

Teacher-Directed Tour
World History I: Egypt



Visit VMFA's Egyptian Gallery to find out more about Ancient Egyptian Art!

Get Ready!

Please make sure you visit the VMFA Teacher-Directed Tour page at <http://vmfa-resources.org/teacher-directed-gallery-tour-instructions/> for directions on using these guides and booking your visit.

The Egyptian gallery is fairly small. This resource was designed for a small group of approximately 15-16 students. Please make sure to contact Tour Services and let us know you will be using this guide so that we may manage gallery capacity: 804-340-1419 or tourservices@vmfa.museum

Get Set!

Produce complete copies of this packet for all teachers and chaperones. Students only need copies of pages 1-11.

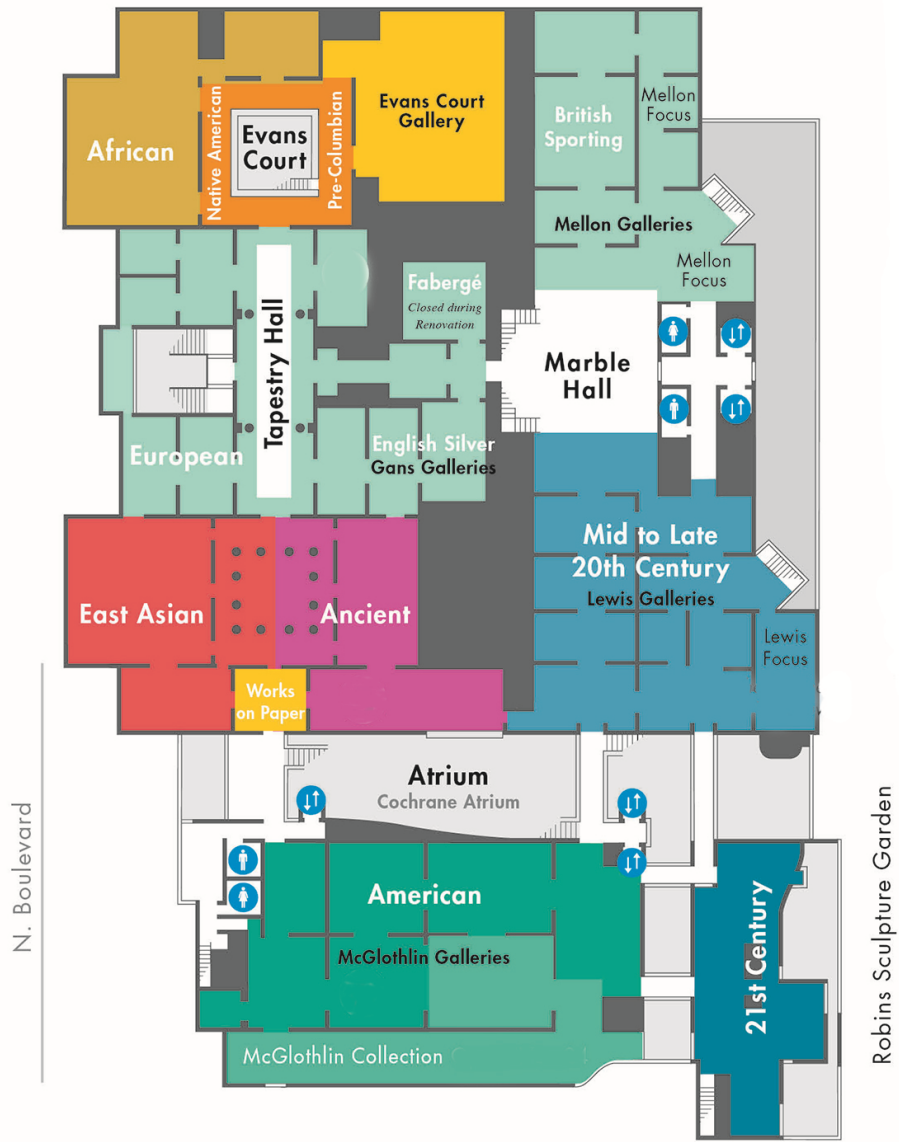
Here are directions:

- Use the gallery map to find the Egyptian Gallery.
- Follow the floor plan on page 3 of your packet to find the selected objects.
- You may wish to break students into smaller groups and have them start at different objects.
- Allow the group time to answer questions at each stop. Encourage them to read the label copy posted by each object to find some of the answers.
- The answer key and further discussion points can be found on pages 9–12.

Go!

We hope you enjoy your experience at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Gallery Map – Level 2



COLLECTIONS

- Mid to Late 20th Century
- 21st Century
- African
- American
- Ancient Egyptian | Greek | Roman | Etrurian
- East Asian Chinese | Japanese | Korean
- European Byzantine | Medieval | Renaissance
Baroque | 18th Century | 19th Century
English Silver | Fabergé | British Sporting
- Pre-Columbian | Native American

Teacher-Directed Tour

World History I: Egypt

Let's explore ancient Egypt! (Level 2; Ancient Galleries)

Start your Egyptian gallery hunt by finding the work of art that contains the detail you see below. (A detail is a section of a larger work of art). This work of art is a limestone raised relief (a sculpture in which the figures project slightly from the background). Much of the original paint can still be seen on the surface of the relief.



Find the title and date of this relief:

How was this made? It took several artisans to make an Egyptian relief. The first artisan made a preliminary drawing using red paint and a brush. Next, an artisan carved away the background to form the raised imagery. Once the limestone was carved, the artisan coated the relief with a thin layer of whitewash, a mixture of glue and whiting (chalk). The whitewash filled in holes, smoothed the surface, and provided a white background that brightened the colors in the relief.

How many colors of paint can you find that remain on the relief? List them here:

This relief was made during the Old Kingdom during the great age of pyramid building. Many of the tombs made in this period are decorated with scenes of daily life, such as the one we see here.

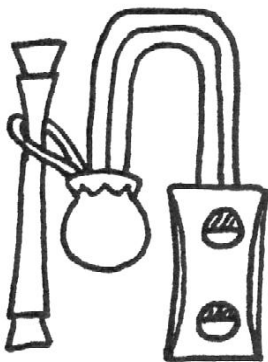
Who do you think is the most important person in this relief? Why do you think so?

The main figure in this scene is probably the nobleman named Methethy, whose tomb was located at Saqqara, a large cemetery near ancient Memphis.

What do you think the middle figures have tucked under their arms? Make a sketch of the object held by the servant closest to Methethy.



Here's a hint.: the symbol below is the hieroglyph for the scribe's tools or *menhed*.



The image represents the scribe's pen case, water pot, and palette, held together by a connecting string, which facilitated carrying.

Can you find this hieroglyph on the relief?

Turn around and go to the case on the far side of the room. Can you find this ancient Egyptian palette?



How was it used? Ancient Egyptians wrote with brushes, not pens, that scribes made by cutting short, tender rush stems at an angle and then chewing the cut end to separate individual fibers. The brushes were kept in a palette that also held cakes of black and red ink. To use his ink, the scribe added water to the colored cakes with his brush.



Reddish, yellow, and brown pigments (raw colored material) came from naturally occurring minerals such as ochre (hydrated iron oxide).

Black pigment came from lamp black (soot) and various forms of carbon black from charcoal.



The raw pigments were mixed with a relatively colorless substance called a binder, which made the pigment thicker and gummy. Possible binders included beeswax, a mixture of gelatin and glue, gum (made from sap of the acacia tree), and egg whites.

The Egyptians called their writing *medu-netjer*.

What does this word mean? _____

The word hieroglyph comes from the ancient Greek meaning "sacred carving."

Why do you think the ability to read and write was so important in early river valley cultures?

In the same area, find an alabaster sculpture of another scribe. His name is Sema-tawy tefnakht. **List the title and name of the man he served below.**

Title: _____

Name: _____

The hieroglyphs in the cartouches on the scribe's shoulders tell us the ruler's name and title. This scribe must have been quite important since alabaster was rare in ancient Egypt. Egyptians considered it precious and made relatively few statues on this scale. Semy-tawy-tefnakht is shown with a papyrus scroll, the most common writing surface for Egyptian scribes, stretched across his lap.

Can you think of a statue of an important person in the United States?

How is the person in the statue you've thought of dressed?

Does the figure hold anything that tells us about why the person was important?

The role of the Egyptian ruler was to mediate between gods and humans and to maintain *ma'at*, the balance between order and chaos, in both his kingdom and the universe. The kings of ancient Egypt are usually called pharaohs (from *pr-aa*, "the great house"), although the Egyptians only began using this term from the middle of Dynasty 18 (around 1400 BCE).

Pharaohs were absolute rulers who were considered the embodiment of the falcon-headed god Horus. When gods were shown with animal heads—or in the form of an animal, the Egyptians were not practicing animal worship. They were illustrating the characteristics of the gods.

Can you find a representation of an Egyptian god that has the head or form of an animal? For example, look for a lion or a falcon.

Take a selfie of yourself with an Egyptian god that you find interesting.

Describe the sculpture or image:

You can find out more about your choice by doing some research back at school.

At times in the long history of Egypt, the land was ruled by non-Egyptians.

Why do you think that so many other groups tried to conquer Egypt in ancient times?

One group of rulers who often vied with Egyptian rulers for control of the Nile valley were the kings of Kush, an ancient African empire directly south of Egypt in what is now the Sudan. Kushites ruled all or part of Egypt during Dynasty 25 (760–656 BCE). Even after their expulsion Kushite rulers were portrayed with the same artistic conventions used to portray Egyptian pharaohs.



Find this statue of a King of Kush.

The inscriptions on the back pillar identify this figure as Senkamanisken, King of Kush.

Look at the royal kilt he wears.

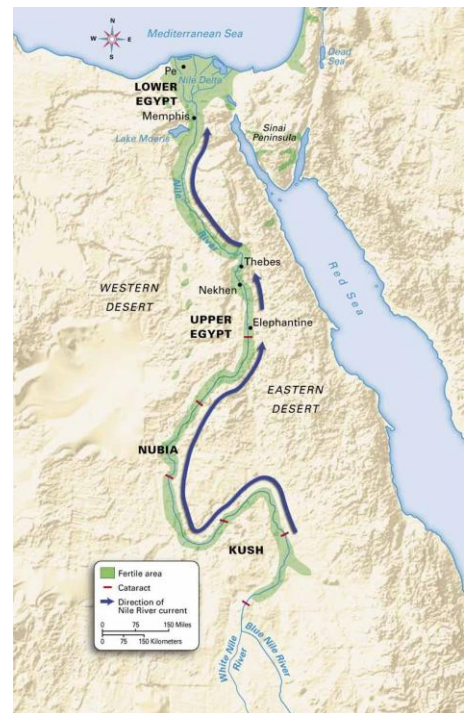
Is the stone in that area smooth or rough?

Can you find other areas where the stone is treated in a similar manner?

The surface of the rest of the stone was brought to a high polish. Gold or silver plating decorated the figure's kilt and jewelry.

Find Memphis and Kush on this map.

How would many travelers have journeyed from place to place in ancient Egypt?



Map from:

<http://mrbrunken.happykids.taipei/>

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/deed.en_US

Can you find this small model of a boat?



Did you know that actual ships have been found buried in many Egyptian graves and tombs?

Why would boats and ships have been important in ancient Egypt?

Boats were also important in funerary rituals and myths. A burial usually included two or more boat models, at least one rigged for sailing (south, upstream on the Nile) and another for rowing (north, downstream). This model comes from the tomb of Djehuty-nakht, which contained fifty-five boat models, probably the largest group found in any Middle Kingdom tomb.



Be sure to take some time to examine the Coffin of Tjeby.

Coffin of Tjeby with Mummy

Egyptian, 2258–2052 BCE, Painted wood, linen wrapped mummy, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund,

53.30.1

Mummification arose out of the Egyptian belief that the deceased must be physically preserved in order for them to enjoy the afterlife. Egyptians developed a ritualized process by which a body was first preserved and then wrapped to create a mummy. Although mummification differed over time and from place to place, the general process involved removing all internal organs (except the heart, which they believed was the seat of consciousness) and drying the body out. After that, several layers of linens were used for wrapping the body, with protective amulets placed between them. Once the mummification process was complete, religious ceremonies (such as the Opening of the Mouth) were performed. Religious texts (including the *Book of the Dead*) were placed with the body to aid the deceased in the afterlife.

Take a close look at the coffin and what you can see inside. Which way is Tjeby's body facing? Why?

What do the hieroglyphs on the coffin say?

In 2013 Tjeby, was CT scanned to see what more we could learn. Be sure to check out the reconstructed face of Tjeby!

Can you find this jar?

It's is the oldest object in the VMFA collection. It is over 5,000 years old! Compare it to the oldest objects in other galleries that you explore on your VMFA visit.

Vase

3200-3000 BCE, 4th millennium BCE, Stone,
Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, 84.72



World History I: Egypt

Answer Key

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Tomb Relief
2475–2195 BCE

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How many colors of paint can you find that remain on the relief? List them here:

ochre, yellow, reddish-brown, yellow, black, blue, gray (possibly more).

This relief was made during the Old Kingdom during the great age of pyramid building. Many of the tombs made in this period are decorated with scenes of daily life, such as the one we see here.

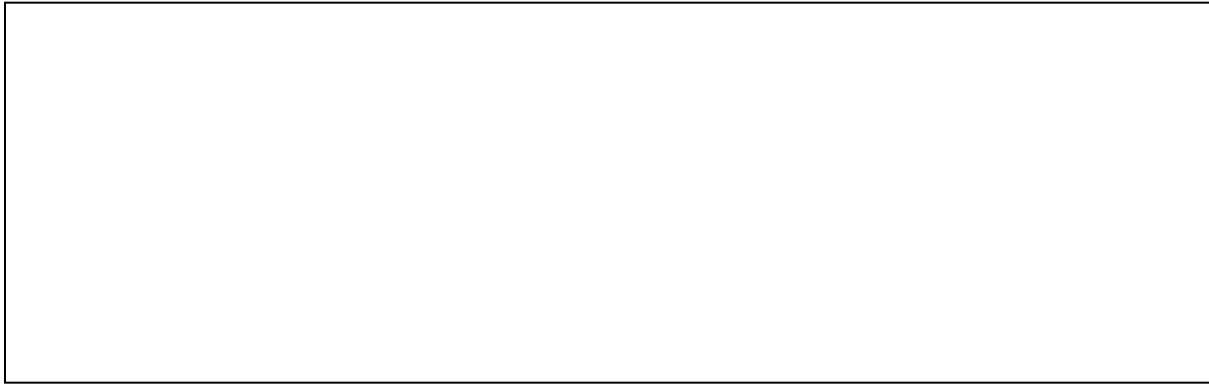
Who do you think is the most important person in this relief? Why do you think so?

The largest figure on the right is the most important. Ancient Egyptians used relative size to indicate importance.

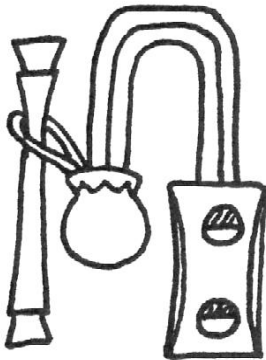
The main figure in this scene is probably the nobleman named Methethy, whose tomb was located at Saqqara, a large cemetery near ancient Memphis.

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Sketch here:



Here's a hint: the symbol below is the hieroglyph for the scribe's tools or *menhed*.



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The Egyptians called their writing *medu-netjer*.

What does this word mean? Words of God

The word hieroglyph comes from the ancient Greek meaning “sacred carving.”

Why do you think the ability to read and write was so important in early river valley cultures?

Particularly after the development of agriculture and permanent settlements, reading and writing made it possible for ancient peoples to keep records and accounts, communicate over distances, and make plans for the future.

In the same area, find an alabaster sculpture of another scribe. His name is Sema-tawy tefnakht. **List the title and name of the man he served below.**

Title: Pharaoh

Name: Psamtik I

The hieroglyphs in the cartouches on the scribe’s shoulders tell us the ruler’s name and title. This scribe must have been quite important since alabaster was rare in ancient Egypt. Egyptians considered it precious and made relatively few statues on this scale. Semy-tawy-tefnakht is shown with a papyrus scroll, the most common writing surface for Egyptian scribes, stretched across his lap.

Can you think of a statue of an important person in the United States?

An example might be the statue of George Washington by the sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon. (Other examples are possible.)

How is the person in the statue dressed?

He is wearing his military uniform.

Does the figure hold anything that tells us about why the person was important?

Washington's right hand rests on a gentleman's walking stick, while his left rests on a bundle of thirteen rods, called a fasces, that symbolizes the strength found in unity.

The role of the Egyptian ruler was to mediate between gods and humans and to maintain *ma'at*, the balance between order and chaos, in both his kingdom and the universe. The kings of ancient Egypt are usually called pharaohs (from *pr-aa*, "the great house"), although the Egyptians only began using this term from the middle of Dynasty 18 (around 1400 BCE).

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Take a selfie of yourself with an Egyptian god that you find interesting.

Describe the sculpture or image:

[Description here.]

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At times in the long history of Egypt, the land was ruled by non-Egyptians.

Why do you think that so many other groups tried to conquer Egypt in ancient times?

Egypt is sometimes called "the gift of the Nile," because the fertile Nile Valley could produce large quantities of grain and other crops. Egyptians were also successful traders—and during many intervals, they controlled the gold supplies in Kush. These resources made Egypt a rich prize for foreign powers.

One group of rulers who often vied with Egyptian rulers for control of the Nile valley were the kings of Kush, an ancient African empire directly south of Egypt in what is now the Sudan. Kushites ruled all or part of Egypt during Dynasty 25 (760–656 BCE). Even after their expulsion Kushite rulers were portrayed with the same artistic conventions used to portray Egyptian pharaohs.



Find this statue of a King of Kush.

The inscriptions on the back pillar identify this figure as Senkamanisken, King of Kush.

Look at the royal kilt he wears.

Is the stone in that area smooth or rough? Rough.

Can you find other areas where the stone is treated in a similar manner?

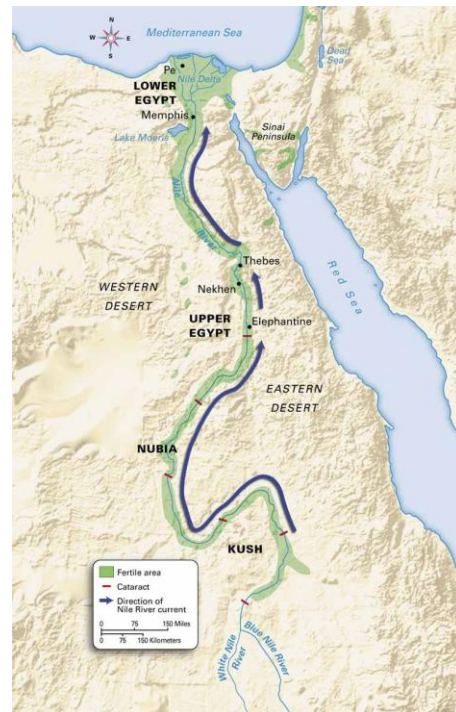
The arm bands, ankle bands, and necklace.

The surface of the rest of the stone was brought to a high polish. Gold or silver plating decorated the figure's kilt and jewelry. |

Find Memphis and Kush on this map.

How would many travelers have journeyed from place to place in ancient Egypt?

By boat along the Nile.



Map from:

[http://mrbrunken.happykids.tapei/
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/deed.en_US](http://mrbrunken.happykids.tapei/http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/deed.en_US)

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Why would boats and ships have been important in ancient Egypt?

The large number of boat models reflects the Nile's importance in

Egyptian life: the river was Egypt's main road and an important source of food (fish and waterfowl).

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linens were used for wrapping the body, with protective amulets placed between them. Once the mummification process was complete, religious ceremonies (such as the Opening of the Mouth) were performed. Religious texts (including the *Book of the Dead*) were placed with the body to aid the deceased in the afterlife.

Take a close look at the coffin and what you can see inside. Which way is Tjeby's body facing? Why?

Tjeby lies on his left side facing outwards. Ancient Egyptians believed that his eyes might look through the set of painted eyes on the coffin, which were in the form of wedjet eye, or Eye of Horus. These eyes are a symbol often used to offer protection. It was also thought that they allowed Tjeby to see into the world and receive the life giving rays of the sun.

What do the hieroglyphs on the coffin say?

The inscription gives prayers for the afterlife as well as his name and his title: "the Count and Sealbearer of the King of Lower Egypt."

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