

Lesson Plan: A Time Traveler's Guide to Ancient Egypt

Materials Needed:

- Large roll of paper or several sheets taped together for a timeline
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Building blocks (like LEGOs or wooden blocks)
- Yellow or gold craft paper
- Blue painter's tape or blue markers
- A paper plate
- Scissors and glue
- Air-dry clay or play-doh (tan or beige color)
- A toothpick or small stick for carving
- A printable hieroglyph alphabet chart (easily found online)
- Optional: A box decorated like a "treasure chest" for the warm-up
- Optional: A few books or a short, age-appropriate video about Ancient Egypt

1. Learning Objectives (The Mission)

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

- Explain in their own words what a pharaoh was.
- Create a simple timeline showing that Ancient Egypt was a long, long time ago.
- Describe a dynasty as a family of rulers.
- Write their own name using a hieroglyph alphabet.
- Identify one or two Egyptian gods and what they were known for.

2. The Adventure Begins: Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Activity: The Archaeologist's Discovery Box

1. Start the lesson with a "mystery." Present a box decorated like a treasure chest. Inside, place a few "artifacts": a small pyramid made of blocks, a drawing of an eye (the Eye of Horus), and a piece of paper with a few hieroglyphs on it.
2. Ask the student: "We are time-traveling archaeologists today! We've just discovered this chest. Where and *when* do you think it came from?"
3. Guide them to guess Ancient Egypt. Explain that we're going on a journey back in time to learn about the people who made these amazing things.

3. Main Quest Part 1: The River of Time (15 minutes)

Focus: Timeline and Dynasty

1. Roll out the long sheet of paper on the floor. At one end, write "Today" and have the student draw a picture of themselves or your house.
2. At the far other end, write "Ancient Egypt" and draw a big pyramid. Explain that the paper shows how long ago this was. You can add other simple points in between, like "When Grandma was a kid" to give it context.
3. **Dynasty Tower Challenge:** Introduce the word "dynasty." Explain it simply: "A dynasty is when one family rules for a long time. When the pharaoh (the king) had a child, that child would become the next pharaoh. It's like passing a crown through a family."
4. Use the building blocks. Say, "Let's build a dynasty tower! Each block is a different pharaoh from the same family." Have the student stack several blocks of the same color. Then say, "After a long time, a new family took over!" and have them start a new tower with different colored blocks next to the first one. This gives a great visual for the concept of different dynasties over time.

4. Main Quest Part 2: Powerful Pharaohs and Great Gods (20 minutes)

Focus: Pharaohs and Gods

1. **Who was a Pharaoh?** Explain that a pharaoh was the king of Egypt, seen as powerful and almost like a god. Talk about one famous pharaoh, like Tutankhamun ("King Tut"), the boy king whose amazing treasure was found.
2. **Activity: Make a Pharaoh's Headdress!**
 - Take the yellow/gold craft paper and cut out a large semi-circle shape that can wrap around the student's head like a crown (the "nemes").
 - Use blue tape or a blue marker to create straight, parallel stripes on the paper.
 - Fit it to the student's head and tape it in the back. They are now a pharaoh!
3. **Who were the Gods?** Explain that Egyptians believed in many gods who controlled things like the sun, the sky, and writing. Introduce two simple ones:
 - **Ra (or Re):** The sun god, one of the most important! He had the head of a falcon with a sun disc on top.
 - **Bastet:** A goddess of protection who looked like a cat. Egyptians loved cats!

5. Main Quest Part 3: The Secret Code (15-20 minutes)

Focus: Hieroglyphs

1. Show the student the printable hieroglyph alphabet. Explain: "The Egyptians didn't use letters like we do. They used picture-words called hieroglyphs. It was like a secret code!"
2. **Activity: Create a Clay Cartouche!**
 - Explain that a pharaoh's name was so important, it was always written inside an oval shape called a "cartouche" to protect it.
 - Give the student the air-dry clay or play-doh. Have them roll it out into a flat, oval shape (about the size of their hand).
 - Using the alphabet chart and a toothpick, help them carefully carve the hieroglyphs for their own name into the clay.
 - Tell them they've just made their own royal cartouche, just like a pharaoh! Let it air dry.

6. The Journey Home: Conclusion & Review (5 minutes)

Activity: Pharaoh's Show and Tell

1. Have the student wear their pharaoh headdress and present their clay cartouche.
 2. Ask them simple, fun questions to review the concepts:
 - "Your Majesty, what is that secret code on your cartouche?" (Hieroglyphs/My name)
 - "What is a family of rulers called?" (A dynasty)
 - "What famous building might you want your people to build for you?" (A pyramid)
 3. Praise their creativity and what they've learned on their "trip" to Ancient Egypt. Place their timeline, headdress, and cartouche on display.
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7. Extension & Differentiation (Optional)

- **For Extra Support:** Use pre-cut shapes for the headdress. For the cartouche, you can lightly draw the hieroglyphs into the clay first and have the student trace them with the toothpick.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Encourage the student to write a short message to a friend using hieroglyphs (e.g., "cat," "sun," "I see"). Or, have them design their own Egyptian god based on something they like (e.g., a "god of video games" with a controller symbol).
- **Further Exploration:** Read an age-appropriate book about Ancient Egypt (e.g., Magic Tree House: *Mummies in the Morning*) or watch a short National Geographic Kids video on the topic.