

TOPIC PACKS · GRADES 3–6

# Ancient Egypt

A cross-curricular themed week

## Suggested timetable

Day	Subject	Activity
Monday	History	The Nile, the pyramids, daily life
Tuesday	English	Hieroglyphics — write your name in symbols
Wednesday	Maths	Pyramid maths — shape, volume, building
Thursday	History & Art	Mummification process and canopic jar design
Friday	History	The Egyptian gods — research and present

## Day 1 — Ancient Egypt timeline

Period	When	What was happening
Old Kingdom	2686–2181 BCE	Great Pyramids built (Giza)
Middle Kingdom	2055–1650 BCE	Strong central rule, art and writing flourish
New Kingdom	1550–1069 BCE	Tutankhamun, Ramesses II, Hatshepsut
Late period	664–332 BCE	Multiple invasions, decline



Period	When	What was happening
Ptolemaic	332–30 BCE	Cleopatra is the famous last pharaoh

## Day 1 — Why Egypt was great

ASK CLASS: Why did civilisation flourish in Egypt? Three main reasons: 1. THE NILE flooded every year, dropping rich black soil onto the fields. Crops grew easily. 2. The DESERT around Egypt was a natural border — invaders found it hard to cross. So Egypt stayed safe and stable for thousands of years. 3. The PHARAOH was both political and religious leader. Society was very organised, which let them build huge projects like pyramids.

## Day 2 — Hieroglyphics (45 min)

Hieroglyphics use pictures for sounds, not letters for sounds. There are over 700 — but a basic alphabet of about 24 covers most names. DISPLAY a hieroglyphic alphabet on the board. (Search 'hieroglyphic alphabet' for ready-made charts.) Children: 1. Write their own name in hieroglyphics 2. Write a friend's name in hieroglyphics for them to read 3. Write a short message — a sentence is plenty DISCUSSION: Why were hieroglyphics hard to read for hundreds of years? (Until the Rosetta Stone was found in 1799 with the same text in three scripts, no one could decode them.)

## Day 3 — Pyramid maths (45 min)

THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA facts: • Originally 146.6 metres tall (now 138m — tip eroded) • Square base, 230 metres each side • Made from over 2 million stone blocks • Each block weighs 2.5 tonnes on average CHALLENGES: • What's the perimeter of the base? (920m) • How many years would it take to build if you placed one block every 5 minutes, working 10 hours a day, 365 days a year? (Working: 6,000 hours per year  $\times$  12 blocks per hour = 72,000 blocks per year.  $2,000,000 \div 72,000 =$  about 28 years.) • Build a pyramid from sugar cubes — square base, then layer up. How tall can you go before it falls?

## Day 4 — Mummification process

### Step 1 — Wash and purify

The body was washed in palm wine and water from the Nile.

### Step 2 — Remove organs

Lungs, stomach, intestines and liver were removed and stored in canopic jars. The heart was left in (Egyptians thought the heart was where thinking happened).



<p><b>Step 3 — Dry the body</b></p> <p>The body was covered in a salt called natron for 40 days. This dried it out completely.</p>	<p><b>Step 4 — Wrap in linen</b></p> <p>Hundreds of metres of linen were wrapped around the body, with lucky charms (amulets) tucked inside.</p>
<p><b>Step 5 — Final ceremony</b></p> <p>The mummy was placed in a coffin and a final 'opening of the mouth' ceremony performed so the dead could speak in the afterlife.</p>	

## Day 4 art — canopic jar design

Canopic jars stored the four removed organs. Each jar had a different head: • Imsety (human head) — held the liver • Hapy (baboon head) — held the lungs • Duamutef (jackal head) — held the stomach • Qebehsenuf (falcon head) — held the intestines Children design their own set of four canopic jars on paper, with the right animal heads. Add Egyptian-style decoration — gold, blue, hieroglyphic borders.

## Day 5 — Egyptian gods research

Each child or pair picks one Egyptian god to research and present: • Ra (sun god, head of all gods) • Anubis (jackal-headed god of mummification) • Osiris (god of the afterlife and rebirth) • Isis (goddess of magic and motherhood) • Horus (falcon-headed sky god) • Thoth (ibis-headed god of writing and wisdom) • Bastet (cat goddess of home, fertility, music) • Sobek (crocodile god of the Nile) PRESENT: A short 2-minute talk including: name, what they look like, what they're the god of, one story about them, why people prayed to them.

