

**Year
3/4/5/6**

The Historical Association's Scheme of Work for Primary History

Unit: Beliefs in Ancient Egypt

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About this unit

This unit on Ancient Egypt offers pupils the chance to look at another civilisation very different from their own. Students can be introduced to the key features of Ancient Egyptian civilisation through the beliefs and attitudes of these ancient people. Students should examine the similarities and differences between their ancient beliefs and beliefs held today and how these beliefs fitted into society and culture at the same time as exploring the world of the ancient Egyptians.

Unit Structure

This unit is structured around these over-arching enquiries :

1. What did the Ancient Egyptians believe? How do we know?
How different were beliefs in Ancient Egypt from today?
2. How did religion affect life in Ancient Egypt
3. How did Civilisation adapt to the needs of Egyptian life?

How this unit links to the new national curriculum for primary history

The Achievements of the Earliest Civilisations:

- Beliefs
- Features of civilisation – buildings, objects, writing, art
- Structure of society and culture

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	KEY CONTENT AND SUGGESTED LESSON IDEAS	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Children should learn: placing periods beliefs and attitudes of the past. religious diversity making links across different time periods	Introduction to what Egyptians believed. How do we know? Polytheistic, gods, goddesses, creation. Wall paintings, gods and preparation for the afterlife Comparison of Christian creation story to that of Ancient Egypt.	See lesson plan and teacher support materials 1 and 2
Children should learn: Who were the Egyptian gods? How do we know?	Myth, Ra, Osiris, Isis, Horus Beliefs and attitudes of the past Religious diversity Wall paintings, gods and preparation for the afterlife Recognise, name and place Egyptian gods.	See lesson plan and teacher support materials 3
Children should learn: What importance did animals have in Ancient Egypt? How do we know?	Bastet and sacred cats. Anubis and the Jackal, The scarab Beetle, Sobek and crocodiles, Tauret and hippos. Investigation into use of animals as representation	See lesson plan and teacher support materials 4
Children should learn: Why did the Egyptians build temples, tombs and pyramids? What were they like? How do we know?	Luxor Akhenaten, Guisa, Valley of the Kings Pupils to use archaeological electronic reconstructions to make virtual tours, learning about structure and use of different parts. Then design/build their own.	See lesson plan and teacher support materials 5 and 6
Children should learn: What religious festivals were there in Ancient Egypt? How did the Egyptians Celebrate them? How do we know? Children should learn:	Festival, Opet, celebration Pupils compare Ancient Egyptian festivals to modern such as Easter, Diwali etc. Then prepare their own Egyptian festival and celebrate it. Afterlife, underworld. Book of the dead, weighing of the soul	See lesson plan and teacher support materials 7-9

How did religion affect life in Ancient Egypt? How do we know? Part 1 – writing Part 2 – buildings, education, festivals, farming and medicine	Pupils investigate spell 125 and others from the Book of the Dead and compare to images. Pupils navigate the tomb of king Tut to see if they can find examples of the Book of the Dead.	See lesson plan and teacher support materials 10 and 11
Children Should Learn: What did the Egyptians believe about death and what happens to you when you die?		See lesson plan and support materials 12
Children should learn: How did Egyptians bury their dead and why? How do we know?	Embalming, ka, ba, akh, mummification, canopic jar, pyramid, tomb Pupils look at the process of mummification and then make their own mummies and canopic jars.	See lesson plan and support materials 13 and 14
Children should learn: What was the role of the Pharaoh on earth? What can the tomb of Tutankhamun tell us about Egyptian beliefs?	Final activity Divine kingship, Tomb of Tutankhamun, archaeology. Pupils to navigate the tomb of Tutankhamen and note the influence of religion.	See lesson plan and support materials 15-20

How will this enquiry help children to make progress in history?

The activities address a number of historical and broader concepts as well as an expanding database of knowledge related to the Ancient Egyptian civilisation. While this unit mostly concentrates upon religion, it is possible to also trace political, economic, social, and cultural perspectives. This awareness should include big picture/outline as well as depth based on more detailed analysis and case studies. These skills and concepts include:

- Acquisition of specialised vocabulary and terminology and reinforcement of that acquired earlier in a broader range of contexts;

How this enquiry might be adapted for children of different ages and different abilities?

There are certain key ideas it is important that children of all ages and abilities acquire, namely:

- Ancient Egypt was a complex and highly civilised society with complex belief systems.
- Their civilisation adapted to the needs of their way of life, centred around farming and the Nile.
- There is a range of evidence to help us piece together the lives of Ancient Egyptians but there are many gaps in this evidence.

- A sense of the distinctiveness of a society including its key features;
- Historical enquiry;
- Historical narrative and sequence and a sense of chronology and duration;
- A sense of space and geography;
- Cause, consequence and motivation including imagining choices;
- Change, continuity, progression and regression;
- Comparison and contrast, similarity and difference, variety;
- An understanding of the nature and use of evidence;
- Constructing accounts including investigation, selection, organisation, effective communication including summarising.

Older and/or more able children could demonstrate a more in-depth understanding of this society by:

- More independence in carrying out investigations including posing their own questions and organising their work;
- Knowing about a greater database of relevant and precise information including the significant features, chronology and changes and vocabulary/terminology including recognising the finer nuances;
- Being better at explaining why things were as they were (causation);
- Showing greater insights when making comparisons and contrasts within and outside the theme and the ability to make links and connections;
- Knowing about the evidence used to produce conclusions and the usefulness of that evidence;
- Having more understanding of the nature and security of representations and interpretations.