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Time Line: Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian history is divided into time periods known as the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom. Between each of these kingdoms was a time of transition known as an Intermediate Period. Within each of these time periods were "dynasties," which measured the length of time a single family ruled the land. There were 30 Egyptian dynasties, followed by two Greek dynasties before Egypt was conquered by the Romans.

6000 B.C. Early farmers in the Nile Valley grow wheat and barley.

4800 B.C. Sheep and cattle are raised.

4000 B.C. First settlement of towns along the Nile River.
            First use of sails on ships on the Nile.

3200-2300 B.C. The Old Kingdom

3100 B.C. King Narmer (Menes) unifies Upper and Lower Egypt.
            Memphis becomes the capital.
            Hieroglyphs and papyrus are used for writing.

2650 B.C. First stepped pyramid is built at Saqqara.

2530 B.C. The Great Pyramid is built at Giza.

2200 B.C. A time of unrest. Several minor Pharaohs rule small territories.

2050-1775 B.C. The Middle Kingdom

2050 B.C. King Mentuhotep reunites Egypt.
 Thebes becomes the capital.
1900 B.C First obelisk erected.
1800 B.C. Egypt invades and conquers Nubia to the south.
 Nubian slaves are taken to Egypt.
1650 B.C. Egypt is conquered by the Hyksos from the north.
 Chariots are introduced into Egypt.

1575-1085 B.C. The New Kingdom

1550 B.C. The Hyksos are defeated by the princes of Thebes.
 Royal Tombs are built at the Valley of the Kings.
1489 B.C Hatsheput becomes the first female Pharaoh.
1380 B.C Akhenaten becomes Pharaoh. He imposes a new religion on Egyptians, involving the worship of only one god, Aten.
1325 B.C Tutankhamen is buried in the Valley of the Kings.
350 B.C. Nectanebo becomes the last Egyptian Pharaoh.
332 B.C. Alexander the Great invades from Greece and names himself Pharaoh.
50 B.C. Cleopatra rules as Pharaoh.
30 B.C. Egypt becomes a province of Rome, under the Emperor Augustus.

Sandbox Archaeology

Archaeology involves the study of ancient civilizations. It is a kind of guessing game. By piecing together parts of the puzzle, we can learn more about how people used to live. Artifacts give clues about ancient civilizations. Careful excavation is important for two reasons: to preserve the objects in one piece, and to map their exact location in order to help make connections. Archaeologists may have different opinions about what certain artifacts might mean. In order to support their theories, they must keep detailed records of their findings.

Materials

classroom sandbox, about 30" x 40" (75 x 110 cm)
masking tape
pencils
1 paper plate for each pair of students
craft sticks
toothbrushes
12 sheets of 10" square blank paper
several "artifacts" (small clay flowerpot, cloth, beads, rope, stones, wooden cuticle stick, etc.)

Getting Started

Prepare your "artifacts." Draw a simple design on the flowerpot using paint or marker. Place in a paper or plastic bag and break. Use the larger, more interesting pieces for the dig. Fray the ends of short pieces of rope. Draw hieroglyphs (see page 27) on some of the stones. Break the cuticle stick, use the piece with the flat end to represent a stylus.

Bury the artifacts randomly in the sandbox. Try placing them at different levels in the sand. Use the masking tape in a grid pattern to create sections of