**The Houston Museum of Natural Science**

Online Curriculum

**Hall of Ancient Egypt**

Knowledge Hunt

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

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Thank you again, and we hope you enjoy your field trip to HMNS!

### How to use this guide:

1. Feel free to edit the questions to suit your student group.
2. The Knowledge Hunt is specifically for the Hall of Ancient Egypt.
3. Visitor services and security staff are posted around the Museum and will be happy to assist you in finding any of the locations or objects mentioned.
4. Please ensure that one chaperone is with every group of ten students at all times as they complete these activities.

For TEKS information or questions, contact us at [**curriculum@hmns.org**](mailto:curriculum@hmns.org%0d%0c)

### Vocabulary

Ancient, Archaeologist, Artifact, Coffin, Deity, Faience, Hieroglyphs, Mineral, Mummy, Patron, Pharaoh, Pigment, Replica, Scribe, Shabti, Temple, Tomb

**Knowledge Hunt Instructions**: Use the following questions to guide your students through the Hall of Ancient Egypt.

## Entrance Room

As you enter the Hall of Ancient Egypt, you will see a projected timeline of ancient Egyptian history on the wall. Answer the questions below using the text panels and timeline in this room.

### Egypt: Gift of the Nile (Text Panel)

Read the text panel aloud and give the students a few seconds to look at the map. Ask the students if they know the name of the river that runs through Egypt.

Tell the students that the Nile River is the “backbone” of Egypt. Each year, the Nile overflows its banks, flooding the surrounding farmlands. Ask students why the flooding of the Nile River would have been significant to the ancient Egyptians.

Ask the students if they can name another ecosystem in Egypt. Please provide them with clues to lead them to desert as the correct answer. Explain that the desert provided ancient Egypt with a natural boundary, protecting the ancient Egyptians from their enemies.

## The Pillar Room

As you move into the next room, point out the large temple pillars that form a hallway down the center.

Encourage the students to examine these pillars. What do they notice about the colors and designs on the pillars as you progress toward the back of the room? Explain that the pillars represent the passage of time. As time passes, the pillars age, with the paint fading and the surfaces eroding.

### Cosmetic Cases

On the right-hand wall of the Pillar Room, you will find two cases displaying cosmetic containers, including kohl pots. Explain that men and women in ancient Egypt used the types of cosmetics that these containers once held. Read the orange-colored text panel labeled “Cosmetics” aloud to the students.

Ask the students if they see any similarities between how fashion trends in ancient Egypt and today's trends.

### Luxury Vessels

The second case on the room's left-hand wall contains various vases and vessels. Ask the students to compare and contrast the different sizes and shapes of the containers. Encourage the students to imagine how ancient Egyptians may have used these containers.

### Working and Coloring Materials

Moving down the left wall to the fourth case, you will find examples of the various colors used by the ancient Egyptians to create art. Egyptians created paints by grinding minerals into a fine powder and mixing them with a binder liquid. Binders allow the pigments to stick to the surfaces they are applied to.

Pay special attention to faience, a synthetic material created by heating sand and powdered minerals to create turquoise-colored glass. Can the students find other examples of faience in the nearby cases?

### Pharaoh: Lord of the Two Lands (Text Panel)

At the far end of the Pillar Room on the right is a text panel labeled "Pharaoh: Lord of the Two Lands." Read the panel aloud and ask the following questions:

* Who was the most important person in ancient Egypt?
* What types of tasks did the Pharaoh do?
* Can you name any modern-day kings or queens?

## Temple Hallway

As you exit the Pillar Room, you will enter a long hallway. It looks like a temple hallway with alcoves along both sides.

### Temples (Text Panel)

The first alcove on the right contains a text panel labeled "Temples." Before reading the text panel aloud to the students, ask them if they know who may have lived in the Egyptian temples. Read the panel aloud to see if they were correct. Then, ask the following questions:

* What kinds of materials did the Egyptians use to build temples?
* Why did you think the ancient Egyptians chose these materials for temple construction?

### Thoth

The second alcove on the left contains a carving of Thoth, an Egyptian god with the head of a bird. Thoth was the god of wisdom and the patron of scribes. Point out how the carving stands out from the surface of the stone. Explain to the students that this carving style is a raised relief, typically used indoors.

### Gods in Animal Form

The third alcove on the left contains a variety of small carvings and statues of Egyptian gods and goddesses. Many have animal features. See how many different animal deities the students can identify. Ask the students why animals were so important in ancient Egyptian religion.

**Animal Mummies**

As you enter the next section, point out the animal mummies on the left. You will address these animal mummies when you discuss mummification in the next room.

### Mummification (Text Panel)

Enter the larger and last alcove in the hallway. Ask students to share what they know about mummies and mummification. When you enter the room, read the text panel on the wall directly to the left. Ask students to explain why they think it was important to the Egyptians to preserve the bodies of the dead.

Ask the students to recall the animal mummies they saw in the last alcove. Ask the following questions:

* What animal mummies have you seen today?
* Why do you think that the ancient Egyptians mummified animals?
* How do you think the ancient Egyptians chose which kinds of animals to mummify?

### Shabti Figures

Locate the case of shabti figures. Read the information about the figures aloud. Invite the students to explain the shabti's purpose in their own words. Would they like to have a shabti to do their chores at home?

## Mummy Alcove (Neskhon’s Room)

*Note:* Feel free to skip this area to avoid your group seeing the mummy.

### Mummy and Equipment of Neskhons

Invite the students to describe the mummy on display. What objects did this mummy have buried with him? Why do you think that these items were included in his burial?

### Coffin of Neskhons

What do you notice about the coffin? What shapes and images are included in the coffin? Point out the presence of the many gods and goddesses represented on the coffin. Are there any gods or goddesses that the students recognize from previous areas of the hall?

**Old Kingdom Room**

Exiting Neskhons Room to the left, you will enter the room representing the Old Kingdom Period.

### The Old Kingdom - Dynasties 3 – 6, 2682 – 2181 BC (Text Panel)

As you enter the room, ask the students to look at the map on the text panel to your right. Is Lower Egypt above (north) Upper Egypt or below (south) Upper Egypt?

Explain to the students that the areas called Upper and Lower Egypt are opposite of what we would expect because they were named based on the flow of the Nile River. The Nile flows from south to north or from the bottom to the top.

Point out the city of Memphis. Explain that Memphis was once a thriving metropolis. Ask the students if they know of another city by that same name. Explain that there are many examples of Egyptian culture in the United States.

**Food and Drink for the Tomb**

Locate the case in the middle right of the room. Explain that ancient Egyptians stocked tombs with clothing, furniture, and even mummified food to ensure comfort and happiness in the afterlife. Locate the artifact labeled “case for a food offering.” Explain that this case once contained mummified meat meant to provide a meal in the afterlife. Ask the students if they can guess what kind of meat the container held based on its shape. What food would they want if they had to pick meals for their tombs?

## Middle and New Kingdom Rooms

The two rooms directly ahead contain artifacts from the Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom Periods. Allow students to explore these rooms and choose their favorite artifacts. Ask the students to explain why they chose their favorites.

Explain that archaeologists working in Egypt discovered many of these artifacts in tombs. Go on to explain that these artifacts provide clues to how the ancient Egyptians lived.

## Coffin Room

Note: You may skip this room if you do not want your students to see the mummies.

Enter the large center room containing several mummies and coffins.

### Mummy of a Man

Gather the students around the mummy in the middle of the room. Explain that because Egypt was fertile and prosperous, people came from many different lands to trade and work there. This particular mummy has Roman features and provides evidence of the diversity of culture in ancient Egypt. Invite students to point out features of this mummy that they find interesting.

**Coffin and Mummy of Ank-hap**

Locate the “Mummy of Ank-hap" across the room from the “Mummy of a Man.” Encourage the students to observe the mummy and its coffin. Invite the students to compare and contrast this mummy with the mummies they previously examined.

## Exit

### The Rosetta Stone

Invite the students to examine the replica of the Rosetta Stone. Explain that the Rosetta Stone was an important clue that helped experts learn to read Egyptian hieroglyphs, a system of writing that used pictures as signs. Ask the students if they can tell you how many different types of writing they can identify on the stone.