

Learning with the Artefacts

Artefacts provide a fascinating insight into the past and allow us to develop a deeper historical understanding. They are a great way to engage children's interest and attention, encouraging curiosity and helping pupils to make links between periods of history. Object-based learning enables items to be shared with the group and this tactile experience aids investigative skills that can bring history to life for all pupils.

Before introducing the artefacts to the class use the background information to ensure that you are familiar with the contents and what each artefact represents.

Consider how you want to use the artefacts, for example:

1. **For decoration/visual stimuli** - Demonstrate and explain each artefact before creating the display using the background notes provided and consider displaying images on the wall to create visual impact. Refer to the images and artefacts at different times during the study and encourage pupils to create labels and additional information as they develop understanding.
2. **As an educational tool to support learning** - Individual artefacts can be linked to concepts or themes such as daily life/society/communication. They can then be investigated at different points during the learning journey and used as a research focus helping pupils to ask and answer questions about the past. There are many ways to use artefacts. We have included some activity ideas here as a free download, along with example exploring artefacts sheets to encourage close observations of the items. We hope you enjoy using them.

Introducing the artefacts

- Teach the children how to handle the artefacts carefully and store them safely and securely.
- Some artefacts you use will be replicas. The first time that children encounter a replica, ensure that you explain that these are replicas rather than originals and discuss why this is so.
- Talk about materials/fragility/location/size/value/age of originals and explain that old objects are getting rarer, and they must be preserved for others to use in the future.

Ideas and suggestions

Explore the ancient Egyptian artefacts and think about the valuable role artefacts play in helping us to learn about and understand what life was like in ancient Egypt.

They can learn about the way of life, key events, beliefs including some of the major gods and goddesses and much more.

1. Mystery Boxes or A Suitcase

When introducing the artefacts, think about ways to build up excitement. You could, for example, hide the objects in a mystery box or suitcase and wrap them in protective layers of packaging. As the children carefully unwrap, you can explain the fragile nature of artefacts.

2. Lucky Dip

Get children to take it in turns to pull an item secretly from a box, bag or case. They should look at the artefact and then describe it to their peers without saying the name of the object. They can describe what they see, feel, smell, hear. Who can guess it correctly?

3. Observe and investigate

Take a closer look at an artefact and investigate it in more detail. Ask children to draw a picture or take photographs of it. They may want to look from different angles or focus on a specific part. You could use magnifying glasses or microscopes to really get in the role of a historian.

(See Observe and Investigate and Explore and Discover Activity Sheets)

4. Create your own ...

After learning about the artefacts, ask children to make their own record or replica. They could draw it or make a full 3d model. Be sure to include all the details and they could create their own information sheet to accompany their drawing or model.

5. Let the object talk!

Imagine if the artefact could talk. What would it say? Describe the stages in the artefact's life. Think about the objects journey from when it was made, how it was used and why, the experiences that were had with it along the way and how it was discovered many years later.

6. Be an expert

Explore the different roles of experts that work with artefacts, such as an archaeologist, a museum manager, documentary maker, conservator, or antique dealer. Children take on a role and create something about the artefact from their perspective. It could be a label in a museum, a fact file, or even a mini documentary!

7. Role play and Hot seating

Choose an artefact and create a short drama piece about it. Use mime, movement, gesture and speech to show how the object would have been used. You could also use hot seating. One person acts as the person who would have used the item in the past, and the rest of the class can ask questions to find out more.

8. Mini Archaeological Dig

Use a sand tray to carefully hide the artefacts. Allow children to uncover the buried items using tools such as trowels and brushes. Make close observations and draw and describe the objects. Ask them to record their initial ideas about what the item is and come up with questions they would like to answer about the artefact.

9. Memory Game

Place the artefacts on a tray and talk about each one. Have fact file cards that match each artefact. Can children match up the artefact with the correct fact file?

10. Odd One Out

Lay out your artefacts and include some from a different time period to the one you are learning about, or even modern day items. Can the children spot which resources are the odd ones out and are not from the era you are studying?

11. Geography

Learn about the location of Egypt. Locate Egypt on a map and describe its landscape, finding out the difference between ancient and modern Egypt. Look at its location, what countries are near and discuss which continent it is in. You may want to explore the River Nile and look to understand why the Nile was so important to the Egyptian way of life.

12. Howard Carter

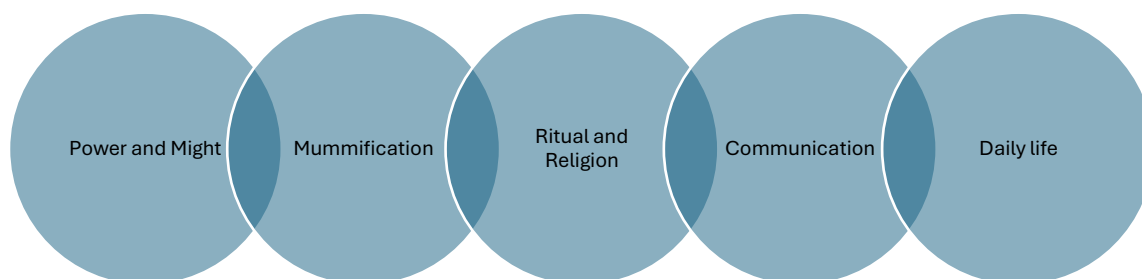
Put yourself into the shoes of Howard Carter and the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922. Look at some of the artefacts found in the tomb such as the sarcophagus. You could write a diary entry in the role of Howard Carter, or you could discuss the significance of these events and artefacts in helping us to learn about the past.

13. Sorting

Lay out the artefacts and discuss different ways they could be sorted, for example material or how they were used.

Once decided, ask children to sort the artefacts into different categories. Some artefacts may be used in more than one category.

For example:



Power and Might	Mummification	Ritual and Religion	Communication	Daily Life
Tutankhamun Mask Obelisk Coin Seated Ramesses Sphinx	Tutankhamun Mask Sarcophagus Canopic Jar Mummification plaque	Ankh Anubis head Scarab Isis Sphinx	Obelisk Hieroglyphs Canopic jar Coin Seated Ramesses	Necklace Coin

14. Learning about a theme

There are lots of themes that often run within a time period, for example Rituals and Religions were very important to the Ancient Egyptians. Choose a theme and explore this in more detail with the children, discussing how this has changed over time.

(See Lesson Plan on Rituals and Religion as an example)

15. Artefact Investigation

You may want to explore the artefacts in more detail by carrying out a deeper case study investigation into one of the artefacts your class find particularly interesting.

For example, Obelisks held an important significance in Ancient Egypt, so you may want to learn about these in more detail.

(See Activity Plan for Obelisks)

Observe & Investigate

Image or drawing of artefact:

Describe using your senses:

- What does it look and feel like?
- Does it make a noise?
- What is it made from?
- How big is it?
- Has it got any detail on it? Markings? Writing? What do they mean?
- Does the object remind you of anything?

Explore & Discover

What material(s) is it made of? Why might these have been chosen? (If this is a replica what were the originals made from?)

What condition is it in? _____

Where do you think it was found? _____

What do you think it is called? _____

What do you think the object was used for? _____

Tick the box/boxes to best describe the item

A luxury item	A useful item	An ordinary item	A valuable item

Who might have used it? _____

What difference did the object make to people's lives? _____

What can this object tell us about life in.....? _____

Example Lesson on the theme 'Ritual and Religion'

Introduction

Select the objects below that can relate to the theme of ritual and religion or belief. Also prepare to make use of images pack

- Ankh
- Anubis head
- Scarab
- Isis or Nephthys (protective goddess)
- Sphinx

1. Ask children to look at the shape of the objects. *Do they know what any of them are called?* Record the names of any they know.
2. Introduce each of the objects and provide their name and some brief background information ([See teachers notes with descriptions of objects](#))
3. Ask children to sort objects to try to think about what might link them e.g. Isis/Anubis = gods or Anubis/Sphinx = animal heads, scarab/ankh = amulet or scared object for protection. *What substantive concept/theme/golden thread might these all belong to?* (Ritual and Religion)
4. Use the images provides in the pack and have additional collection of photos /images of these objects. Ask children to look at them in pairs or groups. *Can they identify them in the images? What can they tell you about them?* Ask them to look at the materials the originals were made of and the size of them. Emphasise the difference between a scarab amulet and the sphinx.
5. Explain that these objects could be said to be characteristic of this civilisation. They represent the beliefs of the Egyptians and their relationship with their gods. ([See background information](#))
 - a. Link to the natural world around them
 - b. Admiration for certain qualities found in the animals/transfer of power and qualities
 - c. Link to idea of rebirth and regeneration
 - d. Linking natural world and that of the gods
 - e. Certain objects linked to specific gods or individuals
 - f. Protection

Development

Give each table one of the objects as a research focus.

(You may need to allocate roles e.g. researcher, recorder, sketcher, depending on how experiences children are at managing this sort of task)

Ask them to either create an electronic poster or slide presentation about their object.

They must include:

- a description of the object with background historical information about it
- two or three images that they have found of the object at least one in an archaeological setting
- a sketch of the object
- an explanation for why this object was important to the Egyptians and how it linked to ritual/belief/religion
- an answer to the question “What does this object tells us about life in ancient Egypt?”

Extension (For most able)

- Go to Griffith Institute Online archive (<http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/discoveringTut/>)
- Go to “Tutankhamun Anatomy of an Expedition”
- Go to “Object Cards Browse Search”
- Input name of object
- Select image and sketch it from card or photos.
- Sphinx Group Go to Metropolitan Museum of Art to find Lapis Lazuli Sphinx (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545996>)

Summary

Each group presents to the class via a spokesperson. Watching groups need to think of a question they would like to ask.

After all groups have presented their findings ask the class to consider which object they think is most characteristic of Egyptian religion and why they think this. (Short discussion here to see their reasoning)

Have objects set around the room on cards. Give each child a sticker. Ask them to think about which is the most characteristic (or iconic) object and put their sticker on the card of the object of their choice.

Example of detailed activities linked to Obelisks

What is the object and what does it tell us about Ancient Egypt?

1. Initial discussion	Obelisk is a Greek word meaning pointed pillar or skewer. The ancient Egyptians called them “tekhenut” meaning “to pierce”. They were seen as rays of light piercing the sky like sunbeams coming through clouds. They linked to the sun god Amun.
2. Modern Placement Activity	<p>The model is of an Egyptian obelisk. Romans, Assyrians and Ethiopians made similar objects but mainly we associate obelisks with ancient Egypt. There are only seven still standing in Egypt today but there are 30 that have been taken to other places in the world including London.</p> <p>Plot on a map where Egyptian obelisks are found around the world. <i>What do they notice about where they are? Why are there so many in Italy? (Romans moved them there!)</i></p>
3. Parts of Obelisk Activity	<p>Look at the model obelisk. <i>Can the children see the shape? Do they notice that the bottom is larger than the top? Can they identify the pyramidion? Can they see hieroglyphs and carved pictures of a pharaoh or god?</i></p> <p>Obelisks were a four-sided rectangular column, inscribed on each face with images and hieroglyphs. At the top was the pyramidion (four-sided pyramid shape). This symbolised the rays of light falling to earth and was often covered with precious metal such as gold, silver or electrum (naturally occurring gold/silver mixed metal). The inscriptions may also have been highly painted and decorated.</p>
4. Reasons for creation of Obelisks Activity	<p>The pharaohs of Egypt had these made to honour the gods (specifically but not exclusively Amun) and commemorate themselves. They were usually made as a pair and erected at the entrances to temples. They were often made to mark an event such as a coronation, opening of a temple or victory celebration.</p> <p>They were made to be spectacular and communicate power, might and wealth.</p>
5. Where and how were they made	<p>Many obelisks were made at the quarry at Aswan of rose-pink granite. They were hewn from a single piece of rock. Have a picture of the unfinished obelisk. (You can find these easily online. Wikipedia “Unfinished Obelisk” has some useful images including one with people to provide a sense of scale).</p> <p>Talk to children about how they think it was excavated. The small round pitting you can see on the photos is evidence of the round stone balls that were said to be used to chip the hard granite rock.</p>

	<p><i>What tools would have been used? How would it have been moved from quarry to temple? How would it have been erected?</i> The children's ideas are quite valid here as archaeologists are still not sure how they were erected but they think they know how they were moved to the site.</p> <p>These objects were very large and very heavy. Hatshepsut's took seven months to create and move from quarry to temple. To give children some idea of the height of some obelisks lay children in a line in playground or hall. Hatshepsut's obelisk at Karnak was 97 feet (29.5 m) tall. That equates to roughly 22 children.</p>
6. Cleopatra's Needle Activity	<p>Obelisks can be used to lead into an investigation about significant individuals. At Karnak, in the temple of Amun there are obelisks created for Hatshepsut, her father Thutmose I and her nephew Thutmose III.</p> <p>London has an obelisk from Ancient Egypt. Although it is called Cleopatra's Needle it is nothing to do with Cleopatra but is linked to Thutmose III and later added to by Ramesses II. Both were great warrior pharaohs. It originally stood in Heliopolis and was created around 1450 BC. It stands on Victoria Embankment guarded by faux sphinx looking over the Thames. The other of the pair is in Central Park, New York. London's was presented to Britain in 1819 but remained in Alexandria until 1877 when a businessman sponsored an expedition to bring it over. It would be useful to have a good quality image of this one for children to see.</p> <p><i>Does this have a valid place here? Why is it called Cleopatra's Needle?</i></p>
Further background information	<p><u>References or where to find background information</u></p> <p>Translation of Thutmose I obelisk: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mjn.host.cs.st-andrews.ac.uk/egyptian/texts/corpus/pdf/urkIV-038.pdf</p> <p>Hatshepsut translation: https://pharaoh.se/ancient-egypt/hatshepsut-obelisk/</p> <p>Unfinished obelisk https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfinished_obelisk</p> <p>Obelisks with drawings of hieroglyphs https://pharaoh.se/ancient-egypt/obelisks/</p> <p>Hatshepsut's obelisk https://www.litosonline.com/en/article/obelisk-hatshepsut</p>