



## VII. Activities

These activities include discussion topics for the whole class and art and writing projects for individuals or groups of students. There are also specific activities and discussion topics based upon looking at the poster.

Look through these activities and use your imagination! They have been designed to suit a wide range of ages, abilities, and interests. Given the characteristics of your class and the time you have available, select the activities that are most appropriate. A number of the activities also appear as part of the lesson plans beginning on page 147.

### *Classroom Activities*

#### • **Costume and Adornment**

Discuss the ornaments worn by figures in Egyptian art. Where on the body were they worn? What are these adornments, and do they have meaning? (Floral patterns, animal forms, and colors function as ornaments but may also have religious and amuletic meaning as well as being symbols of wealth, power, and position.)

Ask the students to draw or design in several appropriate materials an amulet they would like to wear that symbolizes protection, power, good fortune, or fame. Have the other students guess what the amulet symbolizes. You may want to set up a "museum," complete with labels, to display these creations.

#### • **You as an Egyptian**

Have the students draw a self-portrait in the Egyptian style. Remind them to show:

the head, hips, arms, legs, and feet in profile

the eye, shoulders, and chest from the front

men posed with the left foot forward, women with their feet together

a wig, jewelry, costume, and something magical and protective

Put on an Egyptian fashion show, using what the students have learned about Egyptian poses and costumes.

## • A Broad Collar

Have the students make their own Egyptian broad-collar necklaces (see poster of Henettawy and slide 13). Cut large half-circles out of oaktag or construction paper and ask the students to create their own repeating designs and use their favorite colors. This could be a collage activity. When completed, the collars can be strung and worn.

## • Body Language

Discuss the different kinds of expressions and postures we use to express certain feelings and reactions. How do these actions reveal moods?

Play charades. Give each student a folded card upon which is written an emotion or situation such as protecting, commanding, praising, worshipping, offering, meditating, winning, losing, and so on.

Discuss how Egyptian artists used gestures and poses to explain what a figure was doing.

## • Favorites Forever

Ask the students to imagine that they believe in the same kind of afterlife that the Egyptians did. Have them make a list of their favorite pastimes and things that they would like to have with them forever. Suggest that they write a story about the things on their list and/or draw a picture of their ideas. The class could make a time capsule into which the students would put their lists and pictures and even small objects. They could also write letters to people of the future who might be confused about what some of the things were.

## • Life after Death

Discuss with your class the following topics or assign them to a group of students who will report to the class using the poster to illustrate their research.

Egyptian afterlife beliefs

how Egyptian burial practices changed from the Old Kingdom to late Dynastic times (this is a way of reminding students that although much about Egyptian art and society remained fairly consistent for three thousand years, change did occur).

## • On the Wall

Ask the whole class or smaller groups to work together on a mural-size drawing for the classroom, pretending it is a modern tomb wall. Discuss what favorite activities the students would like to do forever and what special people, belongings, and food they would like to have with them always. They can use the favorites they have listed and written about in the activity given above.

When the project is finished, have a class discussion about the ways the class wall painting differs from ancient Egyptian painting, not only in subject matter but also in style.

## • **Wrap-ups**

Ask the students to make a clay model in the shape of a mummy and wrap it with strips of old sheeting. They can include small images of jewelry and other protective symbols they have created, and they could design a mask for the mummy's surface.

## • **Eyewitness News**

Ask your students to write eyewitness accounts of the Hall of Judgment scene in slide 38. What is Nany thinking? What are Osiris and Anubis going to say? Will Isis get involved? The students may write their accounts as if they are observers of the scene, or they may write from the point of view of one of the characters. As a dramatic activity, students could take the parts of the figures, write dialogue, and act out what is happening. Some groups might want to imagine what happened following the illustrated scene and describe the action when Nany gave her answers before the forty-two judges. Use typical Egyptian gestures and poses to help explain each character's actions. If you can, record or photograph the activity so you have a class record.

This eyewitness account of events in the Hall of Judgment could be a lead story in an Egyptian newspaper created by groups of students writing about other important events, such as medical news (the magic cure of Horus in slide 39); international news (the battle scene in slide 18); royal activities (Akhenaten sacrificing in slide 21, Tutankhamun being sanctioned in slide 23, and Sety honoring his father in slide 25); literary news (Haremhab in slide 24); sports (the champion hunting dog in slide 34 and the fishing and fowling activities in slide 36); travel (a visit to the Temple of Dendur, slide 4, the view of the Nile in slide 5, and the river boat in slide 8); family activities (Nikare and his family in slide 31 and Menna and his family in slide 36); fashion (Meketre's offering bearer in slide 10, Wah's jewelry in slide 13, Haremhab in slide 24, and Yuny and Renenutet in slide 37); and the food page (stela of a Middle Kingdom official in slide 33).

## • **Eating It Up**

In slide 33 Mentuwoser's table is piled high with his favorite foods. Ask the students to draw themselves at a table covered with their favorite things to eat. Before they start drawing, ask them to think about how they will arrange the food so that each kind can be clearly seen. When they have finished their artwork, talk about whether they have used the Egyptian convention of putting things one on top of another and avoiding overlapping or whether they have devised other techniques.

- **Art Words**

Examine carefully the way the necklace pectoral in slide 17 was designed to form a sentence made up of hieroglyphic signs. Ask each student to draw a design for a necklace or a belt buckle using two or more words, one of which is his or her name.

- **Name Games**

An Egyptian king had two especially important names. His throne name identified him as the ruler of Egypt, and his birth name proclaimed him to be the son of Re, the sun god, and therefore the possessor of divine powers. Both names were encircled in cartouches. Ask the students to think of two names they would like to add to their own names such as the Athlete, the Brain, the Whiz, the Star, the Brave, the Beautiful, and so on. Then ask them to design appropriate decorations to frame their two favorite names. Before they sign their artwork, pass the drawings of the framed assumed names to other class members and see if they can guess to whom the assumed names and "cartouches" belong.

- **Draw a Story**

Write a brief story using phonograms (letters from our alphabet) for some of the words and ideograms (pictures of the word) for as many words as you can think of.

- **Ask Me an Animal Question**

Ask the students to write a riddle about one of the animals illustrated in the slides, such as the hippo, uraeus, Sakhmet/Bastet, or another animal encountered in the Egyptian collection during a museum visit.

- **Animal Symbols**

In slide 16 the pharaoh's head is depicted on the body of a lion to symbolize royal power. Ask the students to think of a person they admire, either someone they know or a famous person, and then think of an animal or a combination of animals whose characteristics symbolize the special qualities of that person. Have them draw a picture of the animal or animals and write a description of why the animal/animals symbolize the person they have chosen. You may decide to display the animal pictures and the descriptions separately in the school hallway and challenge other classes to match them up.

To extend the activity, ask the students to draw parts of animals—a lion's paws, a bird's wings, the snout and teeth of a crocodile, the horns of a bull, and so on—and then combine them to form new creatures. What or who could they represent and why?

## • Divine Power

Discuss how divine power differs from human power. Talk about the ways in which people of different cultures have tried to imagine God (in human form, as a powerful animal, as a phenomenon of nature, etc.). Would this ultimate One be illustrated best in one image or with several different forms and shapes?

Ask the students to explain their ideas about picturing divine powers in a drawing, a series of drawings, a collage, or in a short essay. Perhaps their endeavors could be put together to form a class booklet or to create a wall mural.

## • Family Relationships

Ask each student to draw a picture of his or her family using scale (size) to show who are the most important members.

After looking at the scene of Menna and his family fishing and hunting birds along the Nile (slide 36), ask the students to think about their favorite family outing or about a family outing they would like to take. Create a picture of the scene, what happens, who is there, and so on, or write a story about the event.

## • Presentation of Self

To be important and good-looking forever, Yuny and Renenutet (Slide 37) had themselves portrayed wearing fine linen, curled and braided wigs, and sitting upon a chair carved with lion's-paw feet, an obvious symbol of power and wealth. Ask the students about what clothing, adornment, hairstyle, and symbols of glamour and status modern celebrities choose. How would the students portray themselves? What would they wear, what poses would they take, and what symbols would they surround themselves with?

## • Archaeology: Class Discussion

(The questions in the paragraphs below are for the leader of the discussion to refer to only if important points are being missed.)

*What is an archaeologist?*

Archaeologists research the material remains of people; they look for evidence of the past by excavating ancient campsites, towns, sacred places, and burial grounds where people once lived, worked, held religious ceremonies, and were laid to rest. As they dig, archaeologists describe and measure the evidence that is uncovered. To make a permanent record of exactly where objects are found, they take detailed notes and photographs and make plans of the level on which they are digging. Archaeologists do this so that they can reconstruct the context of an object—that is, whether it was found in a house, a grave, a religious building, or a garbage dump and whether it was found by itself or with other objects. Keeping these detailed records is important because as the excavation proceeds, the upper levels are removed so that what lies below can be examined. If the

archaeologists have done their job properly, it should be possible for someone else, even years later, to take their records and on paper re-excavate the site level by level.

*What do archaeologists hope to do with the information and objects they discover?*

As the excavators accumulate more and more evidence, they hope to form at least a partial picture of what life was like at the site. When the excavation is completed, it is the responsibility of archaeologists to publish the site plans, records, descriptions, and interpretations of what was found. By comparing this information with publications of excavations at similar sites, archaeologists and historians gain a better idea of the customs, beliefs, art, and economy of that particular civilization. Thus we all learn more about our ancestors and how they lived in many different parts of the world.

*What is the difference between an archaeologist and a treasure hunter?*

Although treasure hunters and archaeologists both remove objects from the ground (or under water), there are significant differences between them. A treasure hunter, obviously, searches for things that are collectible, such as arrowheads, or pieces with artistic value that might bring a high price on the art market, or objects with intrinsic value, such as gold and silver coins or jewelry made with precious metals and stones. The treasure hunter usually has no interest in the archaeological context of an object or in what the object might tell us about the people who made it. Because this information has no value to them, treasure hunters often toss aside or destroy architectural remains, broken objects, bones, textiles, pots, baskets, and mats.

Archaeologists, on the other hand, are interested in everything they find. A fragment of a loom, because of what it might tell of the technology of a culture, may be as important as a gold ring. Fragments of broken pottery (called sherds) are very important because earthenware pots usually were not used for a long period of time before they broke, and their shape and decoration changed as potters continued to make them. By noting the shape and decoration of the sherds found on each excavation level, archaeologists can set up a chronology of pottery development, and thus assign approximate dates to the other objects and buildings at the site and at other sites occupied by people of the same culture.

## • Art and Culture

Is art an important source of information about civilizations? Explain. Talk about the Egyptian style of depicting the human figure and about the use of human-animal combinations in visualizing Egyptian deities. What does Egyptian art reveal about Egyptian religious beliefs? About their political beliefs? About Egyptian society?

Do political, religious, and social views of our times influence the content and style of contemporary art? If so, in what ways? Is art important today? Ask the students to think about which forms of art mean the most to them.

Compare the most ancient Egyptian artworks in the slides to those made in later times. What do these comparisons suggest about tradition and change in ancient Egypt? With more advanced students, discuss changes in modern art and society that have taken place in the last fifty years. Why is change much more rapid today?

### • **Compare, Contrast, and Write**

Draw two large overlapping circles. Ask the students to select two works of art illustrated in the resource and write words or phrases that describe each object in one of the two circles. In the space where the circles overlap, describe characteristics the two works of art share.

Using the words in the diagram, ask the students to write a brief essay about the works of art.

### • **The Look of Egyptian Art**

As a concluding activity, have a class discussion about what looks Egyptian about Egyptian art, what impressed the students, and what their favorite works of art are. This could be a writing activity as well.

## *Poster Activities*

### **Coffin set of Henettawy (Poster A)**

#### • **What Do You See?**

Place the poster in a prominent position and start a discussion with your class by asking:

What are these objects?

Why are the coffins shaped the way they are?

Why did the Egyptians think it was important to mummify bodies after death?

What looks Egyptian about them? (Let them observe and say what they see. Do not tell them anything. Probably many students will mention the hieroglyphic script right away. After a few minutes of looking, depending on your students' ages and backgrounds, some may suggest the large outlined eyes and a few may guess that the figures look like Egyptian gods.)

What kinds of things might the hieroglyphs say?

#### • **You and Eternity**

Give the students tracings of the outline of Henettawy's outer coffin (on the left) or have them draw their own outline. Ask them to decorate the surface in symmetrical panels with their own symbols of protection and good fortune. In drawing the face ask them how they would like to appear throughout eternity, what their hairstyle would be, what clothing and adornment they would wear, how

they would pose their hands, and what they would want to be holding. They can then write about what their symbols mean and describe their facial expression and appearance.

### • **Gods and Symbols**

Assign teams. Ask each to write down:

all the symbols for protection, power, sustenance, and rebirth that they can find on the poster

all the deities they can locate

Have each team share their findings with the whole class.

### • **What Do You Think?**

What is typically Egyptian about the style and arrangement of the images on the three coffin lids? Are there differences? Explain.

Ask the students why it is interesting to understand the symbolic images on the coffin lids. What other civilizations have used symbols to express ideas important to them? What symbols do we use?

Talk about how the Egyptian painter designed the coffin lids to make it easy for ancient Egyptians (and us) to read the symbolic language (symmetry, figures arranged in "windows" between horizontal and vertical bands, images clearly outlined and painted in colors to contrast with the background, expressive gestures).

Ask the students to point out the many patterns. Then suggest they draw or paint a scene and include in it two or three (or more) patterns that are repeated to create different rhythms.

### **Canopic jar lid in the shape of a royal woman's head (Poster B)**

#### • **What Do You See?**

What kind of person is this? How can you tell? (elaborate wig, broad collar) How would you describe the surfaces of the stone? Are there contrasts? Explain.

#### • **What Is Its Function?**

(See description of slide 22).

#### • **What To Create**

A Broad Collar, page 140

Presentation of Self, page 143