Hand-on History Chapter Project

Ancient Egypt and Kush

Project Overview

Project Goal
To understand the function of the sarcophagus in ancient Egypt by creating a personal sarcophagus representing oneself and one’s interests. Students will plan and construct the sarcophagus, explain its designs in writing, and present their finished project to the class.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
• What makes a culture unique?
• Why do civilizations rise and fall?

Skills Addressed
• responsibility and accountability; decision making
• Information and communication technologies literacy; creating displays
• historical inquiry: analyzing characteristics of early civilizations
• expository writing: describing, explaining

Materials Needed
Hands-On Chapter Project Worksheets
Materials for construction of sarcophagus: shoebox with lid, construction paper, magazines, glue, scissors, crayons or markers

Duration
2 independent work days and 1 class days
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Project Steps

Step 1: Introduce Project

Tell students that they will be creating a personal “shoebox sarcophagus.” Like the ancient Egyptians’ sarcophagi, students’ shoeboxes will be decorated to reflect each person’s unique life and interests. Students will write explanations why they chose the decorations they did. They will also present the sarcophagus to the class.

Activate Background Knowledge

Have a class discussion about Egyptian sarcophagi. Explain that a sarcophagus is a coffin made of stone. The sarcophagi of ancient Egypt were elaborately carved on the outside and included decorated images that reflected events from the deceased person’s life.

Identify categories that students might think about as they plan to create their sarcophagi:

- **Family**—parents or guardians, siblings, pets, and extended family
- **Friendships**—close friends from one’s past and present; clubs or social groups
- **Hobbies and Activities**—pasttimes that are especially enjoyable and meaningful
- **Talents and Abilities**—special skills; academic, creative, athletic, or other pursuits
- **Daily Life**—home, school, neighborhood
- **Special Occasions**—holidays, vacations, noteworthy events
- **Changes**—images from early childhood and elementary/middle school; milestones
- **Future Dreams**—hopes for the future (work, family, travel, and so on)
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**Step 2: Plan the Shoebox Sarcophagus**

1. **Discuss the Project Plan**
   Distribute Worksheet 1 and review the task list and chart with students.

2. **Brainstorm Ideas**
   - Distribute Worksheet 2 and read the directions.
     Emphasize that as students decide how to decorate their sarcophagus, they will be writing and speaking about their decorative choices.
   - Explain to students that the shoebox should be decorated with a photograph or drawing of themselves.
   Discuss ideas for decorating the shoebox using:
   - personal/family photographs
   - symbols (for example, a simple tree drawing to represent a love of the outdoors or a running stick figure to represent athletic interests)
   - images from magazines or the Web
   - written items such as cards, notes, awards, or certificates
   - small objects or trinkets that have sentimental value
   - If time allows, display and discuss images of ancient Egyptian sarcophagi. Encourage students to look at these images to begin the discussion:
     - Canadian Museum of Civilization: Mysteries of Egypt (sarcophagus and coffin from King Tut’s tomb) [http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/civil/egypt/egtut02e.shtml](http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/civil/egypt/egtut02e.shtml)

3. **Discuss the Shoebox Sarcophagus Assessment**
   Distribute Worksheet 3 and review the rubric with students. This project will be graded based on the overall quality of the sarcophagus and the written and oral explanation of its designs.
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Step 3: Present the Shoebox Sarcophagus

Students should have time to examine their classmates’ projects and to explain the contents of their own sarcophagus. Presentations might be structured as follows:

- After students construct the sarcophagus and complete the written explanation, arrange the projects in a classroom display.
- Allow students time to walk through and examine the display.
- Have each student present his or her sarcophagus to the class. Presentations need not be lengthy. Students should simply explain the sarcophagus’s designs.
- To keep presentations manageable, you may wish to direct students to focus their presentation on just the three most important decorations.
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Worksheet 1: Ancient Egypt and Kush

Plan Your Sarcophagus

**Directions** Review the task list. Then use the chart to plan your sarcophagus.

**Task List**

1. Brainstorm ideas and plan the designs of your sarcophagus.
2. Gather and create decorations. Construct your sarcophagus.
3. Write to describe and explain the designs of your sarcophagus.
4. Present your sarcophagus to the class.
5. Complete your Rubric Assessment.

**Topics to think about**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Talents and Abilities</th>
<th>Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendships</td>
<td>Daily Life</td>
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<td>Special Occasions</td>
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<tr>
<th>What do I want to show about my life?</th>
<th>What image, object, or symbol can I use?</th>
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Write About Your Sarcophagus

Directions Describe the decorations you chose for your sarcophagus. Explain what these decorations reveal about you.
### Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Research and Content</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Collaboration and Time Management</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All required elements are included; sarcophagus provides very thorough information about the student’s life and interests; sarcophagus clearly involved considerable planning and effort</td>
<td>Sarcophagus is extremely well organized and visually appealing; sarcophagus includes an interesting variety of decorations (photographs, trinkets, and so on) cleverly presented; decorations clearly represent different aspects of the student’s life</td>
<td>Written explanation of the sarcophagus is exceptionally well organized and in-depth; writing is clear, concise, and has few to no errors; oral presentation provides an extremely clear, focused summary of important designs on the sarcophagus</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All required elements are included; sarcophagus provides detailed information about the student’s life and interests; sarcophagus shows evidence of serious planning and effort</td>
<td>Sarcophagus is well organized and visually appealing; sarcophagus includes an interesting variety of decorations; decorations clearly represent different aspects of the student’s life</td>
<td>Written explanation of the sarcophagus is organized and in-depth; writing is generally clear and concise with few errors; oral presentation provides a clear, focused summary of important items included on the sarcophagus</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>All required elements are included; sarcophagus provides information about the student’s life and interests but could be more detailed; sarcophagus shows some evidence of planning and effort</td>
<td>Sarcophagus is somewhat organized and visually appealing; sarcophagus includes some variety of decorations; most decorations clearly represent different aspects of the student’s life</td>
<td>Written explanation of the sarcophagus fulfills the writing purpose but could be better organized or more in-depth; writing is occasionally unclear or unfocused and may include some distracting errors; oral presentation summarizes important items but is sometimes unclear or unfocused</td>
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### Assessment Rubric  
*Cont.*

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<th>One or two required elements are missing; sarcophagus provides some information about the student’s life and interests but lacks detail; sarcophagus shows little evidence of planning and effort</th>
<th>Sarcophagus is somewhat lacking in organization and/or visual appeal; sarcophagus includes decorations but needs greater variety of decorations; some decorations do not clearly represent different aspects of the student’s life</th>
<th>Written explanation lacks depth or has noticeable problems with organization; writing is often unclear or unfocused or includes frequent distracting errors; oral presentation does not effectively summarize the designs on the sarcophagus</th>
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<th>Three or more required elements are missing; sarcophagus provides little information about the student’s life and interests; sarcophagus shows little to no evidence of planning and effort</th>
<th>Sarcophagus is poorly organized and lacks visual appeal; sarcophagus includes too few decorations; decorations do not clearly represent different aspects of the student’s life</th>
<th>Written explanation is minimal or has major organizational problems; writing is unclear or unfocused or includes numerous distracting errors; oral presentation does not effectively summarize the designs on the sarcophagus</th>
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| **Self Assessment** |  |  |
| **Teacher Assessment** |  |  |