

Lesson Plan: Become an Egyptian Scribe!

Materials Needed

- A printed copy of a hieroglyphic alphabet chart (many are available for free online).
- Paper (thick cardstock or construction paper works well).
- Pencil and eraser.
- Markers, colored pencils, or paint (gold or yellow is great for a royal touch!).
- **Optional Hands-On Material:** Air-dry clay or salt dough (for a 3D cartouche).
 - **Simple Salt Dough Recipe:** 2 cups all-purpose flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup cold water. Mix, knead until smooth, and it's ready!
- A tool for carving into clay/dough (like a toothpick or a dull pencil).

Book Recommendations (To explore before or after the lesson)

- ***Mummies in the Morning (Magic Tree House #3)* by Mary Pope Osborne:** A fun, fictional adventure that introduces many key concepts of Ancient Egypt in an accessible way.
- ***National Geographic Kids Everything Ancient Egypt:*** A fantastic non-fiction resource with stunning photos and fascinating facts that will capture your student's imagination.
- ***Seeker of Knowledge: The Man Who Deciphered Egyptian Hieroglyphs* by James Rumford:** The true story of Jean-François Champollion, perfect for showing the real-life puzzle of hieroglyphs.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, your student will be able to:

- Explain the importance of scribes and writing in Ancient Egypt.
- Identify several hieroglyphic symbols and understand they represent sounds or ideas.
- Create a personal cartouche using hieroglyphs to represent their own name.

Lesson Activities

Part 1: The Warm-Up - Who Were the Scribes? (10-15 minutes)

1. **Start with a Question:** Ask your student, "Before computers or even paper and pencils, how do you think people wrote things down? What if you were a king and needed to send a message or keep a record of how much grain you had?"
2. **Introduce the Scribe:** Explain that in Ancient Egypt, very few people knew how to read and write. The special people who did were called **scribes**. They were highly respected and worked for pharaohs, priests, and nobles. They wrote everything: laws, religious texts, messages, and records of food supplies.
3. **Introduce Hieroglyphs:** Show the hieroglyphic alphabet chart. Explain that this was their system of writing. Some symbols stood for sounds (like our letters), while others stood for whole words or ideas. Point out a few fun ones, like the symbols for "water," "sun," or different animals. This isn't about memorization, but about sparking curiosity!

Part 2: The Main Quest - Craft Your Royal Cartouche! (25-40 minutes)

This is the creative, hands-on part of the lesson where your student will make their own artifact.

1. **What is a Cartouche?:** Explain that a pharaoh's name was so important it had to be protected. The Egyptians wrote it inside an oval shape called a **cartouche**. This showed that the name inside was a royal one. Today, we're going to pretend we are all royalty!
2. **Translate Your Name:** Using the hieroglyphic alphabet chart, help your student find the symbols that match the sounds in their name.
 - **Teacher Tip:** Hieroglyphs are based on sounds, not a direct letter-for-letter match. For a name like "Chris," you would look for symbols for "K," "R," and "S." Have fun with it and don't worry about being perfectly accurate—the goal is creative application!
3. **Design Your Cartouche:**
 - **Paper Version:** Draw a large, bold oval shape on the cardstock. Inside the oval, carefully draw the hieroglyphs for the name, usually arranged vertically from top to bottom. Once the pencil sketch is done, outline it in a dark marker and color it in. Gold and blue were popular royal colors!
 - **Clay/Dough Version:** Roll the clay or salt dough into a flat, oval slab (about half an inch thick). Use a toothpick or pencil to gently carve the hieroglyphs of the name into the surface. Let it air dry completely (this may take a day or two). Once dry, you can paint it!

Part 3: The Wrap-Up - Presenting Your Work (5-10 minutes)

1. **Share and Explain:** Have your student present their finished cartouche. Ask them to act as the scribe and explain the meaning. Ask questions like:
 - "Which symbol in your name is your favorite and why?"
 - "Why was it important for a pharaoh to have their name in a cartouche?"
 - "Do you think being a scribe would be an easy or difficult job? Why?"
2. **Connect to Today:** Talk about how we use symbols to represent our names or ideas today (like a signature, a logo for a favorite brand, or even emojis). This helps connect the ancient concept to their modern world.

Assessment (How to know learning happened)

- **Observation:** Did your student actively participate in the discussion about scribes?
- **The Final Product:** The completed cartouche serves as the primary assessment. It demonstrates their ability to use the hieroglyphic chart and apply their knowledge creatively.
- **Explanation:** The student's ability to explain the symbols they chose and the purpose of a cartouche shows their level of understanding.

Ideas for Differentiation and Extension

- **For Extra Support:** Work with a shorter name, initials, or a favorite simple word like "cat" or "sun." Focus on the fun of drawing the symbols rather than perfect accuracy.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Encourage your student to write a secret message for someone else to decode using the alphabet chart. Or, have them research and add other symbols to their cartouche that represent their personality (e.g., symbols for "brave," "strong," or "wise").