

The Art of Ancient Egypt Educators Guide



INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART

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The Art of Ancient Egypt

Educator Guide Introduction

Using This Guide:

This teaching resource was created to help you introduce students to ancient Egyptian art and imagery and to complement history lessons. The activities represent aspects of Egyptian life and offer students a chance to explore how these ancient people still impact us today.

The IMA also offers many other opportunities to learn about Egyptian art. Visit the museum for a tour of the galleries or view the many videos on Egyptian art by visiting the IMA website (www.imamuseum.org) and clicking on the “Interact” tab. Links to the IMA pages on iTunes U and YouTube are located there.

Helpful Hints:

- Use this guide to assist you in lesson planning.
- Activities are given grade level recommendations and have appropriate standards listed for each one.
- Each activity has an estimated amount of time needed to complete an activity. Activities are generally divided into one or two, 30-minute sessions. The 30-minute format is designed to give you time for pre and post discussion or prep and clean up for production activities.
- Images of the Egyptian art can be printed out in hardcopy and given to students or projected digitally in the classroom (images can be found by typing the accession number into our “Search the Collection” feature on our website (www.imamuseum.org)).

Glossary

Canopic	term often used to describe a funerary jar derived from <i>Canopus</i> , a location in Egypt
demotic	an early form of Egyptian writing
hieroglyph	symbol or picture used to create meaning in ancient Egyptian writing
historical art	work of art intended to relay important events from the past
iconography	symbolic images used to and widely recognized by a culture which consistently represent the same ideas
narrative art	work of art that tells a story
pictographic	words using pictures for communication when describing written language
relief sculpture	work of art made by carving away material to leave a raised surface that defines an image
Rosetta Stone	piece of stone discovered with writing on it in two languages (Egyptian and Greek), using three scripts (hieroglyphic, demotic and Greek) that was used to decode hieroglyphic writing

headrest



ancient Egyptian people
Egypt
Old Kingdom
2600-2195 B.C.E.
Accession Number: TR 9423/3

headrest



Bedawi people
Sudan
1900-1930
Accession Number: 1994.37

divine mother Isis and her son Horus



ancient Egyptian people

Egypt

64-332 B.C.E.

Accession Number: 28.225

mother and child



Kongo peoples
Democratic Republic of the Congo
1880-1920
Accession Number: 1998.2

baboon-headed canopic jar



ancient Egyptian people
Egypt
Late period
664-332 B.C.E.
Accession Number: 28.245

jackel-headed canopic jar



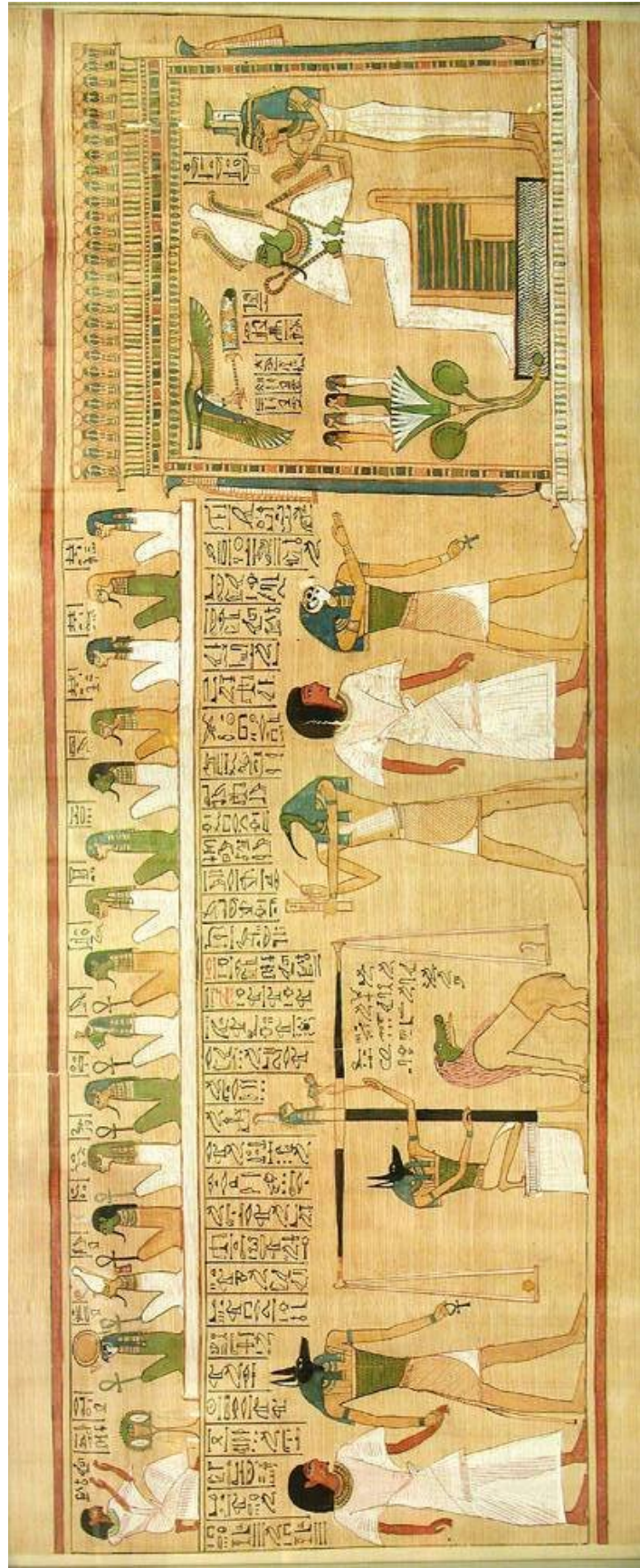
ancient Egyptian people
Egypt
Late period
664-332 B.C.E.
Accession Number: 28.245

mummy coffin with lid



ancient Egyptian people
Egypt
New Kingdom
18th or 19th Dynasty
1539-1185 B.C.E.
Accession Number: 28.244

Book of the Dead of Hunefer—Weighing of the Heart



ancient Egyptian people
Egypt
19th Dynasty
around 1310 BC
British Museum

Activity 1: Egypt in Africa and Beyond

Recommended for Grades 6-12

One, 30-minute session

Objectives:

- Students will examine the connection between ancient Egypt and contemporary Africa.
- Students will discover how Ancient Egypt influenced, and continues to influence, other societies.

Indiana Academic Standards met by this activity:

Social Studies: 6.5.9, 7.1.2, 7.1.16, 7.1.20, 7.5.9

Visual Arts: 6.1.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.4.1, 6.13.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.3, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.13.1, 7.13.2, 8.1.1, 8.3.1, 8.3.2, 8.13.1, 8.13.2, H.1.2, H.1.3, H.3.1, H.13.2

Supplies:

- Images of Egyptian art in the IMA's collection—*headrests, divine mother Isis and her son Horus, mother and child* (digitally projected or printed out hardcopy)
- Examples of Egyptian influence in contemporary culture (books, movies, advertisements, etc. collected by students)

Introduction:

The grandeur and intrigue of ancient Egyptian life was immortalized in the art created under the rule of many pharaohs and has continued to pervade contemporary culture through movies, ads and the proliferation of Egyptian imagery in everything from costumes to product packaging.

Because of the larger-than-life scale of ancient Egypt and its people, both in history and our contemporary interpretation of it, it is often difficult to keep in perspective that this was and continues to be a thriving, important culture and a part of a larger Africa.

In this activity, explore with students the ways ancient Egypt still plays a role in African society through artistic contributions.

There are two images of *headrests*. One is an example of a contemporary African headrest while the other is an example of an ancient Egyptian headrest. Both objects have a shared purpose, to support the head like a pillow and protect elaborate hairstyles. The earliest examples known come from Egypt around 4,000 years ago. These are found across Africa today in places like Egypt, Mali, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The continued use of the headrest is an interesting connection between ancient Egypt and Africa today.

Similarly, *divine mother Isis and her son Horus* and *mother and child* depict a timeless subject: a mother and child. The ancient Egyptian piece uses iconography that suggests the mythology and prized attributes of that culture, while the more modern one created by the Kongo peoples embodies the features found beautiful in that society today.

In both ancient and modern African societies, these types of images related to maternity represent the most important role played by women in these cultures: motherhood.

Other similarities between these two figures are the poses and proportions of the figures. The mother is much larger than the child indicating importance. In African art today, artists continue to use exaggerated proportions to indicate prominence and importance of figures in a work of art.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to look at the two images of *headrests* and have them speculate on their function.
2. Using the two *headrests*, compare the ancient Egyptian and more modern African objects. How are they the same? (Function and basic design) How are they different? (Materials and style)
3. Similarly compare the two images of mother and child. Discuss the influence of ancient Egyptian objects on contemporary African life using the information in the Introduction as a starting point.
4. Next, ask students to think in a larger sense about ways ancient Egyptian culture has influenced society today. In the form of a presentation including images, video or objects ask students to find examples of ancient Egyptian imagery in contemporary culture. Be sure there is at least one example from an African culture and one from American culture. Examples are African art objects, movies such as *The Mummy*, reproductions found for sale of ancient Egyptian burial goods, Halloween costumes, etc. The presentation can be shared with the group or submitted individually for a grade.

Activity 2: Preparing for the Afterlife

Recommended for Grades 6-12

One, 30-minute session

Objectives:

- Students will explore ancient Egyptian funerary practices.
- Students will write an essay contrasting the realities and stereotypes of ancient Egyptian funerary practices.

Indiana Academic Standards met by this activity:

English/ Language Arts: 6.4.1, 6.4.3, 6.5.3, 7.4.1, 7.4.3, 7.4.5, 7.5.3, 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.4.4, 8.4.5, 9.4.1, 9.4.2, 9.4.5, 9.4.6, 9.5.3, 10.4.1, 10.4.2, 10.4.4, 10.4.5, 10.4.6, 10.5.3, 11.4.1, 11.4.4, 11.4.7, 12.4.1, 12.4.4, 12.4.7

Visual Art: 6.6.2, 6.7.3, 7.1.3, 7.7.3, 8.2.2, 8.7.3, H.1.3, H.7.3

Supplies:

- Images of Egyptian art in the IMA's collection—*baboon-headed canopic jar*, *jackel-headed canopic jar*, *mummy coffin with lid* (digitally projected or printed out hardcopy)
- Any of the *To Live Forever* videos located on the IMA website (www.imamuseum.org) and clicking on the "Interact" tab. Links to the IMA pages on iTunes U and YouTube are located there.
- Image from the *Book of the Dead of Hunefer—Weighing of the Heart*
- Books, on-line resources and other research material collected by students
- Paper
- Pencils

Introduction:

In terms of popular knowledge about ancient Egypt, the practices surrounding burial are the most common. An accumulated awareness of these practices has been established both through the interest in more authentic experiences at museums and historical study and stereotypes pervasive in popular culture.

This activity will ask students to think about what they already know about ancient Egypt, how they learned it and how much of it is accurate or only based on romanticized images from movies or television. The foundation for the exploration will be the objects and images included in this kit. First are the two objects, a funerary jar and a reproduction of a carved relief.

Funerary jars, sometimes called canopic jars, were used to store internal organs for use in the afterlife and were preserved in these containers during the process of mummification. The term "canopic" is derived from *Canopus* a location in Egypt. It is now more descriptive and accurate to use the term "funerary." The image on the jar lid represents a son of Horus and there were a total of four that were intended to hold a specific organ and summoned the protection of a specific goddess. They are listed

below:

- Duamutef (jackal headed jar) representing the east, contained the stomach and was protected by the goddess, Neith.
- Qebehsenuf, (the falcon-headed jar) representing the west, contained the intestines and was protected by the goddess Selket.
- Hapi (the baboon-headed jar) representing the north, contained the lungs and was protected by the goddess Nephthys.
- Imseti (the human-headed jar) representing the south, contained the liver and was protected by the goddess Isis.

The *Book of the Dead of Hunefer—Weighing of the Heart* image depicts a scene during the ceremony ancient Egyptians believed took place in the hall of judgment after death. During this ceremony, the deceased was brought to the hall by Anubis and his or her heart placed on a scale to be weighed against the feather of truth. The *Eater of Hearts* depicted in this image with features of a crocodile, lion and hippopotamus waits for a verdict against the deceased person in which case it will receive the heart. If a positive judgment was reached, it was believed Horus then Osiris would lead the candidate to the netherworld.

Both the jars and the relief indicate the elaborate process that went into preparing both a body and soul for the afterlife.

Similarly, the process of mummification, essential to the ancient Egyptian death ritual, has become common knowledge today. The mummy coffin in Slide 8 was made for a non-royal person of a middle class. Lying in a tomb, it would have been horizontal and was coated with a black, petroleum-like substance called bitumen most likely to honor Osiris, ruler of the dead.

Procedure:

1. Before viewing the images of the *baboon-headed canopic jar, jackel-headed canopic jar, mummy coffin with lid* and the *Book of the Dead of Hunefer—Weighing of the Heart*, ask students to make a list of what they already know about ancient Egyptian burial rituals and indicate where they learned each item if possible.
2. As a group discuss the lists, noting the overlap and divergence of information and sources. The resulting discussion should produce a list of ideas about ancient Egypt that can be either confirmed or refuted based on research.
3. Next, look at the images and discuss them using information provided in the introduction as a foundation.
4. Ask students to identify any topics on the group list that were confirmed or refuted based on this study. Cross them off the list.
5. As individuals, ask each student to create a research project that addresses the remaining group topics. Using books, on-line resources and videos from the

IMA, argue for or against each idea held about ancient Egypt in the beginning. Students should be encouraged to evaluate the reliability of the sources given in the initial discussion and use alternate sources to compare and contrast ideas.

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