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Ancient Egypt

Mr. Donn and Maxie's Always Something You Can Use Series

Lin & Don Donn, Writers

Kerry Gordonson, Editor Bill Williams, Editor Dr. Aaron Willis, Project Coordinator Amanda Harter, Editorial Assistant

Social Studies School Service 10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802 Culver City, CA 90232 http://socialstudies.com/access@socialstudies.com/800) 421-4246

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10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802 Culver City, CA 90232 United States of America

(310) 839-2436 (800) 421-4246

Fax: (800) 944-5432 Fax: (310) 839-2249

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Anc	ient Egypt Introduction	Ι
<u>Se</u>	ctions:	
1.	Introduction, Map, Map Puzzles	3
	Map of Egypt	
2.	Gifts of the Nile	9
	Gifts of the Nile	
	Draw the Ancient Egyptian Way	
3.	The Double Crown and the Three Kingdoms	17
	A Quick History of Ancient Egypt	
4.	Hieroglyphics & the Rosetta Stone	23
	Hieroglyphics & the Rosetta Stone	
	Write in Hieroglyphics	
5.	Isis & Osiris, Major Deities	29
_	Reference: Ancient Egyptian Gods & Goddesses	
	The Legend of Isis and Osiris	
	My Egyptian Made-Up God	
6.	Dwelling Places: Pyramids	37
	Dwelling Places: Pyramids	39
	The Pyramid Hypothesis	43
7.	Dwelling Places: Tombs	
	Dwelling Places: Ancient Egyptian Tombs	47
8.	Burial Practices—Mummies and the Afterlife	
	Mummies and the Afterlife	
	Sequence Chain: Mummification	59
9.	Egypt Projects	
	Egypt Projects	63
10.	Dwelling Places: Temples	
	Dwelling Places: Ancient Egyptian Temples	67
11.	Professions: Pharaohs	
	Professions: Pharaohs (Kings and Queens)	71
12.	Professions: Nobles, Viziers, Priests	
	Professions: Nobles and Administrators	
	Professions: Priests	
	The Game of Senet	81
13.	Professions: Soldiers, Scribes, Artists, Peasants	
	Professions: Soldiers, Scribes, Artists, Peasants	85

14.	Daily Life in Ancient Egypt	89
	Ancient Egyptian Women & Daily Life in Ancient Egypt	
	Wrong Statements – Correct Statements	
15.	Life on the Nile	97
	Dwelling Places: Houses	
	Life on the Nile	
16.	Monuments, Records, and Archives	105
17.	Artifact Recovery	107
18.	Deep in the Tombs of Egypt and/or My Word!	109
	Deep in the Tombs of Egypt	
	My Word!	113
	Vocabulary List	
19.	Pharaoh's Fun House/Egypt Day	117
	Pharaoh's Fun House Games	
20.	Additional Activities	121
21.	Using Lessons from the Internet in the Classroom	123
22.	Ancient Egypt: Lesson for a Substitute Teacher	
	Gift of the Nile Business Instructions	127

ANCIENT EGYPT Introduction

Subject: Ancient Egypt

Level/Length: This unit was written with sixth graders in mind, but can easily be adapted for grades 5-9. The unit is presented in nineteen sections including the final activity; some sections are mini-units and will take longer than one class period to complete. Lessons are based on a 55-minute class period or they can be adjusted to fit any time frame. As written, time frame needed to complete this unit: 6–7 weeks.

Unit description: This unit covers 5000 years of ancient Egyptian history and explores Upper and Lower Egypt, the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom periods, along with gifts from the Nile, mummies and the afterlife, government, legends, gods and goddesses, hieroglyphics, inventions, professions, beliefs, and daily life. It concludes with a mini-unit, Pharaoh's Fun House. Activities are varied and include classifying, abstracting, map work, writing, reading, speaking, researching, interpreting, presenting, and other higher level thinking activities.

Rationale: In view of the latest government guidelines on education with "no child left behind", this unit was developed to meet standards applicable in most states. Lessons are designed to address various learning styles and can be adapted for *all* students' abilities.

ANCIENT EGYPT Setting up the Room

With this unit, there is little need to set up much of the room in advance. Travel posters or maps will brighten the room until student work is posted. Throughout the unit, the students will be creating several things to post on the classroom walls or bulletin boards including "In Praise of Me Poetry," "Stump the Audience," and "Backgrounds" for the live stage play *Life Along the Nile* and for "Pharaoh's Fun House."

We would encourage you to set up a word wall and something special above the door leading into your classroom.

WORD WALL

Design: This is consistent for all units, but each has its own look. We suggest the outside shape of a pyramid. Place new words as you discover them in the unit on your word wall.

Once a week, have the students pick a word, any word, define it, and use it in a sentence. Use the word wall to fill in short periods of time throughout the unit. Direct the students to select any 5 words from the word wall, and create ongoing news in a letter home about their visit to the Nile.

<u>DOOR INTO THE CLASSROOM:</u> On the hallway side of the door into your classroom, use construction paper to frame your doorway, creating an entrance to ancient Egypt. We suggest the using a pair of obelisks, with the eye of Horus or Ra over the door.

SECTION ONE: Introduction, Map, Map Puzzles

Introduction

Egypt's Natural Barriers

Map

Time frame: 1 class period (55 minutes)

Preparation:

• Daily Question. Use overhead or write question on the chalkboard. (This is a student writing activity. Students are to write answers to daily questions in their notebooks upon arrival.)

- VHS player & VHS copy of the movie "Stargate" or "Raiders of the Lost Ark" or DVD player & DVD of the same movies
- Overhead transparency of Map of Egypt
- Materials needed to make Map Puzzles
 Heavy paper or cardboard stock to which the students can glue their maps
 Glue, scissors (students should have these in their desks, but have extra on hand.)
 Business Sized Envelopes one per student
 A box or bag to use to collect envelopes
- Reproducible *Map of Egypt*

Daily Question: What is a natural barrier?

Open Class: Welcome to ancient Egypt!

Opening Activity: Show a short cut from one of these two movies:

- <u>Stargate</u>: Show the opening credits through the end of the scene on the Giza Plateau (when the ring is standing). The art behind the credits and the music are both perfect for our needs; the opening scene shows an archaeological dig.
- Raiders of the Lost Ark: Show the scene where they find the miniature village in the pyramid. This cut shows paintings on tomb walls, hieroglyphics and more.

Background: Tell the students:

The ancient Egyptians were fascinating people, and thanks to the movies, are often misunderstood. The ancient Egyptians were not in love with death, but with life! They enjoyed their life to the fullest. They worked very hard, but saved time to enjoy family, friends, music, parties, swimming, fishing, hunting, sailing, and especially their children, all of which were very important to the ancient Egyptians.

Animals were very important to the ancient Egyptians. Unlike other ancient cultures, whose gods looked somewhat like people, most ancient Egyptian gods had animal heads.

Cats, especially, were held in high esteem. The ancient Egyptians believed that cats had magical powers. They believed cats protected their homes and children from danger, and helped their crops to grow. The ancient Egyptians carefully protected their cats. Any person who killed a cat paid for that crime with their life!

The ancient Egyptians believed in an afterlife. They believed that people enjoyed many of the same activities in their afterlife as they did in their current life. They prepared for their afterlife by filling their tombs with small and large statues of friends and family, with household items, and with other items they might need to keep them company and to help them have a good time.

The ancient Egyptians built huge structures like the pyramids filled with incredible objects of art. They invented the 365-day calendar. They managed to stay alive as a civilization for over 4000 years. (The U.S.A. has only been a country for about 230 years.) How were they able to maintain that continuity? Part of the answer lies in their geography.

Class Activity: Egypt's Natural Barriers

Ask: What is a natural barrier? Does anyone remember? (Get an answer.)

Say: What truly helped to keep Egypt isolated from much of the rest of the early ancient world was their geography.

Place *Map of Ancient Egypt* on the overhead. Point out and write down Egypt's natural barriers. Be vague (do not name specific deserts or mountain ranges yet.)

• North: Mediterranean Sea

East: Red SeaSouth: MountainsWest: Desert

Activity: Map of Ancient Egypt

Hand each student one copy of the blank *Map of Ancient Egypt*. Together, go over the natural barriers one more time, and direct students to write these barriers on their maps. Point out the Nile River, and the location of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Add those names to the map on the overhead. Check to make sure all students are participating in this activity.

Since Lesson 2 is the Nile River, on opening day you need only briefly introduce the Nile. Say: The Nile River is the longest river in the world. It is over 4000 miles long. It starts in the mountains in Central Africa and flows north, downhill, to the Mediterranean Sea. That's why Lower Egypt is located to the north at the Nile delta, and Upper Egypt is located south, on higher ground.

Individual Activity: Map Puzzles

- Direct students to glue their maps to a piece of cardboard
- Have them color their maps
- Direct students to each cut their own map into no less than 15 and no more than 25 pieces to create a map puzzle. Assign each student a number and have him or her write that number on each one of his or her map puzzle pieces. Tell students we're doing this so that the puzzles don't get mixed up.
- Hand out one envelope per student.
- Direct students to put their map puzzle pieces into their envelope, and sign their name across the flap. Tuck the flap in, but do not seal it as we're going to get these pieces out again later on.
- Collect all envelopes in a box or bag, making sure each student has written their name across the flap, and that each student has written their number on each piece. (If the student was assigned the number 28, all pieces should have 28 written on the back. Some students may need clarification on this.)

Close Class: That's all for today. See you tomorrow crocodile, at the Nile!

Teacher note: NOT TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS.

It's very important that students number the back of their puzzle pieces. If their assigned number is 30, their puzzle pieces must have the number 30 on the back of each piece. Tell them to do this to avoid possible confusion. When you collect the envelopes, make sure they have followed the directions. Here's why:

- In Lesson 1, students create Puzzle Maps.
- During Lesson 4, students will receive their Map Puzzles back, sort of.
- Prior to handing the Map Puzzles back, remove one piece from each puzzle.
- Envelopes will not be handed back to the person who created them. They will be handed back at random, so that one student will attempt to solve another student's puzzle, without knowing that one piece is missing.
- That's what archaeologists do. They try to put pieces of a puzzle together without all the pieces, in our case, without even knowing that they are missing a piece or two. (These instructions are also listed in Lesson 4.)

NAME: _	
DATE: _	
CLASS:	
PERIOD:	

Map of Egypt

