

The Ancient Egyptians

Year 3 (or mixed age 3/4)

Key end points of the 'Ancient Egyptian' unit are to know that:

- the ancient Egyptians were an ancient civilization who lived near the Nile in Egypt.
- the River Nile floods, creating fertile land to grow crops
- ancient Egyptian society was hierarchal, and the Pharaoh was the leader at the top
- the Ancient Egyptians used a writing system called hieroglyphics which we have been able to translate and use to find out more about them
- the ancient Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses and prepared for the afterlife
- the archaeologist, Howard Carter, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun- a Pharaoh that was mummified.

This unit focuses on Ancient Egypt and follows on from *The Stone Age to the Iron Age*. These units cover some of the same time period which should allow children to make comparisons between what was happening in Egypt and Britain at the same point in time (for example, hieroglyphics were used in Egypt from c.3100 BCE while there was no equivalent writing system in Britain until the Roman invasion in 43 CE)

If possible, this unit is best taught before Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, which both developed after Ancient Egyptian civilisation. During this unit, the children will begin by locating Egypt (the children have previously learned about the continents of the world in Geography and should be able to identify Africa) and looking at the importance of the River Nile. The children will also learn about settlements and rivers in Geography this year.

During this unit, the children will look at Ancient Egypt's hierarchal **society** at this time. Children will look at social pyramids and be introduced to the terminology- slaves, Viziers, Craftsmen/Artisans, and Pharaoh. They will also learn about what it would be like to live in Egypt at this time- looking at how archaeologists have been able to find out about the food they ate, the clothes they wore, the houses they lived in and the jobs they did. The children will learn about the **similarities and differences** between the lives of the rich and the poor, and the lives of men and women at this time.

This unit will also focus on fascinating Ancient Egyptian **religious beliefs**. Teachers may wish to go into more detail into this, perhaps studying Egyptian Mythology and Legends in English (we would recommend studying this in English after the children have some background knowledge of Ancient Egypt). Understanding the religious beliefs of Ancient Egyptians is integral to understanding some of their great achievements- such as the building of the pyramids. The children will look at Egyptians beliefs regarding the afterlife and will look at the artefacts found in the tombs of both a craftsman and his wife, as well as one of the most well-known pharaohs- Tutankhamun. This unit will focus on how archaeological discoveries, such as Howard Carters discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, have enabled us to learn more about life in Ancient Egypt.

This unit helps children develop a sense of chronology and appreciation of the ancient world. The children can build upon their knowledge in Egypt later on in the Art curriculum, where children will learn more about the Great Sphinx, the bust of Queen Nefertiti and the death mask of Tutankhamun.

**Lesson Sequencing:**

At the beginning of the unit, children will be supported to retrieve prior knowledge from geography to locate Egypt and learn about the significance of the river Nile. In Lesson 2, the children will learn about what life was like in ancient Egypt, with a focus on developing disciplinary knowledge by looking at *how* we know so much about them. Lesson 3 focuses on religion and the afterlife, and lesson 4 looks at Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. The final lesson looks at Egyptian hieroglyphics and how they have helped us to find out more about life in Egypt at this time.

Key substantive concepts looked at in this unit are **civilisation, society, power, hierarchy** and **religion**.

Key disciplinary concepts introduced are **sources & evidence** (looking at how we know about life in Ancient Egypt from the things left behind), and **similarities and differences**.