

Art  
ToGo

The Cleveland  
Museum of Art

Let's Discover Egypt

Alicia Hudson



## Contents

- 3 **At a Glance**  
A summary of major objectives
- 5 **Questions and Answers**  
Additional background and some useful definitions
- 8 **Presentation Outline**  
A brief description of the lesson
- 10 **Things to Think About**  
Creative ways to introduce the subject
- 11 **List of Objects**

## Resources

- 12 **Lesson Plan**  
Formatted especially for teachers
- 13 **What You Need to Know**  
Logistics of the Art To Go visit and suggestions on how to configure your classroom
- 13 **Vocabulary List**
- 14 **“Webbing” Egypt**  
How to connect Art To Go lesson concepts to other disciplines
- 15 **Suggestions for Further Reading**  
Books for students and teachers
- 15 **Website**  
How to reach the Cleveland Museum of Art over the internet, and the address for objects

## Also in your folder

- a. **Presentation Evaluation**  
Please fill out and return to the museum after the presentation. Thank you!
- b. **Fax Sheet**  
Use this form for shorter questions or concerns relating to the Art To Go visit.
- c. **Art Project to be provided by Bob Dewey**

Cover: Coffin Cover of Bakenmut  
Dynasty XXI, ca. 1070–945 BC  
Gift of the John Huntington Art and  
Polytechnic Trust, 1914.561

© 2000 The Cleveland Museum of Art

## Introduction

The purpose of this Teacher Packet is to prepare you for a visit from the Art To Go team of the Cleveland Museum of Art. The contents should help you become familiar with the Art To Go program and with the topic of the presentation you have requested, *Let's Discover Egypt*. Please feel free to use the materials included in the packet and share them with your colleagues. You may reproduce the materials in the packet for educational purposes.

## At a Glance

Mummies, Pyramids, and King “Tut” have fascinated students of all ages. What could be better than handling ancient Egyptian art during a visit from the Art To Go team? We will reveal the wonders of these objects and allow students to handle and examine works of art that were once covered in the ancient sands of the Egyptian desert.

The primary focus is to introduce the objects as works of art, and special emphasis will be placed on their handling. However, the Art To Go team is trained to present the objects so that the students can make connections to other fields of study, from social studies to science. The objects included in the Art To Go suitcase introduce many themes of ancient Egyptian culture, from the importance of the Nile to the many roles of the pharaoh in life and society.

The works of art included in the Egyptian suitcase are real, not reproductions. They have been selected to represent many themes of ancient Egyptian civilization. An oil lamp made during the Roman occupation of Egypt is an unfamiliar object, leading to the question, “What is It?”. Made of Nile mud, it also refers to the role of the Nile River in ancient Egyptian life. The course of the Nile leads to the introduction of the use of quarries. Students and science teachers can think about how much the ancient Egyptians relied on stone for works of art and architecture. A stone bowl, which was found near a pyramid at Saqqara, was once part of a royal household. Science teachers can use it as a touchstone to discuss the different geological formations in ancient Egypt.

The lessons introduce some of the complexities of ancient Egyptian religion, especially the role played by the pharaoh. His mythical union with Osiris, the god of the dead who was resurrected in the form of a mummy, resembles the afterlife mythology of Dionysos and Christ. A bronze statuette of the god Osiris is included in the suitcase.

Ancient Egyptian burial practices account for the existence of much material in museum collections today, and many of the objects in the Egyptian suitcase were buried with their owners. Of all ancient Egyptian funerary practices, mummification seems to fascinate children the most. Several of the suitcase objects were once placed in a tomb with a mummy. The lid of a canopic jar with the image of Imsety once guarded the liver of the deceased, who might also be protected by amulets placed in the mummy

wrappings. At the conclusion of the presentation the students will meet a *shawabti*, a servant figure placed in the tomb to perform lowly tasks in the underworld that the deceased would otherwise have to undertake. Children can dream of a *shawabti* of their own to do their worst chores! Throughout the lesson the Art To Go team member will engage students in the presentation by asking questions as the objects are passed around. The timeline will be discussed and students will be asked to problem-solve with “What Is It” questions. The purpose of the lesson is to allow students to handle rare and fragile works of art, and place them within a historical and cultural context.

## Questions and Answers

### **What was the role of the Nile in ancient Egyptian life and art?**

The total length of the Nile River is 4,132 miles, making it the longest river in the world. It flows from south to north, into the Mediterranean Sea. The southern section is called the “Upper Nile” while the north near Cairo is referred to as the “Lower Nile.” Historically, the unification of the two halves of Egypt was an important event celebrated in art by Egypt’s first pharaohs. The Nile was seen as a source of life in a country surrounded by desert. Its annual flood was celebrated in a festival much like our New Year’s Eve festival. The Nile flood

brought rich nutrients to the soil which provided a fertile environment for crops to grow, to such an extent that Egypt was once the “breadbasket” of the Roman empire. One of the objects in the suitcase, an oil lamp, is actually made from Nile River mud.

The course of the Nile is interrupted by patches of jutting rock called cataracts. Egypt also has many different stones that are suitable for carving. Limestone and sandstone are easily carved and were well suited for relief carving on walls. Harder stones like diorite were favored for use by pharaohs. A stone bowl in the suitcase, made of a hard stone called anorthosite gneiss, was found in the tombs at Saqqara, the burial place of some of the first Old Kingdom pharaohs.

### **What was the role of the pharaoh in the production of art?**

The word pharaoh comes from the Egyptian term *per aa*, meaning large house, and originally designated the palace. It was only much later, in the first millennium BCE, that *per aa* was used to designate the master of the great house. The pharaohs were the greatest patrons of the arts, although it is clear from tomb material that there were other classes of society that commissioned works of art, many of which were meant to be enjoyed in the afterlife. It seems that the pharaohs controlled some artistic production, such as goldwork and lapidary arts, that involved the use of expensive materials. Some stones were used for statues and vessels only by permission from the pharaoh.

## **How does their art reflect the religion of the ancient Egyptians?**

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus once noted that the ancient Egyptians were the most religious people he had ever encountered. Much of their art has specific religious imagery, although that imagery is sometimes difficult to interpret. One of the statues in the suitcase is clearly an image of the god Osiris. The statue may have once been placed in a temple by a pious worshipper as a votive offering.

## **How does the art reflect the ancient Egyptian concept of the afterlife?**

It is commonly believed that the ancient Egyptians were fascinated with death, as they produced much art to be placed in tombs to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. It is closer to the truth to say that they loved life so much that they never wanted it to end. Relief sculpture decorating the walls of tombs often depicted scenes from the deceased's earthly life that were meant to magically recur in the afterlife. It was important to preserve the body in the form of a mummy to provide the spirit with a place to reside in the afterlife. Objects associated with the mummification process, such as the canopic jars or amulets, were given artistic attention as well. Many *shawabtis* like the one found in the suitcase were placed in tombs to accompany the deceased in the afterworld. Many have inscriptions reminding them of their duty to perform menial labor for the deceased in the afterlife. The ancient Egyptians buried so much art with their dead that much has been preserved for us to enjoy in museum collections today.



The Nile functioned not only as a unifying element for the two halves of Egypt and a means of transportation, but also as a source of life. The flooding of the Nile, celebrated in June, brought vital nutrients to the soil and caused crops to grow. One of the symbols associated with the river's life-giving properties was the frog, which appears on the oil lamp in the suitcase. Frogs were seen to multiply after the Nile flood and became associated with fertility.

Egypt had plentiful supplies of stone. Varieties such as sandstone were suited for building and relief carving, while others were reserved for vessels and statuary. A stone bowl of the type commissioned by Old Kingdom pharaohs is included in the suitcase. It is a good example of the skill with which Egyptian artists worked in stone.

The god of the dead, Osiris, was closely associated with the pharaoh. A bronze statue of Osiris is included in the suitcase. According to myth, Osiris was killed by his jealous brother Seth and chopped into many pieces that were spread across the land. His faithful wife Isis collected the pieces and held them together with strips of linen, thereby creating the first mummy. Later, Osiris' son Horus, the falcon-headed god, challenged Seth to combat to avenge his father's death and lost an eye in the battle. A Horus-eye amulet, a protective charm, is included in the suitcase.

The process of mummification took place naturally when a body was placed in the hot dry sands of Egypt, but once tombs were used, desiccation had to be performed manually. Mummification took

\*An Art To Go presentation depends on personal interaction between a trained volunteer instructor and students in their own classroom. Presentations and the selection of objects may vary depending on the instructor and the involvement of the students.



some seventy days, and was performed by experts according to ritual. Many accoutrements were placed in a tomb with a mummy. Canopic jars held the organs needed in the afterlife, and the suitcase contains a lid for a canopic jar with an image of Imsety, guardian of the liver. Always in a set of four, the jars were placed near the mummy. The mummy itself was often protected by charms called amulets, placed inside, or sewn to the outside, of the mummy wrappings. The suitcase includes an Eye of Horus amulet and a Winged Scarab amulet.

Even with all of their material comforts included in the tomb, the ancient Egyptians did not expect the afterlife to be easy. Wary of obligatory menial tasks in the hereafter such as dredging the Nile, they were buried with as many servant figures, or *shawabtis*, as possible. The name *shawabti* means “answerer,” referring to their duty to answer and report for service when called. A genuine *shawabti* will be introduced during the class presentation.

## Things to Think About

You may want to prepare your students with a few questions about ancient Egyptian life. Here are some that may pique their interest:

- How many different ways was the Nile River important in ancient Egyptian life?
- How was Isis able to bring her husband Osiris back to life after he was killed by his brother Seth?
- Which organs did the ancient Egyptians preserve in the canopic jars? Why was the brain not saved?
- What other cultures, past and present, wear protective charms like amulets?
- If you had a *shawabti* or servant figure in your house, what would you ask it to do?

## List of Objects

- Oil Lamp with Frog Design, Nile mud, 2nd–4th century CE
- Bowl, anorthosite gneiss, ca. 2550 BCE
- Osiris, bronze, Late Period, 664–525 BCE
- Canopic Jar Lid with Image of Imsety, travertine marble, New Kingdom, 1150–1070 BCE
- Amulet with Eye of Horus, faience, ca. 900–300 BCE
- Amulet with Winged Scarab, faience, 3rd Intermediate Period, 1070–712 BCE
- *Shawabti*, faience, ca. 900–300 BCE

Not all objects in the suitcase are suitable for handling. The Art To Go instructor must supervise the handling of objects. The Cleveland Museum of Art reserves the right to change the list of objects for any reason.

### Lesson Plan

#### Focus

On introducing students to the art of ancient Egypt through the handling of real works of art. A special emphasis will be placed on concepts relating to geography, political structure, religion, and the afterlife. The lesson will be appropriate for an elementary audience.

#### Purpose

To study the art and culture of ancient Egypt through direct experience of Egyptian art. Students may be further motivated through classroom discussion, follow-up questioning, or a hands-on art project.

#### Motivation

Students will be motivated through an immediate, hands-on experience, as well as classroom discussion, follow-up questioning, or a hands-on art project.

#### Objectives

- Students will understand dates BCE (before the common era) and CE (common era).
- Students will learn the role of the Nile in ancient Egyptian life.
- Students will learn the role of the pharaoh in society and religion.
- Students will learn the ancient Egyptian concept of an afterlife and related concepts such as the making of a mummy and the placement of protective amulets with the mummy.
- Students will understand the museum's role in presenting history and the value of protecting works of art.
- Students will make connections with other aspects of the curriculum.

#### Student Interactivity

Students will be asked to respond to questions as the lesson is taught.

#### Comprehension Check

The Art To Go staff will question the students as the lesson is taught. Teachers may follow up the presentation with curriculum materials and ideas taken from this packet, or from sources listed in the bibliography. Teachers may also use ideas from the lesson to incorporate in an art project.

#### Closure

Students will visit the permanent collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art and make connections between the Art to Go visit and the works on display in the Egyptian galleries.

## What You Need to Know

### General Information

The Art To Go presentation will take approximately 40 minutes.

- Anyone who wishes to handle the objects must wear gloves, which will be provided by the Art To Go staff.
- We respectfully request that a homeroom teacher or events coordinator be present and attentive during the presentation.

### Classroom Set-Up

- Please have a small table or desk available at the front of the room.
- If possible, arrange the students in a semicircle facing the presentation. This allows the Art To Go staff to pass works of art among the students.
- Please provide student identification so that the Art To Go teachers may call on students by name.

## Vocabulary List

Afterlife	Horus
Amulets	Imsety
Cataracts	Isis
Ceramics	Linen
Canopic jar	Natron
Desiccation	Nile
Faience	Osiris
Four sons of Horus	Pharaoh
Funerary practices	Scarab
Hequat	<i>Shawabti</i>
Hieroglyphs	

## Webbing

Suggestions for making art the center of student learning.

### Language Arts

Discuss the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead and its magic spells. Discuss the different scripts used by the Egyptians including hieroglyphic, hieratic, and Coptic.

Discuss the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, the key to translating hieroglyphs.

Discuss the role of the scribe in ancient Egyptian society.

Discuss the etymology of the word "paper" and the plant material called *papyrus*.

### Science

Identify different kinds of stone used by the ancient Egyptians in art and explain how they are formed. Some of the stones more commonly used in art include sandstone, limestone, travertine marble, slate, diorite, and anorthosite gneiss (used in the stone bowl).

Discuss the mummification process. Identify the substance natron and its use in mummification.

## Egyptian Art

### Visual Arts

Discuss how the ancient Egyptians portrayed the human form. How can this be seen in the image of Osiris in the Art To Go suitcase?

Discuss the importance of the tomb as a setting. Include relief sculpture and sculpture in the round.

Identify the material faience and discuss its use in art, including amulets and *shawabti* figures in the Art To Go suitcase.

### Social Studies

Study the social hierarchy of ancient Egypt: pharaoh, priest, scribes and bureaucrats, laborers and slaves. Discuss what types of artwork they might have wanted in their own tombs.

Discuss the polytheistic religion of the ancient Egyptians. Review the mythology of the gods and goddesses

mentioned in the Art To Go presentation. Discuss what main ideas might also be represented in other world religions.

Identify significant individuals involved in the history of Egypt, for example noteworthy pharaohs like Ramses II, or foreign invaders like Alexander the Great or Napoleon.

### Math

Describe how planar geometry would be necessary in building the ancient Egyptian pyramids and temples.

Using *Fun With Hieroglyphs* as a guide, identify the ancient Egyptian system for representing numbers with hieroglyphs, and discuss the role of numbers in measuring fields, taking inventory, calculating taxes, and building temples.

## Suggestions for Further Reading

*Ancient Egypt: The Great Ages of Man* by Lionel Casson and the editors of Time-Life Books. New York: Time Inc., 1965.

*The Art & Architecture of Ancient Egypt* by W. Stevenson Smith, in *Pelican History of Art Series*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965.

*The Egypt of the Pharaohs* by Jean-Pierre Cortegianne. London: Scala Publications Ltd., 1987.

*Egyptian Art* by Cyril Aldred. New York: Thames and Hudson Inc., 1985.

*Egyptian Life* by Mirian Stead. London: British Museum, 1968.

*The Egyptian Museum, Cairo* by Mohamed Saleh and Hourig Souronzian. Germany: Prestel-Verlag, Phillip von Zabern, 1987.

*The Gods of Ancient Egypt* by Barbara Watterson. New York: Facts on File, 1984.

*Pyramid* by David Macaulay. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975.

*In the Shadow of the Pyramids: Egypt during the Old Kingdom*. by Jaromir Malek. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

### Website

[www.clemusart.com](http://www.clemusart.com)

We encourage teachers and students alike to visit the Cleveland Museum of Art in person. We also encourage teachers and students to visit the museum's website, where information about the museum's permanent collection and educational programs can be found.

### Especially for Children

*African Kingdoms of the Past—Egypt, Kush, Aksum* by Kenny Mann. Parsippany: Dillon Press, 1997.

*Ancient Egypt, Discovering Its Splendors*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1978.

*Ancient Egyptian People* by Sarah McNeill. Brookfield: The Millbrook Press, 1997.

*Ancient Egyptian Places* by Sarah McNeill. Brookfield: The Millbrook Press, 1997.

*Egypt—Children of Other Lands* by Sharon and Jeff Siamon. Markham, Ontario: Grolier Educational, 1990.

*Egypt in Pictures* by Steve Feinstein. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1988.

*The Egyptians* by Anne Millard. London: Macdonald Educational, 1977.

*Enchantment of the World—Egypt* by Wilbur Cross. Chicago: Children's Press, 1982.

*Into the Mummy's Tomb* by Nicholas Reeves. New York: Scholastic/Madison Press Book, 1992.

*Mummies* by James Putnam. London: Eyewitness Guides, DK, 1993. Another great product from DK publishing, full of color pictures and works of art. See p.14–15, "Making a Mummy," for images of a complete set of canopic jars; "Amulets and Magic Charms," p.20–21, and "Workers for the Afterlife," p.32–33, for many images of *shawabtis*.



# Let's Discover Egypt

THE CLEVELAND  
MUSEUM OF ART  
Department of Education  
and Public Programs  
11150 East Boulevard  
Cleveland, Ohio  
44106-1797

ART TO GO SERVICES  
216-421-7340 x 468  
TDD 216-421-0018  
FAX 216-421-9277  
info@cma-oh.org

The Art To Go pilot program  
is sponsored by Eaton  
Corporation. Additional  
support is provided by the  
National Endowment for  
the Arts, a federal agency,  
and Toshiba International  
Foundation.



## Let's Discover Egypt



Amulet with Eye of Horus  
Egypt, Third Intermediate  
period  
Faience  
1927.439



Bowl  
Egypt, c 2550 BC  
Anorthosite gneiss  
1914.840



Oil Lamp with a Frog design  
Egypt, 2<sup>nd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> century  
Nile mud  
1986.1037



*Shawabti* figure  
Egypt, c 900- 300 BC  
Faience  
1941.321



Osiris  
Egypt, Late Period, 664-525 BC  
Bronze  
2055.18



Canopic Jar Lid  
Egypt, New Kingdom, 1150-1070 BC  
Travertine marble  
1932.191



Necklace with amulets  
Egypt, Middle Kingdom and  
later  
Faience, coral, carnelian  
1927.451



Amulet with Winged Scarab  
Egypt, Third Intermediate period,  
1070-712 BC  
Faience  
1916.408



Amulets of the Four Sons of Horus  
Egypt, c 900-300 BC  
Faience  
1940.640, 1940.641, 1940.642,  
1940.643