

YEAR 4 UNIT 1: The Achievements of Earliest Civilizations

Enquiry Question: How much did the Ancient Egyptians achieve? Topic: The Ancient Egyptians

Related units: (Prior Learning, if you can try and link to previous years)

Unit overview (About the unit needs to link with National Curriculum)

In this unit, the children will explore who the Ancient Egyptians were, what they did, and discuss whether Ancient Egypt deserves its reputation as one of the most important early civilisations. The National Curriculum Programmes of Study for History require you to study Ancient Egypt in the context of three other early civilisations. These are the Shang Dynasty of Ancient China, Ancient Sumer and the Indus Valley civilisation. The first session introduces all 4 civilisations and supports the children in understanding where they were located in time and place. It looks at some of the common features that made them so successful.

The children could go on to study more about these cultures as part of extension or homework activities. It is also important to make comparisons with what was happening in Britain at the same time, linking back to prior learning in Year 3. This helps the children to understand why the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians should be regarded as so significant.

Assessment (Expectations) (This should be on the knowledge organizer – check they match up)

Assessment:

- Identify three or more of the main achievements of the Ancient Egyptians.
- Provide some valid detailed reasons for the chosen achievements.
- Make some reference to specific evidence, dates, etc.

End of unit quiz

Scientific vocabulary (these also need to be on the knowledge organizer)

Ancient
Civilisation
Fertile
Antiquities
Pharaoh
Achievement
Mummification
Pyramid
Hieroglyph
Archaeologist
Scribes
Papyrus
A mace
Hieroglyphs
Excavation
Inscription
Canopic jars
Shaduf
Shabti
Irrigation
Cartouche
Sarcophagus
sphinx

Activities and learning outcomes (Add information from unit plans)

- study the achievements of the earliest civilisations
- understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources

Big finish:

Children collect their own sources to create a 21st century time capsule. They explain why they have chosen the object; arguing what the future civilisations would learn about our times.

Cross-curricular links (this needs to be on the knowledge organiser)

Investigations:

- Make comparisons with what was happening in Britain at the same time, linking back to prior learning in Year 3.
- Research why the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians should be regarded as so significant

Writing opportunities:

- writing a diary or newspaper account

Cross-curricular links (this needs to be on the knowledge organiser)

Maths opportunities:

- Use timelines
- Using the ancient Egyptian decimal system to solve mathematical problems

Teacher knowledge (this is on the unit overview)

Ancient Egypt existed some 5,000 years ago. Although the actual end date is uncertain, it is estimated that it lasted around 3,000 years as the leading nation in the Mediterranean world. It owes much of its success to the River Nile, whose flooding cycle and controlled irrigation allowed for fertile land and prosperous agriculture. There is a reasonable amount of surviving evidence through structures such as pyramids, temples, artefacts – especially grave goods – as well as writing. The Egyptians had a system of writing called hieroglyphics. The Egyptians had a well-structured and stratified society with pharaohs at the top, nobles, then scribes and priests, but most were farmers. There were also slaves. The status of women was relatively high in Egyptian society, with some becoming pharaohs. There were many famous pharaohs including Rameses III, Akhenaten, Cleopatra and Tutankhamun. Religion was very important to the Ancient Egyptians, and they had a strong belief in the afterlife – as evidenced by the often elaborate burial processes. This topic is an ideal one for a museum visit. Rich Victorians and Edwardians were fascinated by the Egyptian culture and collected Egyptian artefacts to decorate their homes. Many of these artefacts have now found their way into public collections, meaning many of our regional museums have extensive Egyptian collections. The British Museum houses the largest collection of Egyptian artefacts outside Egypt. Many museums offer workshops and some offer loan boxes of genuine or replica artefacts. If you would like to use artefacts, it is also worth asking parents and members of the school community, who may have had a holiday in the area and brought back souvenirs they are happy to loan or donate to your collection. There are many exciting cross-curricular opportunities resulting from this unit. However, it is important to use time outside your history allocation if, for example, you want to mummify an object or design and create your own shaduf. This unit also provides many opportunities for homework and extension activities.

Resources (Add suggested web resources and concrete resources you will need for the unit; teachers need to check they have the resources for the topic)

Websites:

For the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun:

- <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/tut.htm> contains extracts from Howard Carter's account
- <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/discoveringTut/> – collection of Harry Burton's photographs of the discovery etc.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38WtA9mr580> – Lego animation of the discovery (could be used to discuss historical accuracy, representation, interpretation, etc.)
- <https://www.teachertube.com/video/discovery-of-the-tutankhamun-tomb62284> – section of film taking you into the tomb today – comparison with how this looked in 1922
- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/uncovering-tutankhamuns-tomb180957168/> – image from Carter's notes Rising Stars 2019 © Hodder & Stoughton Limited 2 Year 4 Unit 1: The Ancient Egyptians
- BBC Bitesize <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zcsgjxs/videos/4> – 37 clips on Egypt, includes Jamie Theakston on opening Tutankhamun's tomb Pyramids:
- <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/clips/z849wmn> – BBC website Building pyramids series of short films
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/egyptians/launch_gms_pyramid_build_e_r.shtml – Pyramid building game General:
- www.ancientegypt.co.uk – Ancient Egypt site, British Museum
- https://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/resources/cultures/ancient_egypt.aspx – more British Museum materials Mummification
- <https://www.mylearning.org/resources/canopic-jar-interactive-powerpoint> – Canopic jar interactive PowerPoint
- <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/ancient-egypt> – Smithsonian site, has sections on mummification and the pyramids

Look at Reaserch.pdf for this unit (Log on to Rising stars website)