

Legacies of Ancient Egypt

Overviews of Critical Challenges

1 Deciphering the drawing (2 sessions)

In this introductory challenge, students learn to decipher a drawing depicting a scene in ancient Egypt. To set the stage for this unit, students situate ancient Egypt in relation to Canada. They compare similarities and differences between life in ancient Egypt and modern Canada. Using the 5W questioning strategy, students take on the role of an archaeologist in forming hypotheses and conclusions about the people and events depicted in a sample drawing. In pairs, students look for evidence to support or refute teacher-developed hypotheses about the drawing. They then assess the degree of support for the hypotheses and their comprehensiveness in deciding whether or not to accept these conclusions as offering an adequate explanation of the drawing.

2 Explain the picture (2 sessions)

In this follow up challenge, students view four drawings and other supplemental pictures depicting life in ancient Egypt. In groups, students use the concepts learned in the previous challenge to develop, for each of the 5W questions, multiple hypotheses about an assigned drawing/picture. Members of each group view the various hypotheses they have generated, and look for evidence to support an agreed upon explanation that best answers the 5W questions for their drawing. Other students then assess how well the explanations meet the agreed upon criteria.

3 Examine ancient life (7 sessions)

In this two-part challenge, students further their understanding of daily life in ancient Egypt and the comparisons with modern life. Students view several pictures and drawings to generate hypotheses and conclusions about various aspects of Egyptian life. In the first critical challenge, each group infers as much as possible about an assigned aspect of Egyptian civilization. Students then consult with parents, teachers and friends to learn about any parallel practices in modern Canada. Charts comparing ancient Egypt to modern Canada are presented to the class. In the second critical challenge, students decide the most significantly similar and different features for each aspect of ancient Egypt and Canadian life. In closing, students offer an overall comparison of life in ancient Egypt and modern Canada.

4 Frame research questions (5 sessions)

The focus of this challenge is on framing questions that identify the information needed to complete a research project. The lesson begins with an introduction to a class project to create museum exhibits on 30 inventions from ancient Egypt. The purpose of the museum exhibition is to profile the nature and importance of the legacies of ancient Egypt. Prior to researching their Egyptian legacy, students consider what they would need to research given a hypothetical challenge of trying to convince their parents to take a family vacation at Disneyland. Students are presented with four criteria for a successful vacation destination and information about Disneyland. They summarize the information they have, identify helpful information and frame focused questions that encompass their most important information needs. Using a similar procedure, each student (or pair of students) is provided with a briefing sheet on a specific ancient Egyptian invention or product. Students summarize existing information about their invention, identify information they need to learn and then use the criteria provided to frame four to six effective questions to guide their research. As students conduct their research they use data retrieval charts to assist them in gathering information about each question.

5 Analyse museum displays (2 sessions)

In this challenge, students learn about the qualities and techniques of effective museum exhibits. As a class, students consider examples of effective and ineffective exhibits to generate criteria and techniques for their exhibit design. Students employ a standard evaluation format to critique three exhibits at a local museum. Based on their knowledge of the qualities and techniques of effective and ineffective exhibits, students rank order the exhibits.

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6

Design your exhibit (2 sessions)

This challenge invites students to translate what they have learned about the qualities and techniques of effective exhibits into the design of their own exhibit. Students review the elements of an effective exhibit and create a checklist of things they want to include in their own exhibit. Drawing on their individual research, students decide upon the 15–20 most important facts to convince others of the impressiveness of their legacies. Students translate these ideas onto paper using an exhibit template, and draw a rough sketch of their proposed design. After an introduction to the principles of constructive feedback, students exchange their rough sketch with other students. They offer suggestions to improve each other's designs. Final revisions are made before students prepare their actual exhibits.

7

Promote the exhibit (5 sessions)

This two-part challenge offers an optional set of activities (in art, media studies or language arts) focusing on advertising. Students learn about the qualities and techniques used in various media so they can effectively advertise the ancient Egypt exhibition. Students learn about effective advertising by examining samples of print and radio ads. In the first critical challenge, pairs of students develop an ad in a medium of their choice to promote the exhibition. Using a structured peer critique format, students assess each other's work. The feedback is incorporated into their final products. In the second critical challenge, students rate the effectiveness of five of their colleague's ads, with the winners to be announced at an end-of-unit "Academy Awards" style banquet. The visual and audio ads are posted/broadcast to attract audiences to the exhibition.

8

Create an exhibit logo (1 sessions)

This is another optional challenge with a media focus. It involves students in creating a logo to represent their museum exhibit. Students are presented with examples of hieroglyphics from ancient Egypt and asked to guess the meaning of the various symbols. They then examine modern logos and icons as a means of generating criteria for an effective logo. Students are taught to create a logo by using images to represent desired qualities. Using a structured format, students identify essential qualities of their Egyptian legacy. Students then create their own logo to represent their exhibit in the form of a coloured paper mock-up and, perhaps, as a potato stamp.

9

Judge the most impressive legacy (4 sessions)

In this final two-part challenge, students study a selection of the museum exhibits to learn about the wonders of the various inventions emerging from ancient Egypt. In the first critical challenge, students nominate one of five exhibits reviewed for an award as the most impressive ancient Egyptian legacy. Further research is conducted on the short-listed nominees, and a presentation made to convince the rest of the class of the merits of the nomination. In the second critical challenge, students individually decide, from the short list of five or six nominated legacies, their choice for the most impressive legacy of ancient Egypt.
