstorming list on the board

Now that the students have gotten warmed up thinking about general ways in which people have viewed the roles of gods and religious beliefs in society, the class will turn its attention to the religion of the ancient Egyptians.

Activity:

Day One

- The class will have been previously broken down into heterogeneous groups of four to five students. Each group will be given the image of an artifact.
- The students will view the background info slide on the “Egyptian Religion” Keynote presentation.
- The students will be given the task outlined in Handout #1. This task has them analyze pieces of ancient Egyptian artwork that depicts a god or goddess. They are working from the perspective of an archaeologist on a mission to deliver truths about Egyptian religion to modern people.
- Students will use outside sources for additional background info on the god or goddess. ** Extra Laptops or computers needed for this activity. You may use one per group.**
- Students will turn in their Artifact Reports. Although they are working in groups, each student must turn in their own copy of the information. Students must turn in these “reports” at the end of day one so that the teacher may check them for accuracy.

Day Two

Intro Activity:

- The class will view the Echoes of Egypt exhibit website. The teacher should skip over the “Exhibit Text” and go straight to the list of artifacts without giving anyone any background information. The teacher should not click for more info on any item yet. Have the students read down the list of items and ask them to explain as much as they can about one or two in their binders.
- Go back and have the class read over the “Exhibit Text” together. Return to the list of

items and ask students to look at the same item (or another item) on the list and write down anything they now think they know about the item.

- The teacher should now click for more info on one or two of the items to see how accurate the students' hypotheses were.
- The class will discuss the importance of "Exhibit Text" for visitors to a museum exhibit they may know nothing about.

Activity:

- The group will then create "Exhibit Text" to accompany their group of artifacts in the fictional exhibit. They should use their Artifact Reports from Day One to compose a one page "Exhibit Text" with the purpose of informing their classmates about a specific deity. The presentation must include: The name of deity, something(s) in the universe that the deity represents, an explanation of how the deity is represented in the artwork, other ways we may see the deity depicted, and finally, the group must create a fictional but realistic scenario in which an ancient Egyptian may have felt the need to appeal to or celebrate this god or goddess.
- Teacher should touch base with these groups during the work period to make sure they are on track and their presentations are organized and clear.

Day Three

- The presentations will be shared with the class
- The teacher will review each image and provide any missing background information left out of presentations
- The students will summarize what they have learned about Egyptian religion by answering the following questions in a journal entry:
 - Describe ways in which the Egyptians depicted the supernatural forces of the universe
 - Why are both Hathor and Isis shown with cow horns?
 - How can Seti I be Osiris?
 - Why do you think Egyptians used certain animals to represent powers of the deities?
 - Pick a god or goddess other than the one your group reported. Create a scenario in which an ancient Egyptian or modern American would worship or appeal to this deity.
 - Are there any ways in which the religion of the ancient Egyptians is similar to any modern religions of today?

Resource List/Bibliography:

Students will be directed to the following sources for background information:

- <http://ancientegypt.co.uk/gods/index.html> accessed 7/25/13

- <http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/interactives/history/egypt/egyptiangod/> accessed 7/25/13
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/egyptians/gods_gallery.shtml accessed 7/25/13
- Petras, Kathryn, and Ross Petras. *Mummies: Gods & Pharaohs*. New York: Workman Pub., 2000. Print.

The class will visit the Peabody site in order to prepare for creating their own informative posters (Exhibit Text):

- <http://echoesofegypt.peabody.yale.edu/>

How Are You Going to Use This Unit?

This three-day lesson will be used early in my unit on ancient Egypt for sixth graders. Since gods and goddesses are so prevalent in the art and literature of this culture, it is important for students to realize how the Egyptians viewed these deities and the roles they believed the gods played in their everyday lives.

Handout #1 - The task

You and your team of esteemed archaeologists were chosen to curate a new museum exhibit with a special purpose. You have spent years uncovering artifacts pertaining to the religion of the ancient Egyptians. The artifacts your group has assembled show the variety of ways in which the ancient Egyptians portrayed their gods and goddesses in visual form, and also ways in which they wrote about these powerful deities. These artifacts will now be displayed at your local museum in a detailed exhibition.

As Egyptologists, you and your colleagues know that it can be difficult for the general population to understand the complex religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. You want to help the people who visit your exhibit to understand what they are viewing and how the item demonstrates the nature of the Egyptian religion.

Your team's task is to fill out an Artifact Report for one of the groups of items that will be in the exhibit. The items are grouped according to the god or goddess it shows. This Artifact Report will highlight the important features and information about the deity. You will then use this report to create a comprehensive label for when the items are displayed in the exhibit.

The questions for each artifact report are located at your station. You may recopy each question into your own binder or echo the question in your answer.

Your team has been assigned artifacts depicting: _____