
MUMMIES MADE IN EGYPT

Author: Aliko

Publisher: HarperCollins

THEME:

Technology can help us learn more about people and cultures from the past... like ancient Egypt.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

This book describes the techniques and the reasons for the use of mummification in ancient Egypt.

LeVar explores mummies and learns about the art of conserving Egyptian artifacts at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Then CT scan technology provides an inside look at a mummy thousands of years old, and a forensic expert recreates the head of a mummy using intricate skull dimensions.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Discuss with students why it is important to learn about people who lived thousands of years ago, such as the ancient Egyptians.

Before viewing the program, brainstorm all the facts students have about mummies. After watching, revisit the list, deleting inaccurate information and adding new details. What questions do students still have about mummies? Add these questions to the list.

After students have watched the program, discuss why the ancient Egyptians made mummies. What did the Egyptians believe happened to a person after she/he died? Why did they put certain objects with the mummy for burial?

Invite students to share their experiences visiting museums. Discuss why people enjoy visiting museums.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Locate Egypt on a map of the world. Find the Nile River and the deserts. Discuss the importance of the Nile to the ancient Egyptians (without the river as a means of transportation and the soil along the river for planting food, they might not have existed). Also, locate the sites of the most well known pyramids.

Divide the class into small cooperative groups to research different aspects of ancient Egypt, such as mummies, pyramids, pharaohs, the people, the Sphinx, etc. Have each group develop a set of questions about its topic to which it would like to find answers. Encourage each group to search for interesting facts about its topic as well. As the groups gather their facts, have them each assemble a pyramid to share their findings. Make available equilateral triangles (about 4 inches to a side) on beige paper. Have students write one fact on each triangle and build a pyramid of the triangles. (They will need to plan how the triangles will fit together, so all the writing can be easily read.) Attach all of the pyramids to a large bulletin board on which the students have drawn appropriate background scenery for ancient Egypt.

The Ancient Egyptians used a measurement system that was based on parts of the human body. Their measuring tools included a "cubit," a "digit," and a "palm." A cubit was the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. A digit was the width of a finger, and a palm was four digits. (Discuss with students why these measurements were not "standard.") Have students work with partners to measure a cubit, digit, and palm for each other. They may transfer their measurements to strips of paper and use their Egyptian tools for measuring objects. Pose questions such as "How tall are you in cubits?" and "How many digits long is a pencil?" and "How long is a book in palms?" Encourage students to estimate before they measure.

Ancient Egyptians believed that the scarab, or dung beetle, was sacred, thinking that it symbolized the sun. As a result, it often appeared in jewelry and art. Have students look in books to see the elaborate way in which the Egyptians depicted the scarab. Give students a small ball of clay or clay dough for them to shape into an oval. Paint the oval gold and provide items such as glitter, sequins, or plastic "jewels" for them to glue onto the oval, thus creating their own elegant scarab.

Using some of the resources on Ancient Egyptians, locate examples of hieroglyph symbols and their meanings. Have students figure out how to write their name in hieroglyphics. Give each student an oval piece of tagboard and instruct them to design it with their name in hieroglyphics. Explain that this oval shape might be a *cartouche* in Ancient Egypt, a sort of name plate that was placed on buildings and monuments. Display the students' cartouches in the classroom.

Organize students into small groups. Give each group an outline of a mummy cut from large bulletin board paper. Have the groups use the resources on Ancient Egypt to research the artwork on mummy cases, plan their designs, draw and then color or paint their mummy outline. Display the finished mummies in the classroom or hallway.

To accompany the above activity, have the groups write a biographical sketch of the person whose mummy case they made. They will already need to have made some decisions about this person's life in order to create the designs on the mummy case.

The pyramids in Egypt were made with rectangular stones. Have students, working in small groups, use rectangular blocks (any size) as manipulatives and problem solve the building of a pyramid. Encourage them to consult the pyramid segment of the program, Alik's book, or other resources on pyramids as references.

RELATED THEMES:

museums
ancient civilizations
archaeology

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Alik Brandenburg grew up in Philadelphia and recalls drawing all her life. She credits her kindergarten teacher with recognizing her talent and encouraging her. The author of numerous works of both fiction and nonfiction, Alik says that she writes about subjects that she's curious about. She is the author/illustrator of two other **Reading Rainbow** feature books, *Digging Up Dinosaurs* and *Feelings*, and review books, *A Medieval Feast*, *How A Book Is Made*, *The Many Lives of Benjamin Franklin*, and *The Two of Them*. Alik makes her home in London with her husband Franz, with whom she has collaborated on several books.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

BILL AND PETE GO DOWN THE NILE
by Tomie dePaola (Putnam)

I CAN BE AN ARCHAEOLOGIST
by Robert B. Pickering from the "I Can Be" series (Childrens Press)

VISITING THE ART MUSEUM
by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown (Dial)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

I AM THE MUMMY HEB-NEFERT
by Eve Bunting, illus. by David Christiana (Harcourt Brace)

ANCIENT EGYPT
by Daniel Cohen, illus. by Gary A. Lippincott (Doubleday)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EGYPTIANS?
by Joanna Defrates (Peter Bedrick Books)

HIEROGLYPHS FROM A TO Z

by Peter Der Manuelian (Scholastic)

ABC: EGYPTIAN ART FROM THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM
by Florence Cassen Mayers (Harry N. Abrams Publishers)

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PEOPLE
by Sarah McNeil (Millbrook)

MUMMIES
by Joyce Milton, illus. by Susan Swan (Grosset & Dunlap)

FIRST FACTS ABOUT THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS
by Jacqueline Morley (Peter Bedrick Books)

MUMMY
by James Putnam (Alfred A. Knopf)

TUTANKHAMEN'S GIFT
by Robert Sabuda (Atheneum)

ZEKMET, THE STONE CARVER: A TALE OF ANCIENT EGYPT
by Mary Stolz, illus. by Deborah Nourse Lattimore (Harcourt Brace)

CAT MUMMIES
by Kelly Trumble, illus. by Laszlo Kubinyi (Clarion)

