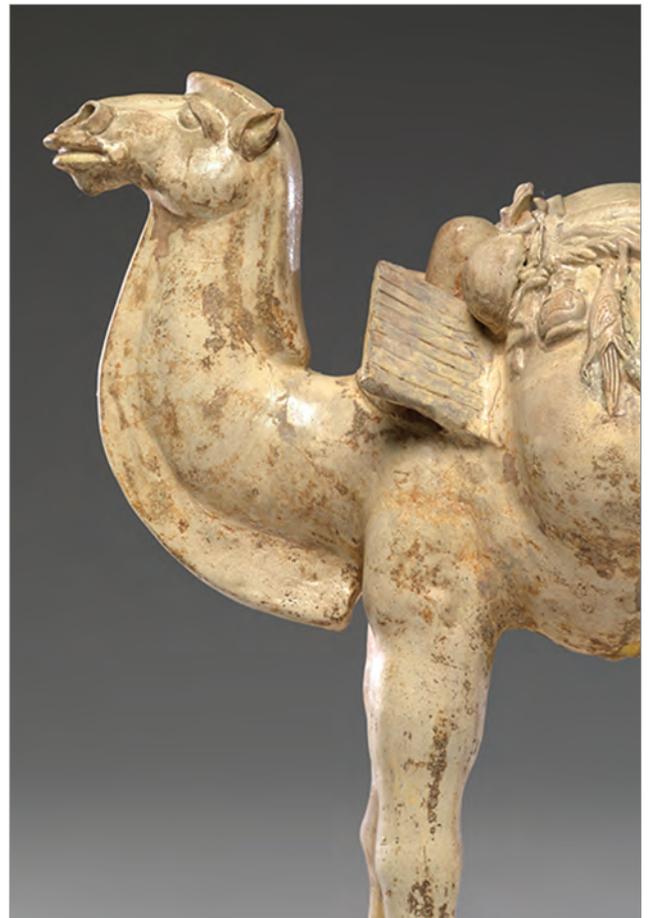


# Ancient Worlds: Egypt and China

GRADE 2



Based on images of two works of art from VMFA's collection, these activities will provide students with background information before their visit and, afterwards, encourage them to use critical thinking skills to draw conclusions from what they saw. The works may or may not be shown on your guided tour, but they are related to the tour theme, and the pre-visit activities will help prepare the students for the interactive component of the tour.

**Tour Description**

Explore the fascinating ancient worlds Egypt and China! Examine the importance of writing, art, and artifacts used in daily life and beyond!

**Tour Objectives**

1. The student will understand how the heritage and contributions of the people of ancient Egypt and China have influenced the present world in terms of architecture, daily life, and written language.
2. The student will locate Egypt and China on a world map and discuss its geographical features/surroundings.

# Virginia Standards of Learning for Second Grade

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The following SOLs are for the tour and follow-up activities:

## Social Science

- 2.1 The student will explain how the contributions of ancient Egypt and China have influenced the present world in terms of architecture, inventions, the calendar, and written language. The student will identify spatial relationships—left, right, top, bottom, side, center, front, back, over, and under.
- 2.4 The student will develop map skills by
  - a) locating the United States, Egypt, and China on world maps;
  - b) understanding the relationship between the environment and the culture of ancient Egypt and China.
- 2.7 The student will describe natural resources (water, soil, wood, and coal), human resources (people at work), and capital resources (machines, tools, and buildings).
- 2.8 The student will distinguish between the use of barter and the use of money in the exchange for goods and services.

## Visual Arts

- 2.4 The student will create works of art inspired by a variety of concepts, themes, and literary sources.
- 2.9 The student will create works of art from observation.
- 2.13 The student will compare works of art, elements of architecture, and artifacts of other cultures with those of their culture.
- 2.21 The student will explain ways that the art of a culture reflects its people's attitudes and beliefs.

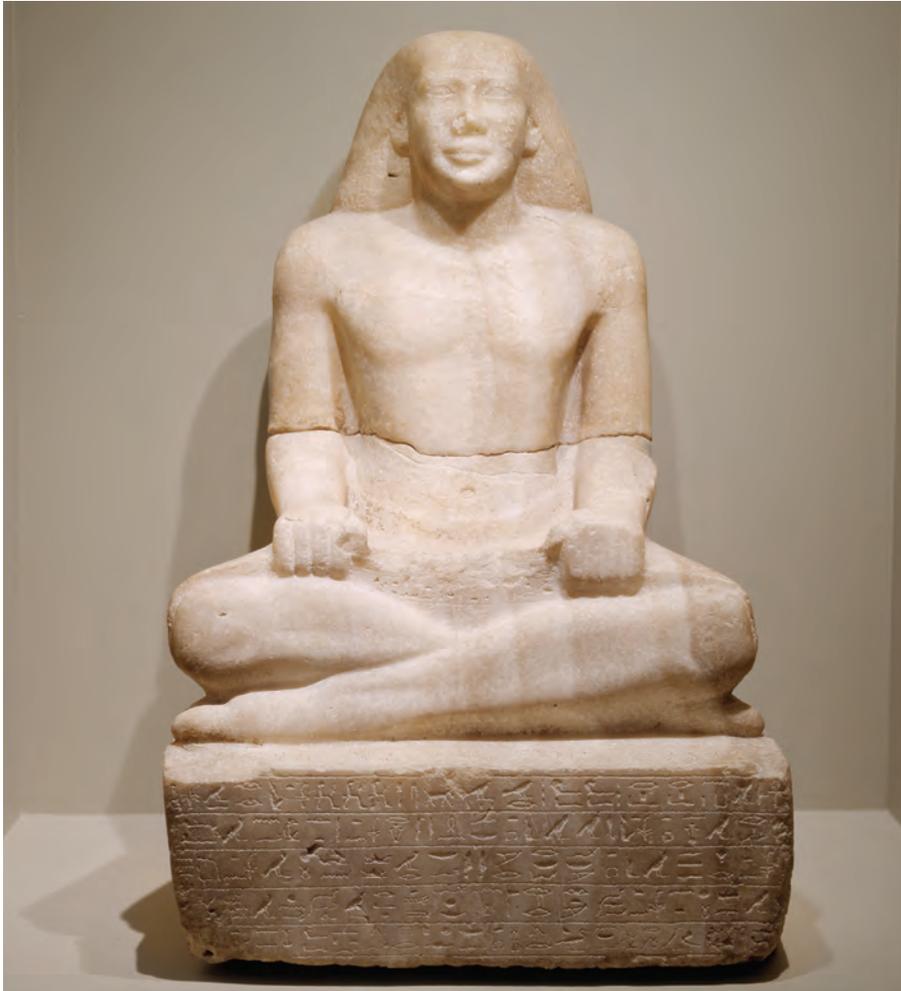
## English

- 2.2 The student will expand understanding and use of word meanings.
  - b. use words that reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge.
  - e. use vocabulary from other content areas.

## Pre-Visit Activities

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### Object 1: Egypt



***Seated Scribe: Sema-Tawy-Tefnakht, 644–610 BCE***  
Egyptian alabaster  
Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 51.19.4, 64.60

The ancient Egyptians developed their own writing system by creating more than seven hundred hieroglyphs! Each hieroglyph was a symbol for a different sound, word, or concept.

Scribes, who recorded the important business of Egypt, were some of the few people who could read and write. They attended a special school to learn how to use hieroglyphs, and their skills and position were passed down to the next generation.

Scribes like VMFA's Sema-Tawy-Tefnakht were often depicted in ancient Egyptian art sitting cross-legged and holding a writing board. The hieroglyphs on our scribe's base tell us about him and his job: "The Herald of the King in all his Places, The one who surrounds the king and speaks to him when he is alone, the overseer of the secrets of the King in all of his places, who loves the king, who is beloved by the king." The hieroglyphs on his shoulders contain the name of the king who employed Sema-Tawy-Tefnakht. The pharaoh is most commonly known as Psamtik I.

## Pre-Visit Activities

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### Questions

- What did the ancient Egyptians call their writing system?  
*Hieroglyphic. Hieroglyphs are the individual symbols*
- Where do you see them on this statue?  
*On the base, below the scribe's legs.*
- Do you think everyone could read and write in ancient Egypt?  
*No, not everyone could read and write. Only certain people, like scribes, could read and write.*
- What do you think the sculpture of the scribe is made out of?  
*Alabaster, a type of stone used in ancient Egypt for making sculptures and vessels*
- Scribes usually wrote on papyrus, a type of paper made from the papyrus plant. The English word for paper comes from the Egyptian word "papyrus." What do you write on today? What is your paper made from?  
*Today paper is usually made from wood and plants.*

## Pre-Visit Activities

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### Object 2: China



***Bactrian Camel*, 7th century**  
Chinese Tang Dynasty (618–906)  
Glazed earthenware  
Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 51.12.2

This sculpture was most likely found in the tomb of a very important person. It represents a Bactrian camel with two humps. This type of camel was used to transport goods across deserts and along the Silk Road, a series of more than 4,000 miles of trade routes that linked China with parts of Central Asia, the Mediterranean, Africa, Europe, and South Asia. Camels were an important part of daily life in ancient China. They could carry a great deal of weight and survive the weather in the Gobi desert, where it could be very hot during the day and very cold at night. Camels are built for long, dry journeys. Their humps store fat, which they use for energy when food is short. A camel's stomach lining is specially built for water storage. The length of time camels can go without a drink depends on their travel speed and the weight of the load they're carrying. They can last about six to ten days if traveling is slow and easy. Their long eyelashes keep the sand out of their eyes. Their big feet prevent them from sinking in the sand.

Like the Egyptians, the Chinese believed in a life after death so they buried their dead with things they thought they would need in the afterlife. This camel carries all of the necessities for a long journey across the desert or into the afterlife, including water and food.

# Pre-Visit Activities

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## Questions

- What type of animal is this?  
*A Bactrian camel, or camel with two humps.*
- What kind of land does China have?  
*Forests, hills, mountains, and deserts.*
- China has two major deserts—the Gobi and the Taklamakan. What is the climate like in a desert?  
*Hot, dry, little rainfall, and often cold at night.*
- Why do you think camels were important to the ancient Chinese?  
*They helped transport people and goods over long distances and could withstand the heat and dryness of the desert.*
- What types of things would have been traded along the Silk Road?  
*Westbound: silk, iron, gold, silver, bronze, mirrors, tea, ceramics, paper, etc.*  
*Eastbound: spices, glass, jade, lapis lazuli, fur, wool, vegetables (cucumbers, carrots, spinach), fruit (grapes), nuts (walnuts), exotic animals, and plants.*
- Why do you think a statue of a camel would have been buried with someone?  
*Camels were very important to the Chinese in daily life. Since they believed the afterlife was similar to life on earth, they expected they would need the camel then as well to assist them.*
- What objects are so important to you that you would like to take them with you?

## Post-Visit Activities

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- Ask the students what they learned from their visit. Have them fill in the answers on their K-W-L charts. Ask them if the questions they had before their visit were answered.
- Ask them what their favorite image was and why.
- Show students the two images again and ask them what they remember about seeing the works of art in the galleries. Did they look different from what they expected? What did they learn about the subjects of the two works of art as well as the works themselves? Did they see other works that helped them understand these two works?
- Ask the students to draw an image of their favorite work of art and add as many details as they can.
- Make a list of the works of art students remember visiting on their tour and ask them how they were important to the ancient Egyptians and Chinese.
- Please let us know how your students have been inspired by VMFA! Visit our tumblr page and submit images of student works at: <http://vmfaeducation.tumblr.com/>



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