

Egypt Lesson 1

Here's What I See

The Basics

Age Range: 4th grade and up.

Objective: To introduce participants to objects from ancient Egypt.

Performance of Skill Expectations/Enduring Understandings: The participants will continue developing observational skills through a discussion of new artifacts.

Prerequisite Lessons: *Introductory Lesson 1: The Key to Understanding Artifacts*. You may also want to view a video of this activity modeled on the *An Artifact Speaks* website at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/artifact/videos/models>.

Estimated Materials Preparation Time: 5 minutes.

Duration: Instructor discretion.

Materials Provided in the Box: One canopic jar replica, one miniature Rosetta Stone replica, and Artifact Information Sheets.

Materials to be Provided by the Instructor: Smartboard, chalkboard, or easel pad, and associated writing materials.

Notes: All of the instructions for *Here's What I See* lessons are nearly identical. Differences will be found in vocabulary, development, and the artifacts used. The full instructions are repeated each time as a refresher for returning educators or a full lesson for educators new to the program.

Concepts/Vocabulary

- Mummification: preservation of the body through drying.
- Afterlife: a place where life continues after death.
- Hieroglyphics: a system of writing in which pictures represent meaning or sound or both.

Procedure

Preparation: Have the artifacts to be discussed out of the box and ready for showing.

Introduction/Instruction: Explain that for this lesson, they will be playing a game called "Here's What I See." As you walk around the room with an artifact, the participants will look at it then raise their hands when they have an observation to make about it. The observation is stated as "Here's what I see. I see a _____." Observations are

things they actually see—facts—not assumptions or conclusions they have made from what they see. They are looking for aspects of the artifact, the things that are recognizable and can be compared among artifacts. An easy example to show before looking at the ancient artifacts is a watch. Good observations for a watch might be (depending on the watch):

- “I see numbers.”
- “I see a word.”
- “I see moving parts.”
- “I see a buckle.”
- “I see metal.”

Tell the participants not to worry about stating an observation that seems obvious. Sometimes the obvious thing is a very important thing (e.g., you may get 10 observations about a statue, but no one will say that it is a male or female figure portrayed).

Before taking observations, suggest that the participants speak loudly enough for all to hear, because you want to see how many observations they give before you get a repeat.

Development: For the Egypt lesson, there are two individual artifacts, a canopic jar and a miniature Rosetta Stone. Each should be observed separately. You may want to write down the answers (or have a helper do this). This helps reduce the number of repeated answers. It also can serve as an aid in discussion of what kinds of observations the participants are making. Once you have a nice list of observations, see what types of observations have already occurred and which ones you may need to prompt. For example, the participants may talk a lot about the shape of an artifact, but not give their observations on the type of material it is made from. They may have their thoughts on the material, but not mention size or color. Ask the participants for specific observations on the aspects of an artifact that they haven't mentioned yet.

Closure: Once the artifacts have been shown and the observations made, ask the participants to give their guesses on what the artifacts are. If the artifacts are guessed correctly, have the participants tell you what they already know about them. Use the information from the Artifact Report Sheets to give the participants any information they may not have given during the discussion. Here are a few key facts:

Canopic jar:

- Each is used to hold the preserved organs of a mummified person.
- They came in sets of four. Each one had the head of a different god on it.

Rosetta Stone:

- Used to translate hieroglyphic writing.
- Contains a proclamation by priests.

Reflection: Generate a short discussion with these questions:

If this is the first time the game is played:

- What was the most fun about this activity?
- Why is it important to learn about the skill of observation when studying other cultures?

If the game has been played once before:

- What was easier about playing the game this time? Do you think your observation skills have improved? If so, how?

Assessment: This game will be played multiple times over the school year if all loan kits are used. Use the game to assess how well the participants' observation and description skills develop over time.