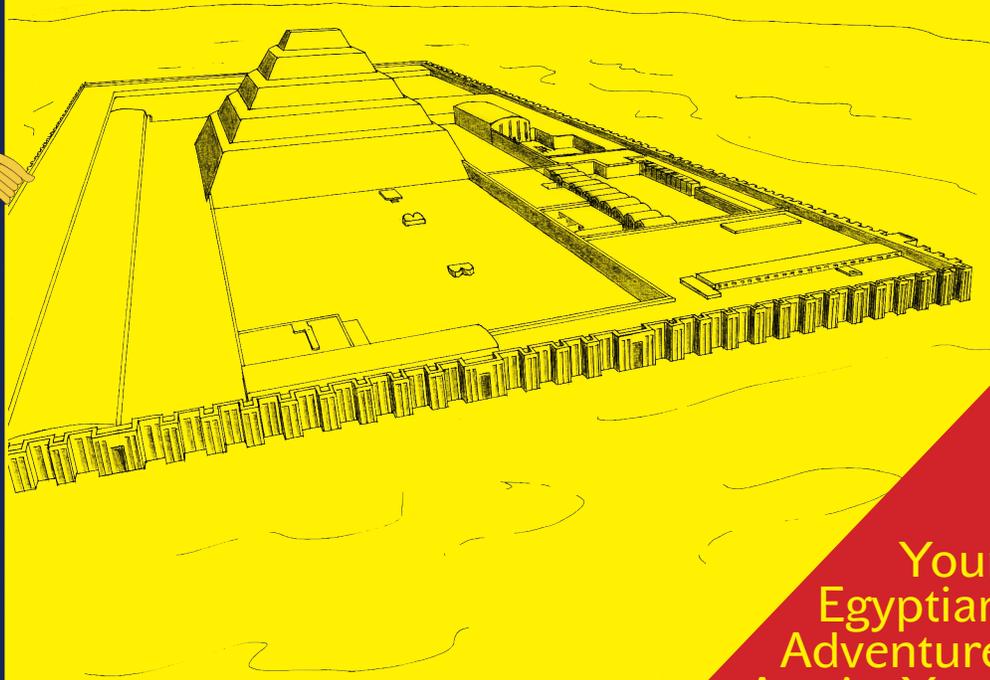


Artful Adventures

EGYPT

An interactive guide for families

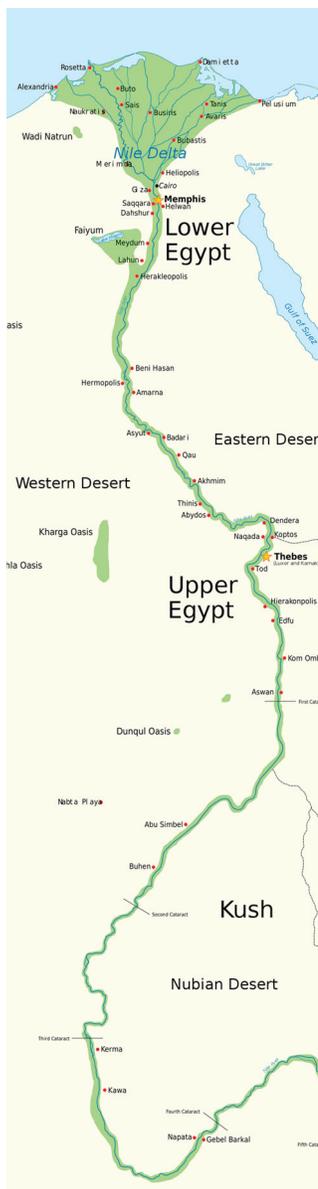


Your
Egyptian
Adventure
Awaits You!
See inside for details

ARTFUL ADVENTURES: ANCIENT EGYPT



Today we are going to travel back in time to explore what life was like in ancient Egypt. We begin our journey in the Egyptian gallery, which is on the lower level of the Museum. Walk down the stairs, turn right, and walk through the Greek gallery to the cases on the far wall.



THE NILE RIVER

The Nile River is important to Egypt for many reasons: it is a water source, makes land fertile so that food can be grown, and provides a means of travel from one end of Egypt to the other. Egyptians built some of the biggest and best ships in the ancient world, and the flowing waters of the Nile let them move heavy stones from one place to another so they could build large buildings, like the Pyramids.

Looking at the map, you can see that the Nile splits into many small rivers (called tributaries). Unlike most rivers, which flow from north to south, the Nile flows from south to north. Ancient Egyptians named the regions of Egypt to match the river's course: southern Egypt is called "Upper Egypt" and northern Egypt is called "Lower Egypt."

PREPARING FOR THE AFTERLIFE

The ancient Egyptians believed in an afterlife that began after death and lasted forever. They buried their loved ones in tombs, or underground rooms, with the things they thought were needed for a happy afterlife. The climate in Egypt is very dry and tombs were often made of stone, so the things inside were kept safe. Some of the tombs survived, untouched, for thousands of years. By studying the objects found in these tombs, archeologists and art historians have learned a great deal about the ancient Egyptians and their civilization.

Let's pretend that we are in ancient Egypt and want to fill a tomb with the things we might need in the afterlife. Begin by looking at the objects in the cases in front of you, most of which were found in ancient Egyptian tombs.



Egyptian, Greco-Roman: mummy case and mummy/anthropoid coffin. h. 37.0 cm., l. 183.0 cm., w. 49.0 cm. Gift of Frederic C. Penfield in 1908 (Y1959-212).

A MUMMY

First, let's look at the coffin in the center case. Inside this coffin is the mummy of a man who lived thousands of years ago. When a person died in ancient Egypt, his or her body was mummified—dried out with salts and wrapped in linen strips. A series of rituals that were intended to preserve the body was performed, so that the person's spirit could use the body as its home. The spirit, called a *Ba*, is drawn as half human and half bird. Do you see a symbol, or picture, of a *Ba* on the top of the mummy coffin? The coffin is decorated with pictures and symbols that were intended to protect the mummy from harm. Sometimes, mummy coffins also included spells that were meant to help the person inside find his or her way to the underworld.



To see an example, turn around and look up at the yellow, oddly shaped object with pictures and symbols written on it. This is a piece of another person's coffin. The ancient Egyptians believed that the gods used tests to determine if a person was good or bad. Those who answered correctly could have a happy afterlife. The family of this ancient Egyptian didn't want to take any chances, so they provided him with a "cheat sheet" of correct answers to be sure that he passed the gods' tests.





THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

The writing on the back of this coffin lid is part of a group of spells called the “Book of the Dead.” These spells were intended to help the dead person answer the gods’ questions correctly and assist him in finding his way in the underworld. The symbols are part of the ancient Egyptian written language called *hieroglyphics*; some represent letters, some entire words, and some have sounds, like the letters in the modern English alphabet. Researchers have learned to read hieroglyphics, so we know that this coffin belonged to a man named Wadj-shemsi-su. The hieroglyphics also tells us who his parents were and what he was bringing with him into the afterlife. This is part of spell number 17 from the “Book of the Dead.”

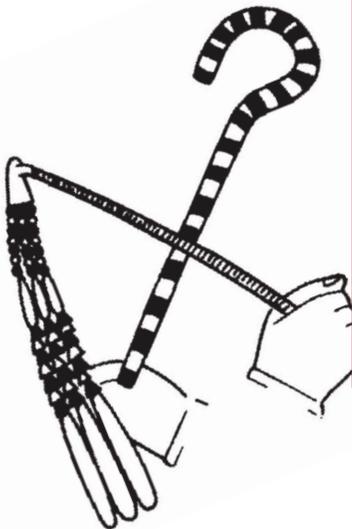
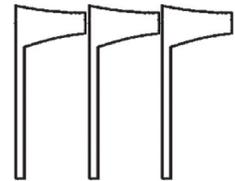


Egyptian, New Kingdom (early 18th Dynasty): fragmentary lid from the coffin of Wadj-shemsi-su, ca. 1500–1425 B.C. Wood, painted plaster, limestone, obsidian, and bronze, h. 61.0 cm., w. 39.5 cm., d. 20.5 cm. Museum purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund (1998-37). Photo: Bruce M. White

GLYPH ACTIVITY

The Egyptian word for “gods” is *netjerew*. The glyph for this word looks like three flags in a row.

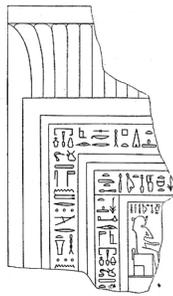
Can you find any of these on the back of this coffin lid? Use the image below to help you. Circle each one you find.





caption: Egyptian, Old Kingdom, 5th Dynasty: false door from the tomb of the priestess Ankh-Hathor, ca. 2686–2181 B.C. Limestone, h. 92.0 cm., w. 38.0 cm., d. 16.5 cm. Museum purchase, Carl Otto von Kienbusch Jr. Memorial Collection (y1942-48).

A FALSE DOOR



To be sure that a spirit can enter or leave the tomb whenever it wants to, we need a false door, a piece of stone carved to look like a door or entryway.

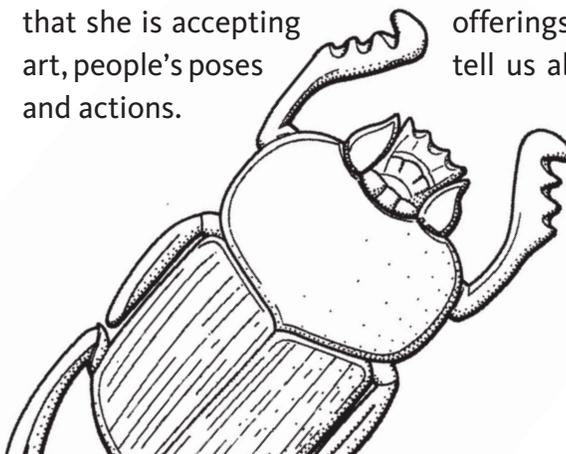
Fortunately, we have one here in this room!

Return to the case with the mummy coffin in it, and look at the stone slab above it. The narrow rectangle in the center is the door. It's called a false door because it didn't open and close. It acted as a portal, a magic door, so that the spirit of the dead person could enter and exit the tomb to receive the offerings of food and drink that were left by loved ones.

This false door came from the tomb of a woman named Ankh-Hathor, whose name is written on it many times in hieroglyphics. It looks like this: Can you find it?



Ankh-Hathor herself is shown three times on this false door. Can you find her? Her name can be found near each picture of her (hint: lower left corner, lower right corner, seated in the upper middle section). Her pose, with one arm stretched out in front of her and one arm against her chest, tells us that she is accepting offerings. In ancient Egyptian art, people's poses and actions tell us about their emotions and actions.



POSES MATCHING ACTIVITY

Below are some of the most commonly used poses. Can you match each picture of a pose or gesture with the appropriate meaning? Draw a line to connect the word and the picture. Use the descriptions to help you.



ready to receive offerings—seated with one or both arms resting on one's lap, palms down



worshiping—both arms extended forward with hands upraised



presenting an offering—both arms extended forward with an object held in one or both hands



rejoicing—both arms extended out to the sides with palms turned away from the body



mourning—arms raised with palms turned toward the face

There is an example of a figure in the worshipping pose in the case to the right. Can you find it?

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FIGURES

Have you noticed that ancient Egyptian figures are often shown in a unique way? The head is in profile (seen from the side), the upper body is from the front, and the legs and feet are from the side. Try standing like this. It isn't easy! Ancient Egyptian artists were capable of creating more natural looking figures, but this was the convention, or accepted style, they used for depicting kings and other noble people.

Ankh-Hathor means "she who lives for Hathor." Hathor is the ancient Egyptian goddess associated with joy, music, and love. Hathor is often pictured as a cow with horns. Can you find the cow with horns in this case?



Egyptian, Old Kingdom, Dynasty 6, probably the reign of Pepy II: jamb from the right side of a false door, 2278–2184 B.C. Limestone, h. 62.0 cm., w. 25.2 cm., d. 2.7 cm. Museum purchase, Carl Otto von Kienbusch Jr. Memorial Collection (y1954-45).

Hathor, Courtesy of wikimedia commons website. Illustration by Jeff Dahl





Egyptian, Late Period to Ptolemaic: falcon deity, 664–30 B.C. Bronze, includes tangs: h. 24.3 cm., w. 7.0 cm., d. 2.1 cm. Museum purchase, Carl Otto von Kienbusch Jr., Memorial Collection (y1953-76). Photo: Bruce M. White

THE PHARAOH

To ancient Egyptians, the ruler, sometimes referred to as the pharaoh, was the most important person in the world. He was believed to be a demi-god, a human who was also part god. The Egyptian king was believed to be protected by the god Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis. Horus is sometimes pictured as a falcon. Can you find any falcons in these cases?

****Fun Fact:** The hieroglyph the Egyptians used for Horus is a falcon. Remember what Ankh-Hathor's name looked like? The bird inside the box is the Horus falcon. Horus is everywhere! That's because he, like the king he protected, was very important to the ancient Egyptians.



Greco- Egyptian: statuette of Horus (Harpocrates), Bronze, figure: h. 8.5 cm., w. 3.0 cm., d. 4.4 cm. Gift of Hetty Goldman (y1965-203).

Sometimes, Horus is shown as a young human child. You can see an example of this form of the god in the case on the far left. He's the one with a braid of hair growing off the side of his otherwise bald head and his index finger touching his lips, like he's saying "shhh." Can you find him?



USHABTIS



Egyptian, Late Period (Saitic): ushabti, Faience, h. 18.8 cm., w. 4.9 cm., d. 3.6 cm. Gift of Horace Mayer (y1959-145).

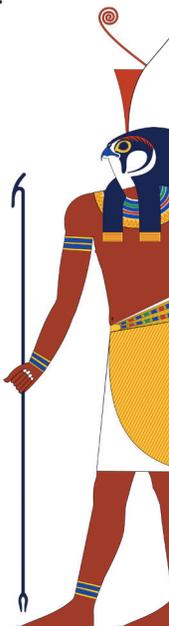
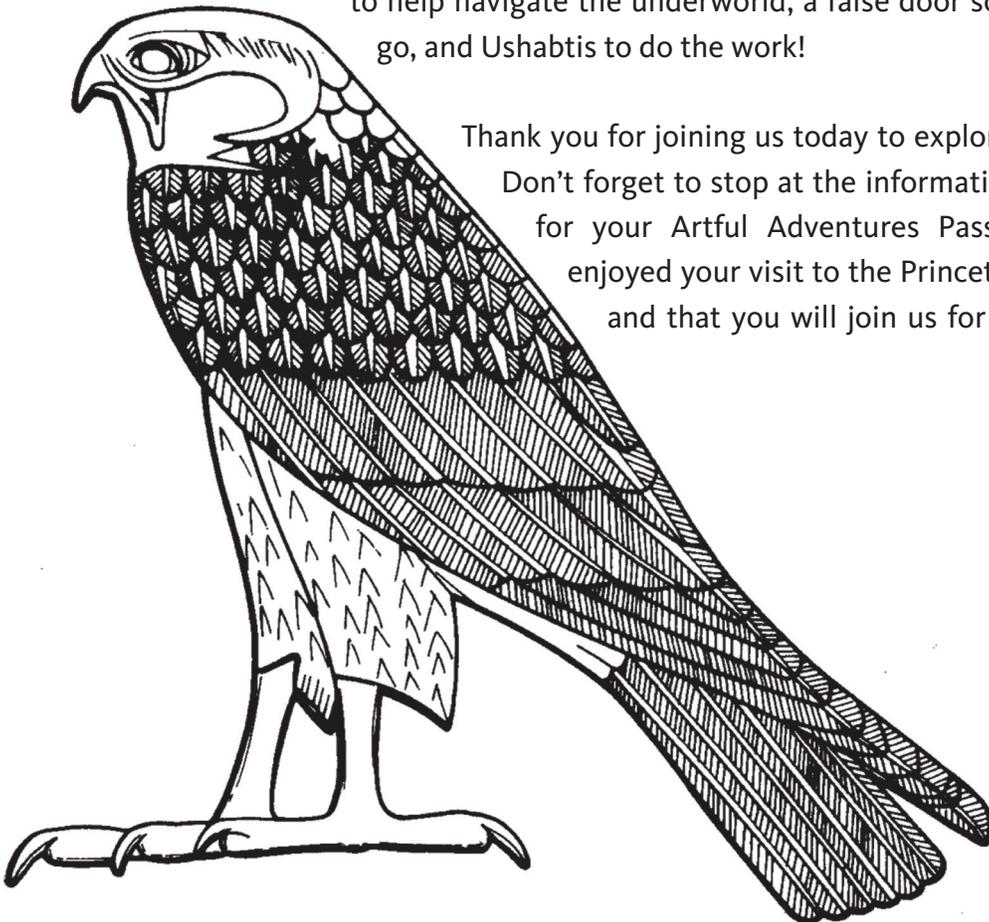
Horus Standing, Courtesy of wikimedia commons website. Illustration by Jeff Dahl

Because the king was so important, his tomb includes items that only the very rich could afford. Find the little stone, mummy-shaped figures sitting in front of the big Horus falcon in the case on the left.

These are called *Ushabtis* (pronounces “yoo-SHAB-tees”). Ancient Egyptian kings had hundreds, maybe even thousands, of these in their tombs. Ushabtis means “answerers” because if someone asked the king to do any kind of work in the afterlife, the Ushabtis would stand up and answer for him, saying “I’ll do it!” What would you have Ushabtis do for you? Clean your room? Make you a snack? Do your homework? The possibilities are endless!

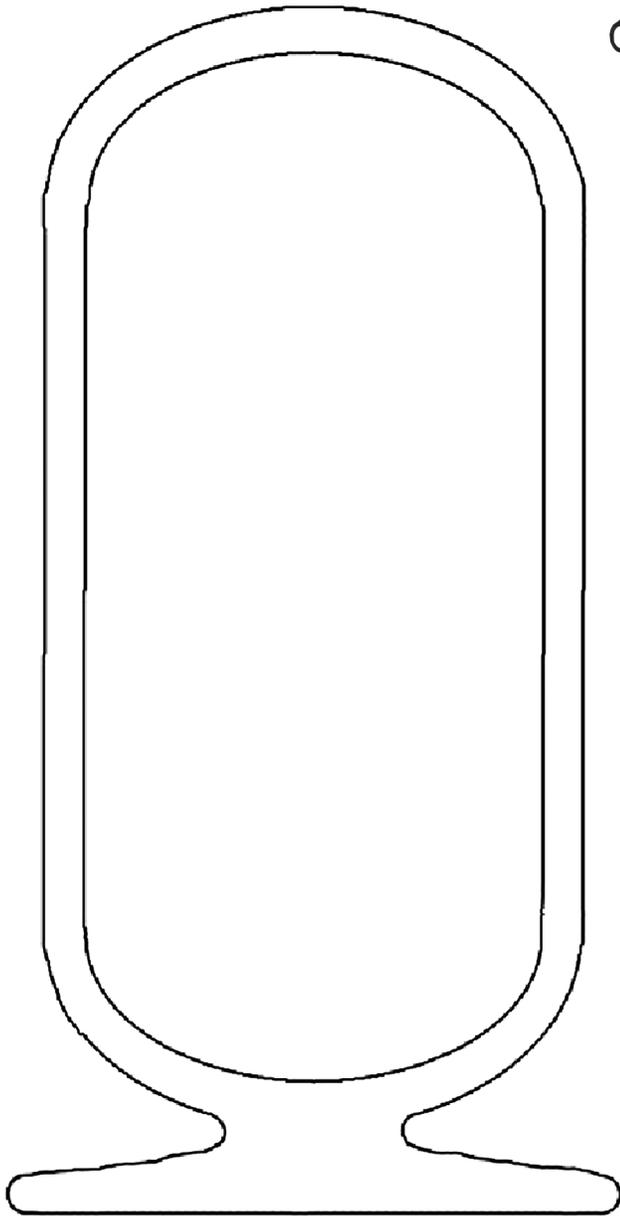
Our tomb is now ready for the afterlife. We have a mummy, a coffin decorated with symbols to protect the mummy, the Book of the Dead to help navigate the underworld, a false door so the spirit can come and go, and Ushabtis to do the work!

Thank you for joining us today to explore the art of ancient Egypt. Don’t forget to stop at the information desk to collect a sticker for your Artful Adventures Passport. We hope that you enjoyed your visit to the Princeton University Art Museum and that you will join us for another Artful Adventure!



ART PROJECT: MAKE A CARTOUCHE

(pronounced "car-toosh")



A cartouche is an oval shape with hieroglyphics inside. A line at one end indicates that the writing inside is the name of a royal person. A cartouche was believed to protect the wearer from evil spirits.

Below are the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs that most closely relate to the modern English alphabet. Use these symbols to write your name on the cartouche below.

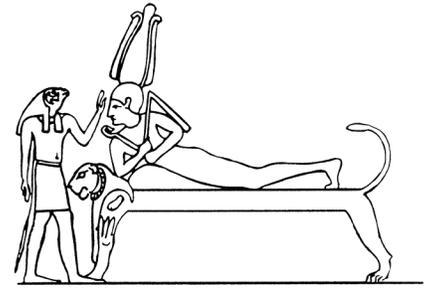
When you get home you might want to use yellow construction paper or card stock to make a cartouche for each member of your family. If you use a hole punch and some string it can be worn as a necklace or hung on a door knob—a personal cartouche for your bedroom door!

f		l		q		y	
d		j		p		u,v,w	
c,k		i		o		t	
b		h		n		s	
a		g		m		r	

SUGGESTED READING

***Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, by Henry Barker;
illustrated by Jenny Williams**

This book recounts the religious beliefs of ancient Egypt, discussing various gods and goddesses and their attributes. (Gr 1–3)



***The Star-Bearer: A Creation Myth from Ancient Egypt*,
by Dianne Hofmeyr; illustrated by Jude Daly**

This colorful picture book describes Egyptian creation myths and gods. (Gr 3–5)

***Egypt*, by Selina Wood**

National Geographic presents this basic overview of the history, geography, climate, and culture of modern Egypt. (Gr 3–6)

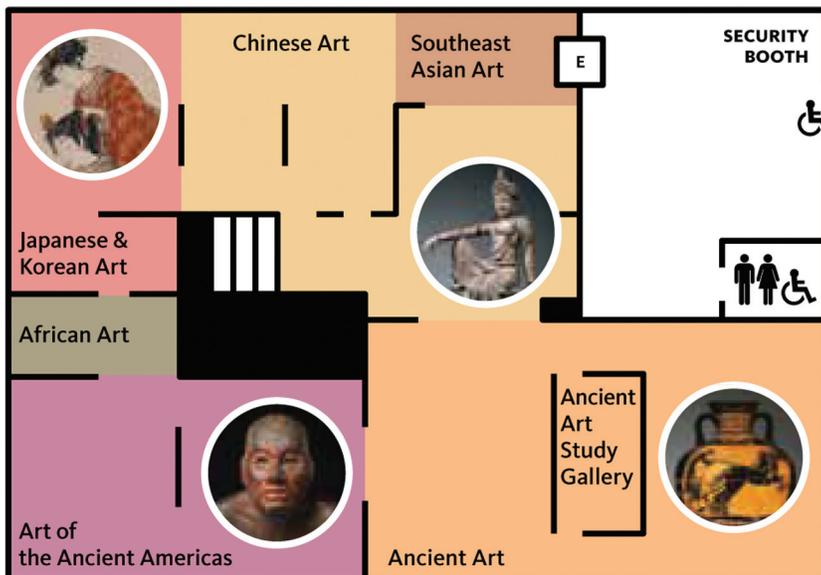
***Egypt in Spectacular Cross-Section*, by Stephen Biesty (illustrator) and Stewart Ross**

Detailed illustrations with explanatory captions and narrative text survey the sites of ancient Egypt, including a pharaoh's tomb in the Valley of the Kings. (Gr 3–7)

***Great Ancient Egypt Projects You Can Build Yourself*, by Carmella Van Vleet**

This book explores Egyptian history through more than twenty-five hands-on building projects and activities. (Gr 4–6)

All of these books can be found at the Princeton Public Library.



Front Cover *Hathor*, Courtesy of wikimedia commons website. Illustration by Jeff Dahl; *Djoser-complexe*, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons website. Illustration by Franck Monnier.

Uncredited Illustrations courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wikimedia Commons website.