

Ancient Egyptian beliefs about life after death

The purpose of this lesson is:

to discover what the ancient Egyptians believed about life after death.

Learning objectives

Children should learn:

- about Egyptian tombs, pyramids and burial sites;
- to use sources of information in ways which go beyond simple observation.

Class objective:

- to find out about what the ancient Egyptians believed about life after death.

Learning outcomes

Children should be able to:

- select pictures about Egyptian beliefs;
- recreate objects accurately;
- create a small-scale reconstruction of a burial, which demonstrates ancient Egyptians' beliefs about the afterlife.

Programme of study

- 1a** place events, people and changes into correct periods of time;
- 2a** characteristic features of periods and societies studied, including the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past;
- 2b** social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of societies;
- 4a** find out about events, people and changes from an appropriate range of sources of information, including ICT based sources;
- 4b** ask and answer questions, and select and record information relevant to the focus of the enquiry;
- 5a** recall, select and organize historical information;
- 5c** communicate knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways.

Prior learning

This lesson builds on information from previous lessons.

Vocabulary

canopic jars, mummification, natron, pharaoh, sarcophagus (coffin), Tutankhamen

Resources

- **Resource sheet** **RS7.1**: *Life after death*
- **Activity sheet** **AS7.1**: *Preparing the mummy*
- **Activity sheet** **AS7.2**: *The burial chamber*
- **Activity sheet** **AS7.3**: *Wall painting*
- **Activity sheet** **AS7.4**: *Sarcophagus template*
- Air-drying clay (or Plasticene) for mummies, sarcophagus, canopic jars etc.
- Collection of reference books and CD-ROMs with

information on ancient Egyptian tombs

- Glue
- Paints, crayons, gold/silver marker, small beads
- Scissors
- Shoe boxes (or other similar-sized boxes) for the burial chamber – one per group
- White toilet paper, to be cut into strips and used as bandages

Cross-curricular links

- **Art:** Knowledge, skills and understanding,
- **RE:** Unit 3E *What is faith and what difference does it make?*
- **Science:** Unit 3C *Characteristics of materials*
- **Design and technology:** Knowledge, skills and understanding: Knowledge and understanding of materials and components
- **ICT:** Websites

Differentiation

Some less able children may need help from an adult in selecting appropriate items for their burial chamber.

Assessment opportunities

Each child's understanding of this lesson can be assessed through an analysis of his/her contribution to the group discussion and individual contribution towards the burial chamber.

Advance preparation

This lesson deals with sensitive issues relating to death and burial. You will need to be sensitive to the needs of children, as some of them may be coming to terms with the death of a relative or friend. For part of this lesson the children will be working in groups to

create an Egyptian burial chamber. You will need to collect the items in the **resources** section prior to this lesson. You will also need to make your own model of an Egyptian burial chamber to demonstrate to the children. Make a model of the sarcophagus using the template on **Activity sheet AS7.4: Sarcophagus template** before the lesson. Fold down the tabs around the edge of the template. You will need to cut a 3cm wide strip of paper to stick to the tabs around the edge, to complete the lid of the sarcophagus. Place the children in mixed-ability

groups for this lesson. Arrange computer access for this lesson. Supply any CD-ROMs that refer to Egyptian burial chambers and load the following websites onto the computers: http://touregypt.net/egyptmuseum/egyptian_museum.htm (This is the website of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and includes pictures of the well-known treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamen.) <http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/menu.html> (This is the British Museum's website.)

Introduction

Begin the lesson by sharing the class objective: **to find out about what the ancient Egyptians believed about life after death**. Remind the children of their homework task and select children to share their information with the rest of the class. Place the following heading on the board: **The tomb of Tutankhamen**. As the children provide information as to what was in the tomb, add this to the board.

Activity 1 What the Egyptians believed about life after death

- Read the children the information on **Resource sheet RS7.1: Life after death**.
- Stress that the tombs that archaeologists have found are excellent evidence for what the Egyptians believed about life after death.
- Give out **Activity sheet AS7.1: Preparing the mummy** and tell the children to read this for ideas of what should go into an Egyptian burial chamber.

Activity 2 Researching the burial chamber

- Tell the children that they will be working in groups to create a model of an Egyptian burial chamber. Give each group **Activity sheet AS7.2: The burial chamber** and place a selection of books on the table. Tell the children that they will have some time to look at the resources (books, websites and CD-ROMs) before discussing and recording what they think should be in the burial chamber of a pharaoh. They will then need to decide what part of the burial chamber each child is to make. Remind the children to make use of the information that you wrote on the board about the tomb of Tutankhamen.

Activity 3 Creating the tomb

- Now give each group **Activity sheets AS7.3: Wall painting** and **AS7.4: Sarcophagus template**.
- Distribute the resources, so that the children can create the objects/drawings that are to go into their burial chamber:
 - air-drying clay (or Plasticene) for mummies, sarcophagus and canopic jars etc.
 - glue
 - white toilet paper, to be cut into strips and used as bandages
 - paints, crayons, gold/silver marker, small beads
 - shoe boxes (or other similar-sized boxes) for the burial chamber – one per group.
- Tell the children that for the burial chamber they will need to:
 - decorate the walls of their (shoe box) burial chamber with pictures or hieroglyphics;
 - include a decorated sarcophagus (coffin);
 - include a (clay/Plasticene) mummy wrapped in bandages, with amulets (see **Activity sheet AS7.1: Preparing the mummy** for pictures of amulets);
 - include canopic jars;
 - include things needed for the afterlife, e.g. food, shabtis, furniture, jewellery.
- Write this information on the board.

Plenary

- Select children to sum up for the class what the ancient Egyptians believed about life after death. Tell the children that they will be able to continue making their ancient Egyptian burial chamber during the next lesson.

Homework

- Ask the children to continue working on their contribution to the group's burial chamber and to find out the name of a pharaoh.



Life after death

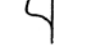
Resource sheet 7.1



The ancient Egyptians believed in many different gods. Their strongest belief was that they would enjoy a wonderful life after their death. To make sure they were ready for this afterlife, they prepared the dead body very carefully and put it into the burial chamber with many objects that would help the person on their way.



Egyptians believed that when a person died, s/he would go to the hall of two truths, where s/he would answer questions on his/her life to the god, Anubis. Then the person's heart would be weighed on scales against the feather of truth. If the person in question were honest, s/he would be granted a safe passage to the afterlife by the god, Osiris. If the person were dishonest, his heart would be eaten by Ammit, devourer of the dead.



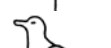
After the person had died, the body was washed in water from the Nile.



The liver, lungs, stomach and intestines were taken out and dried in natron (a natural mineral, like salt). These organs were placed in canopic jars. Each jar had a different top:



Imsety, the human-headed god looked after the liver;



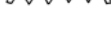
Hapy, the baboon-headed god looked after the lungs;



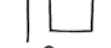
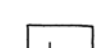
Duamutef, the jackal-headed god looked after the stomach;



Qebehsenuf, the falcon-headed god looked after the intestines.



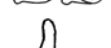
The heart was left in the body because the Egyptians believed that the person would need it in the afterlife. A long hook was used to smash the brain and pull it out through the nose. The body was then stuffed and dried in natron. After 40 days it was rubbed with good-smelling oils, then wrapped in linen bandages. The arms and legs were wrapped separately.



Amulets (charms) were put in the bandages. The isis knot amulet protected the body and the plummet amulet kept the person balanced in the next life.



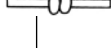
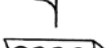
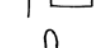
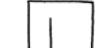
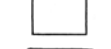
The stuffed, dried-out body was then covered in resin. The priest read out spells. A papyrus scroll (papyrus was used before paper and made from squashed papyrus reeds), with spells from the Book of the Dead, was placed in the mummy's arms. The spells were placed with the dead person in order to help him/her pass through the dangers of the underworld and attain an afterlife of bliss in the Field of Reeds.



A death mask was put onto the mummy.



The last ceremony was one called the 'opening of the mouth'. The priest touched the mouth of the mummy, so that it would be able to eat and speak in the afterlife. The mummy was then put into a sarcophagus (a coffin), which could be made out of either wood or stone. Magic symbols were painted on the coffin, as well as hieroglyphs, pictures of gods and spells. The sarcophagus would then be placed into the burial chamber, together with the canopic jars, food, possessions and other items for the afterlife. A wealthy Egyptian would also take servants in the form of shabti with him/her. The walls of the tomb were decorated with paintings and spells.



Preparing the mummy

Activity sheet 7.1

The ancient Egyptians believed that they would enjoy a wonderful life after their death. To make sure they were ready for this afterlife, they prepared the dead body very carefully and put it into the burial chamber with many objects that would help the person on their way.

After the person had died, the body was washed in water from the Nile. The liver, lungs, stomach and intestines were taken out and dried in natron. These organs were placed in canopic jars. Each jar had a different top:

Imsety, the human-headed god looked after the liver;

Hapy, the baboon-headed god looked after the lungs;

Duamutef, the jackal-headed god looked after the stomach;

Qebehsenuf, the falcon-headed god looked after the intestines.



Imsety



Hapy



Duamutef

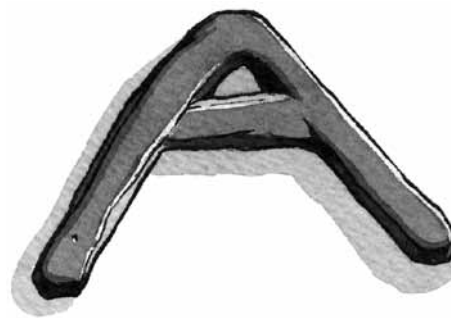


Qebehsenuf

The body was dried and then wrapped in layers of linen bandages. Amulets (charms) were put in the bandages.



Isis knot amulet to protect the body



Plummet amulet to keep the person balanced in the next life

A papyrus scroll, with spells from the Book of the Dead, was placed in the mummy's arms. A death mask was put onto the mummy. The mummy was then put into a sarcophagus (coffin), which could be made out of either stone or wood. Magic symbols were painted on the coffin, as well as hieroglyphs, spells and pictures of gods. The sarcophagus would then be placed into the burial chamber, together with the canopic jars, food, possessions and other items for the afterlife. A wealthy Egyptian would also take servants in the form of shabti with him/her. The walls of the tomb were decorated with paintings and spells.

Name: _____



The burial chamber

Activity sheet 7.2

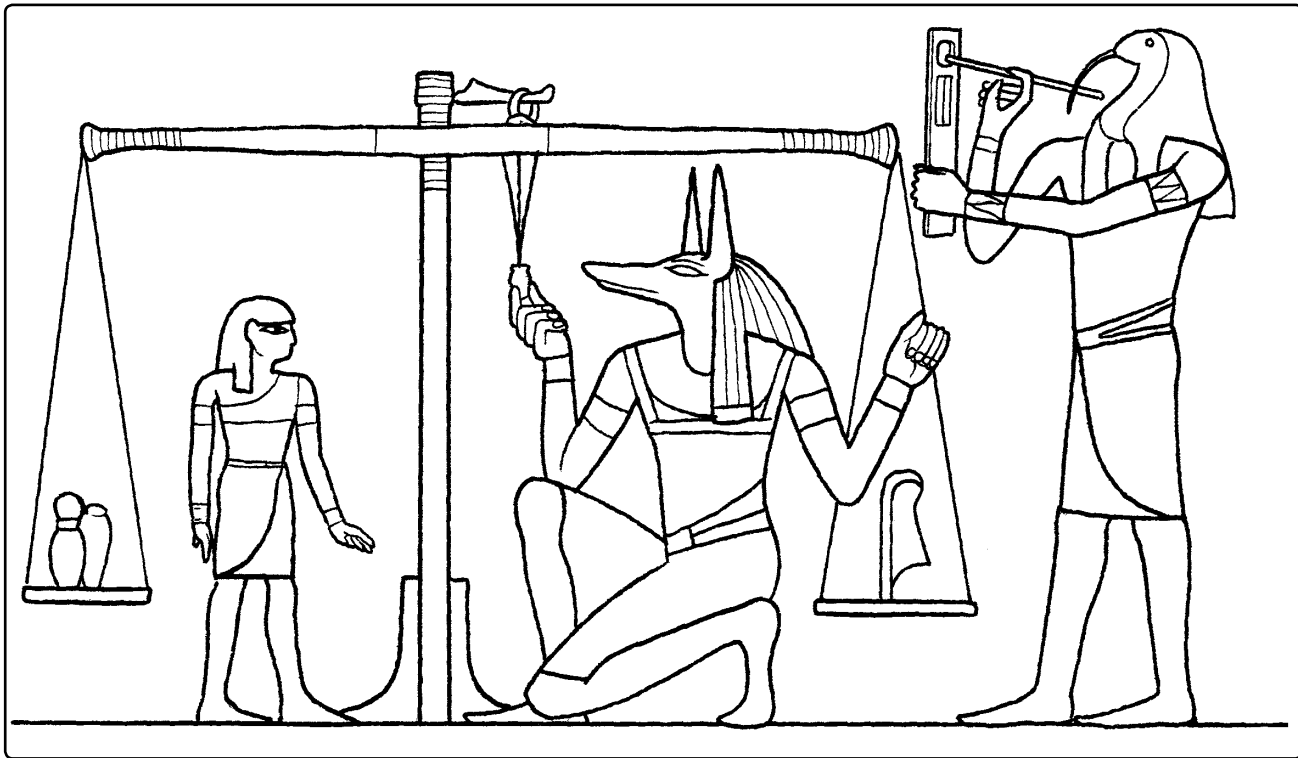
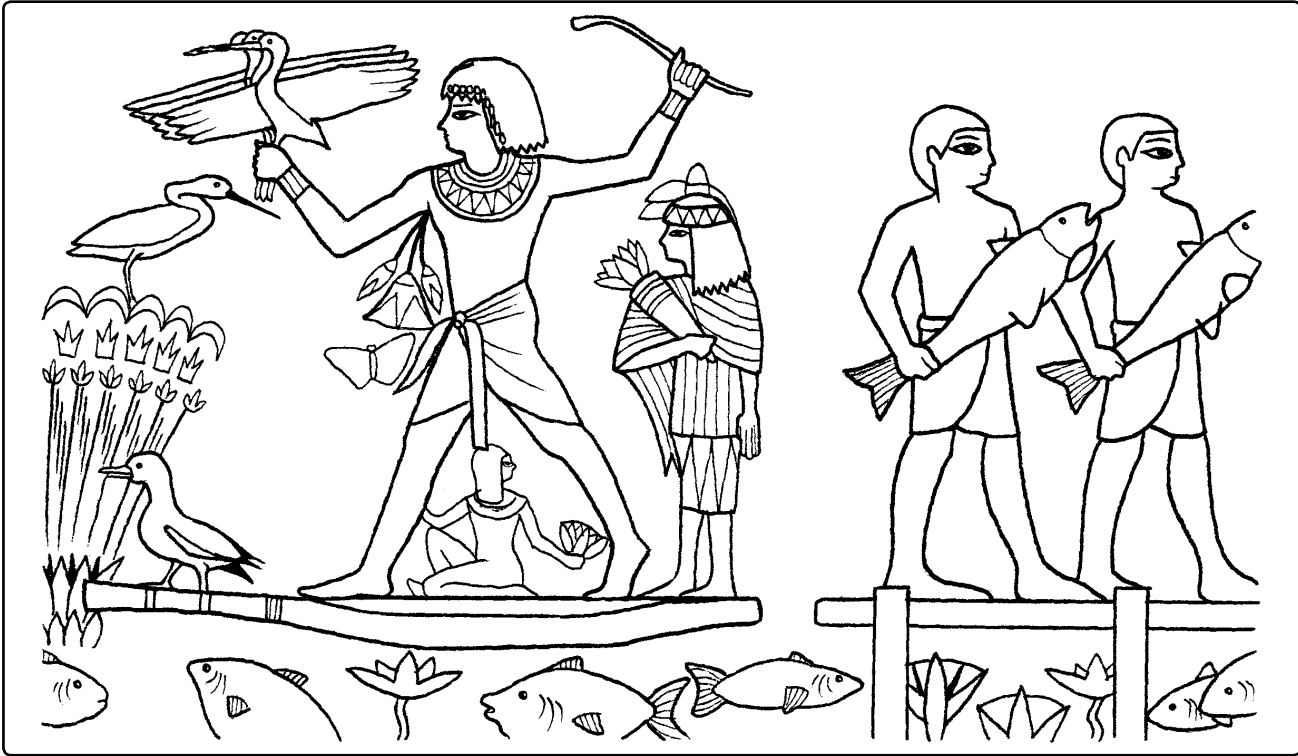
Names:

<p>Task each person in the group is to do</p>	
<p>Why we should include it</p>	
<p>What we should include</p>	

Wall painting

Activity sheet 7.3

Name: _____



Name: _____

Sarcophagus template

Activity sheet 7.4

Use this template to make a lid for your Egyptian mummy's coffin. Decorate the lid.

