

Embracing Cultural Diversity: Egypt

A Cross-Curricular Lesson Plan

Author: Deborah Kopka
Author: Jonathan Gross
Author: Bonnie J. Krueger
Book Design: Patti Jeffers

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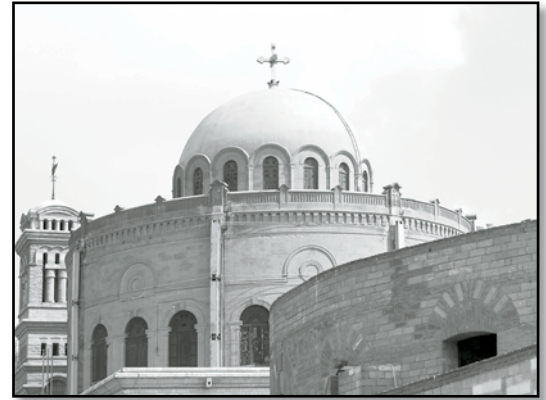
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The Coptic Era

St. Mark, an African Christian, brought Christianity to Alexandria in the first century B.C.E. and founded the first Coptic Church. (Coptic is an Egyptian language spoken only in Egypt at that time.) Christianity spread across Egypt. It spread so quickly that Diocletian (dy-oh-KLEE-shin), who became Roman emperor in 284 B.C.E., tried to kill many of the Copts. Nevertheless, Coptic Christianity survives to this day in Egypt and in other parts of the world. The Coptic churches are beautiful examples of Coptic art and architecture.



The Islamic Era and Beyond



Muslim Arabs invaded Egypt in AD 639 B.C.E., bringing with them the religion of Islam and the Arabic language found in Egypt today. Muslims ruled Egypt for the next six centuries. They continued to rule even after the conquest of Egypt by the Turks from the Ottoman Empire (what became modern-day Turkey) in 1517.

The French and the English both dominated Egypt at times. Led by Napoleon Bonaparte, the French invaded the land in 1798. After they withdrew, a series of wars took place.

When the Suez Canal was completed in 1869, Egypt became an important world trade center. But the country fell heavily into debt to pay for the canal. Egypt was forced to sell its shares of the canal to Great Britain, which seized control of Egypt in 1882.

Britain quickly eliminated the existing Egyptian government. Constant revolutions by the Egyptian people led Britain to declare Egypt partially independent in 1922. In 1952, Egypt overthrew its British-backed king and became fully independent. In 1953, Egypt became a Republic, and in 1956, Egypt seized control of the Suez Canal. It remains under Egyptian control today. It is open to every nation, and Egypt gets millions of dollars every year from taxing ships that come through the Canal.

Egypt Today

Today Egypt has the largest population in the Arab world. After centuries of invasions and conflict, it still struggles for stability and peace. It has fought with Israel over the Sinai Peninsula. President Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981 by terrorists who disagreed with his peace-making efforts toward Israel. But the Egyptian government continues to modernize this vast land. And Egypt continues to draw tourists from all over the world with its beauty and mystery.



The Pyramids

The pyramids of Egypt are among the world's oldest and most mysterious structures. Use the Internet and other resources to help you answer the following questions about the pyramids. You may find that not all sources will give you the same answers! Discuss the differences with your classmates, and tell where you found your information.

1. Why were the pyramids constructed? _____

2. How many known pyramids exist in Egypt? _____

3. Of what materials were the pyramids made? _____

4. Where did this material come from? _____

5. Near what city are most of the pyramids grouped? _____

6. Who probably built the pyramids? _____

7. To the ancient Egyptians, what did the shape of the pyramids represent? _____

8. Why are we so fascinated with pyramids today? _____

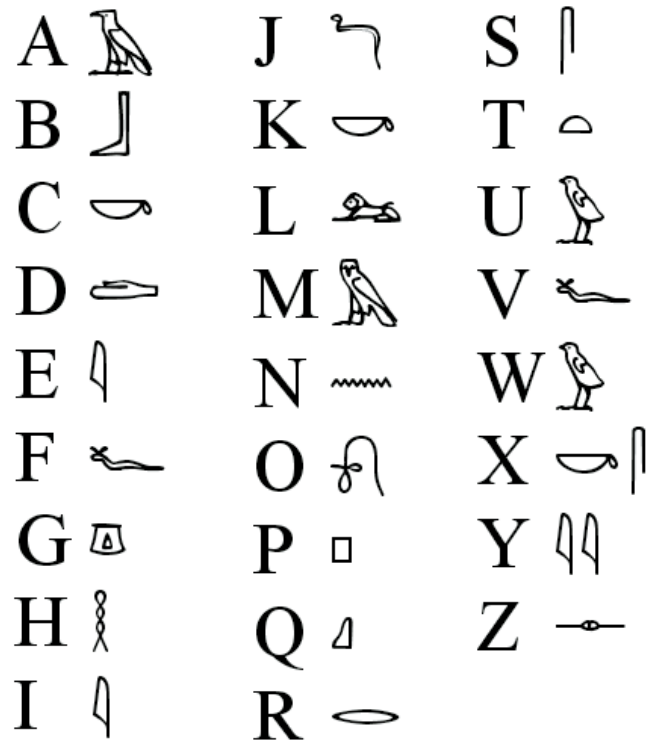
9. Why do some people think that pyramids were created by aliens? _____

10. Would you like to visit the pyramids? Why or why not? _____

Translating English to Hieroglyphics

Hieroglyphics were the picture symbols the ancient Egyptians used for their system of writing. Use the provided basic set of Egyptian hieroglyphics to spell the following English words:

1. beetle	
2. cloth	
3. dance	
4. donkey	
5. festival	
6. garden	
7. knee	
8. moon	
9. rest	
10. tent	
Your Name	



*There are many different types of hieroglyphics that have been used throughout history. Different hieroglyphs can represent sounds, words, or even parts of words.