

Lesson Plan: A Journey Down the Nile - Discovering Ancient Egypt

Materials Needed

- Paper (white, blue, green, and brown/yellow construction paper)
- Drawing supplies (crayons, markers, or colored pencils)
- Scissors and glue or tape
- A long blue ribbon or piece of yarn (optional)
- Building materials (LEGOs, sugar cubes, blocks, or even small cardboard boxes)
- Play-Doh or clay (optional)
- A simple hieroglyph alphabet chart (easily found online and printed)

Learning Objectives

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

- I can tell you two reasons why the Nile River was important to the ancient Egyptians.
- I can describe what a pharaoh was and what a pyramid was for.
- I can name one ancient Egyptian god or goddess.
- I can create a piece of art inspired by ancient Egypt.

Lesson Activities

Part 1: Introduction - Welcome, Time Traveler! (5 minutes)

Hook: "Imagine you are a time traveler, and our magic clock is about to send us way, way back in time! We're going to a hot, sandy place with a giant river, huge triangle buildings, and kings wrapped up like presents. Where are we going? That's right, Ancient Egypt! Let's get ready to explore."

Setting the Stage: "Today, we're going to be historians and artists. We'll discover how people lived long ago by the Nile River, who their kings were, what they believed in, and how they wrote in pictures!"

Part 2: The Body of the Lesson - Exploring Egypt (30-40 minutes)

Activity 1: The Gift of the Nile (Geography and Lifestyle)

- **I Do (Educator Explains):** "In Egypt, there is a super long river called the Nile. It was the most important part of life! Think of it like a superhero. Once a year, the river would flood and leave behind special dark, muddy soil called 'silt'. This silt was like magic fertilizer, making it easy to grow lots of food in the middle of a giant desert. The river was also their main road for traveling in boats."
- **We Do (Interactive Map):** "Let's make a map. Lay down the blue ribbon—that's our Nile River. Now, let's cut strips of green paper for the farms. Where should we put them? Right next to the river! Now, let's put the big yellow paper for the desert far away. See? Everyone had to live close

to the river to survive!"

- **You Do (Creative Drawing):** "Now it's your turn. On a piece of paper, draw the Nile River. Show me the green farms growing food right next to it, and the sandy desert far away. You can even draw a boat floating on the water."

Formative Assessment (Quick Check): Ask, "Why was the river so important? What did it give the people?"

Activity 2: Pharaohs and Pyramids (Leaders and Architecture)

- **I Do (Educator Explains):** "The rulers of Egypt were called Pharaohs. They were like super-powerful kings and queens. Egyptians believed that when pharaohs died, they went to an afterlife. To keep their bodies safe and to store all their amazing treasures, they built huge tombs. The most famous ones are the pyramids—giant triangle-shaped buildings made of massive stone blocks!"
- **We Do (Build a Pyramid):** "Let's be Egyptian builders! Using our LEGOs, sugar cubes, or blocks, let's work together to build a pyramid. Let's make a big, square base and then build up, making each layer a little smaller. Imagine trying to do this with giant, heavy stones!"
- **You Do (Pharaoh's Treasure Plan):** "Pretend you are a pharaoh planning for your afterlife. On a piece of paper, draw or write three special treasures you would want to take with you inside your pyramid. It could be your favorite toy, a pet, or gold and jewels!"

Activity 3: Gods, Goddesses, and Mummies (Culture and Beliefs)

- **I Do (Educator Explains):** "The Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses who controlled everything from the sun to the harvest. Many gods had human bodies and animal heads. For example, Ra, the sun god, had the head of a hawk! Anubis, the god of mummification, had the head of a jackal. Mummification was a special process to preserve bodies for the afterlife."
- **We Do (God & Goddess Match-Up):** "Let's look at these pictures. Here is a picture of the sun. Which god was the sun god? Ra! Great! Here is a cat. The goddess Bastet was a cat goddess who protected the home. Let's match the god to what they were in charge of."
- **You Do (Create a God):** "Now, you get to be creative. Invent your very own Egyptian god or goddess. What are they the god of? (Maybe the god of drawing, or the goddess of playing!) What animal head will they have? Draw your god and give them a cool name."

Formative Assessment (Quick Check): Point to the student's drawing and ask, "Tell me about your god. What is their power?"

Activity 4: Hieroglyphs and Daily Dress (Writing and Culture)

- **I Do (Educator Explains):** "The Egyptians wrote using amazing pictures called hieroglyphs. Each little picture, like an owl or a snake, stood for a sound. To write a pharaoh's name, they would draw an oval shape around it called a 'cartouche'. For clothes, it was so hot they wore light, breezy clothes made from a plant called flax. Rich people also wore makeup, especially dark eyeliner."
- **We Do (Write Your Name):** "Look at this hieroglyph chart. Let's find the pictures for the letters in your name. The letter 'A' is an eagle. The letter 'B' is a foot. Let's sound out your name and find the right pictures together."
- **You Do (Make Your Own Cartouche):** "Draw a big oval—your cartouche. Inside, carefully draw the hieroglyphs for your name. You can decorate the outside to make it look like it was carved in stone! If you have time, you can also draw a picture of yourself dressed as an ancient Egyptian."

Part 3: Conclusion - Show and Tell from Ancient Times (5 minutes)

Recap: "Our time machine is bringing us back to today! We learned so much. We saw how the Nile River gave life to the desert, how pharaohs built giant pyramids for the afterlife, who the Egyptians worshipped, and how they wrote their names in pictures."

Learner Reflection: "Now it's time for our very own Egyptian Museum Show and Tell! Can you show me all the amazing things you created today? Tell me about each one. What was your favorite thing you learned about ancient Egypt?"

Assessment (Measuring Success)

Summative Assessment: The "Show and Tell" serves as the final assessment. The student's ability to explain their creations demonstrates their understanding.

Success Criteria:

- Did the student explain that their Nile drawing has farms near the water because the river provided food?
- Did the student explain that their pyramid treasures were for the pharaoh's afterlife?
- Could the student name their created god and its purpose?
- Did the student correctly identify their cartouche as a way to write their name in hieroglyphs?

Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For Younger or Struggling Learners (Scaffolding):** Provide pre-drawn templates for the cartouche or the Nile scene. Focus on just one or two gods. Spell out their name in hieroglyphs for them to copy.
- **For Older or Advanced Learners (Extension):** Challenge them to write a full sentence in hieroglyphs. Ask them to research a specific pharaoh like Tutankhamun or Cleopatra and share three interesting facts. Have them build a model of the inside of a pyramid with different chambers.
- **Classroom/Group Adaptation:** Activities can be done in pairs or small groups. The "We Do" sections can become "Think-Pair-Share" activities. The final "Show and Tell" can be a "Gallery Walk" where students view each other's work.