

Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs

Educator Resources

de Young \
museum

Dear Educator,

Thank you for supporting your students' visit to the exhibition [*Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs*](#) at the de Young museum. *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs* explores the life and accomplishments of the eminent military officer who became king of Egypt as the remarkable Ramses II. The installation features the most important trove of Ramses the Great objects to leave Egypt as well as treasures revealing the wealth of the pharaohs, the astonishing skill of ancient Egyptian tomb builders, and the superb workmanship of Egyptian artists. To augment your students' experience of the exhibition, we partnered with Bay Area educator Maha Nusrat, sixth-grade social studies teacher for United for Success Academy in the Oakland Unified School District.

We hope the assembled information, offered in English and Spanish, will prepare you and your students for a memorable and enlightening museum visit. The supporting materials include the following:

- A map of the exhibition
- Educator Resources (digital)
- Student Discovery Guide in English and Spanish (printed and digital)
- In-classroom Discussion Cards in English and Spanish (printed and digital)

If you have any questions prior to your visit, please contact us at schooltours@famsf.org.

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Pre-Visit Lessons

SL 6.1, SL 6.2, RI 6.1, RI 6.6, W 6.4, RI 6.7, W 6.9, RH 6–8.2, L 6.2, L 6.3

Lesson 1 objectives

- Explore the ethics behind museum exhibitions and look critically at exhibitions

Lesson 2 objectives

- Consider the qualities of great leaders and understand the role of the pharaoh
- Formulate opinions about a great leader's responsibilities

Lesson 3 objectives

- Learn about the roles of the pharaoh and ancient Egypt's social structure
- Develop critical opinions of the role of social hierarchies and distribution of power

Lesson 4 objectives

- Uncover background about Ramses II and become familiar with why he is called "Ramses the Great"

Teaching Guide: Day 1

Part 1 (8 mins.)

1. Pass out the student guides
2. Read the big question and scenarios aloud and ask students to consider their position on the prompt
3. Offer a few minutes for students to write
4. Open up the opportunity for students to share their perspectives aloud with one another
5. Invite students to take a poll of the class. They can get up and ask their peers their opinion about the prompt: does the opportunity to learn from stolen objects justify them being in museums?
6. Transition by having students consider and note their ideas about ethical questions that archaeologists and curators should consider

Part 2 (10 mins.)

1. Read the paragraphs to pose ethical issues of museum exhibitions to the students. Perhaps they have never considered that there would be issues with artworks on view at museums
2. After reading the prompts and considering some of the critical questions, invite students to discuss two prompts
3. Students read and write their responses first
4. Then, they discuss with a peer and paraphrase their peer's response in writing
5. Invite a few students to share aloud and observe similarities or differences of opinions

Teaching Guide: Day 1

Part 3 (20–25 mins.)

1. Explain to students that ancient Egypt also has its own controversies
2. ASK students if they have ever had a friend who had trouble seeing all sides of a story or situation
3. ASK if they think that teachers or other professionals may sometimes not see all sides as well
4. Read the “Critical Facts” statements about possible bias in how ancient Egyptians are depicted
5. If needed: unpack the term “bias” for students using the images provided to fully consider the question
6. After reading each statement, ask students if they observe a possibility of bias or not seeing things accurately based on the images and facts shared
7. Have them complete the written reflection “Seeing with a Critical Eye” using the response frames
8. Invite them to discuss their answers with table partners to understand other perspectives
9. Instruct students to reflect on what they learned from their partners and write a final statement of what they understand

Teaching Guide: Day 2

Part 1: Thinking critically about good leaders (5–8 mins.)

1. Have students think about their favorite heroes or leaders
2. Popcorn some names to help them imagine what those leaders are like
3. Read the “Anticipatory Guide” statements and ask students to check “agree” or “disagree” for each
4. Prompt students to explain two or three reasons why they checked “agree” or “disagree”
5. PARTNER SHARE: Prompt students to explain to a table partner why they agreed or disagreed with particular statements

Part 2: Novel ideas and preparing the reader (5 mins.)

1. Students group into fours
2. As a group, take turns round robin–style, brainstorming ideas one after another and writing a list of the qualities of great leaders using the oral sentence stem, “I believe a great leader is someone who . . .”
3. Each teammate scribes the others’ notes
4. They must share NOVEL or new ideas with no repeats
5. Prompt the class to share ideas aloud without repeating and add to their written lists based on new ideas presented

Part 3: Quick connection (5 mins.)

1. Connect the idea of leaders to the exhibition, explaining that we will be learning about pharaohs, or leaders of ancient Egypt
2. Invite students to observe this image of a pharaoh and write down what they notice and what they wonder
3. Finish with making evidence-based inferences about the image and how it shows the role of leaders in ancient Egypt

Teaching Guide: Day 2

Part 4: Reading about the role of a pharaoh (25 mins.)

1. Explain to students that they will do some background reading with a focus
2. Read the instructions and explain to students: underline every detail that answers our focus-reading question “What were pharaohs responsible for?”
3. As they read aloud in groups or alone, observe that they are underlining accurately

Part 5: Processing the text (8–10 mins.)

1. After reading, have students fill out the “Give One, Get One” reflection
2. After students write their responses, have them find a partner to exchange one idea with them
3. After hearing other perspectives, have them complete the exit reflection on what they learned and compare the role of the pharaoh to their own ideas of great leaders
4. This is their exit reflection for this section

Teaching Guide: Day 3

Part 1: Comparing pharaohs to our ideas of great leaders (10 mins.)

1. Quick write prompt opens the lesson. Have students write for 5 minutes
2. Explain that the goal is to understand and be able to explain the responsibilities of a pharaoh. Have students read the chart
3. Ask teams to discuss and have one expert share out their answer to the prompt: what were pharaohs responsible for?
4. AFTER READING: Invite students to connect back to their ideas of great leaders and respond to the two prompts:
 - Why would the pharaoh be thought of as a god on Earth as well as the representative of the gods?
 - How are these roles similar to or different from what you think a leader should do?

Part 2: Introduce the social hierarchy (10 mins.)

1. CONNECT and explain that students have just learned about all the roles a pharaoh had and how they were considered connected to the gods. This also provided a clear idea of who had power and who did not
2. Explain that in ancient Egypt, the pharaoh was on top and all others fell under their power and leadership
3. Ask students to think about what social hierarchy looks like in their school or in this country
4. REFLECT: Ask students if that hierarchy of power is positive or if there are problems with such a structure. After students share out, have them reflect in writing and draw a diagram of what power looks like at their school or in this country. Then complete the “Think Critically” section under Social Structure
5. DISCUSS: Close with having students reflect on what some might see as benefits of one leader holding power and what may be benefits of sharing power and leadership

Teaching Guide: Day 4

Who was Ramses II?

Part 1: Ramses gallery walk (10 mins.)

1. **CONNECT:** Explain to students that the exhibition is honoring one famous ancient pharaoh and that today we will think like historians to explore clues and create hypotheses about the pharaoh
2. Students observe the art objects in the guide, noticing details about objects and what these details make them think
3. **DISCUSS:** Give students the opportunity of focusing on two objects to “give one, get one” and exchange ideas about what this object reveals about Ramses

Part 2: Block party (15 mins.)

1. Cut or tear apart the Block Party cards sent by the Fine Arts Museums
2. Pass one card out to each student and give them a few minutes to read and interpret their card
3. **DISCUSS:** Have students rotate to different classmates, reading their card aloud and explaining its meaning while also listening to their peers read their cards aloud
4. Explain they have to gather all of their evidence after the activity
5. Signal students to rotate back to their home seats and prepare to gather ideas
6. In seats, they must share one by one what they gathered from others in the block party and take notes on their paper
7. They will then reflect on what this evidence taught them about Ramses II in writing
8. You can give the option to share conclusions aloud

Teaching Guide: Visit the Exhibition

1. Discuss the “Before You Visit” questions with your class to review all they have learned
2. Review the Discovery Guide materials to help structure your students’ experience in the exhibition
3. Prepare students to visit in small groups with the support of attending chaperones

Note: Pencils are not permitted in the galleries. If you have students with sensory sensitivity, please be aware the exhibition design includes projections with layered sound that create a loud and dark environment.

Teaching Guide:

Post-Visit Lessons

Part 1: “Quiz, Quiz, Trade” discussion (10 mins.)

1. Cut or tear the cards apart and pass them out to students
2. Instruct students that they will be doing a Quiz, Quiz, Trade. Find a partner, ask your question, listen to the partner, partner asks a question, you answer, and then you SWITCH CARDS and find a new partner
3. Ask students to stand up and speak to many people within the time limit
4. Rotate back to teams/seats

Part 2 (10 mins.)

1. Invite students to use the “Reflecting” section of the guide to think about the ideas of their peers and write a summary of what they think about the exhibition based on the discussion
2. Instruct the students to draw three items that stood out to them from the exhibition and reflect in writing about what was interesting about the artworks

Part 3: Think critically (10 mins.)

1. Ask students to discuss the “Before You Visit” questions in pairs. They will think about critical questions we needed to consider during the exhibition
2. Invite them to share and paraphrase their partner's response in their notes. They can speak with the same partner for all three questions, or rotate to different partners to think critically about museum exhibitions

Post-Visit Art Activity

Title of activity: Animals hold meaning

Description

Most Egyptian gods were associated with animals or took animal form. People honored gods and requested their help through ritual and prayer involving the appropriate species. For example, the ibis bird was associated with Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom and writing. Thoth has a human body and an ibis's head. He was believed to assist the wise scribes who handled the administration of Egypt. Cats also had a special status, revered as useful predators, for their fertility, and as symbols of divine protection.

Think of an animal with qualities that you admire and respect. How would those qualities benefit your community? Create a drawing of your chosen animal, in the style of ancient Egyptian art or your own style. Use ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs to name the animal.

Key Concepts/Words

Sacred animals, symbolism, hieroglyphs, color, line, shape

Materials

(This is a list of suggested materials. Please use the art materials you have access to.)

Drawing pencils

Color, charcoal, or pastel pencils

Paper: pastel, newsprint, or drawing paper (light earth tone is suggested)

Resources:

- Egyptian alphabet hieroglyph printout
(one source: [Egypt's Golden Empire . Special Features . Hieroglyphs . Alphabet | PBS](#))
- Information on Bay Area animals (if you choose to focus on your local environment)
[The Common Plants and Animals of San Francisco · iNaturalist](#)
[Mammals of San Francisco Bay Area: sfbaywildlife.info](#)

Questions

- After visiting the exhibition, what did you learn about the animals that were considered sacred in ancient Egypt? What special qualities and abilities did they possess?
- What animal embodies qualities you admire? What is special about these qualities?
- How will you highlight the qualities of the animal in your drawing?

Steps

1. Spend some time discussing the animals and their meaning as you observed them in the *Ramses the Great* exhibition. Discuss the style in which they were depicted (a focus on simplifying shapes)
2. Research an animal of your choice that you feel has special qualities and abilities
3. Practice sketching the animal. Consider how you might want to simplify the body and call attention to specific qualities of the animal
4. Move onto your final drawing. Start with light lines. When you are happy with the drawing, color your animal. Consider highlights and shading as well, using pencils to create textures and patterns
5. Look up and replicate the spelling of your animal in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs
6. Optional (for class teacher): On a large sheet of paper or on a classroom wall, have the students display their work together

Lesson by Jennie Smith, senior teaching artist



Example:

Coyote

Admirable traits:

Ability to adapt to a huge variety of environments, coyotes have strong communication skills, and they are quick and agile

Gallery Map

de Young museum

Lower Level, Herbst Exhibition Galleries

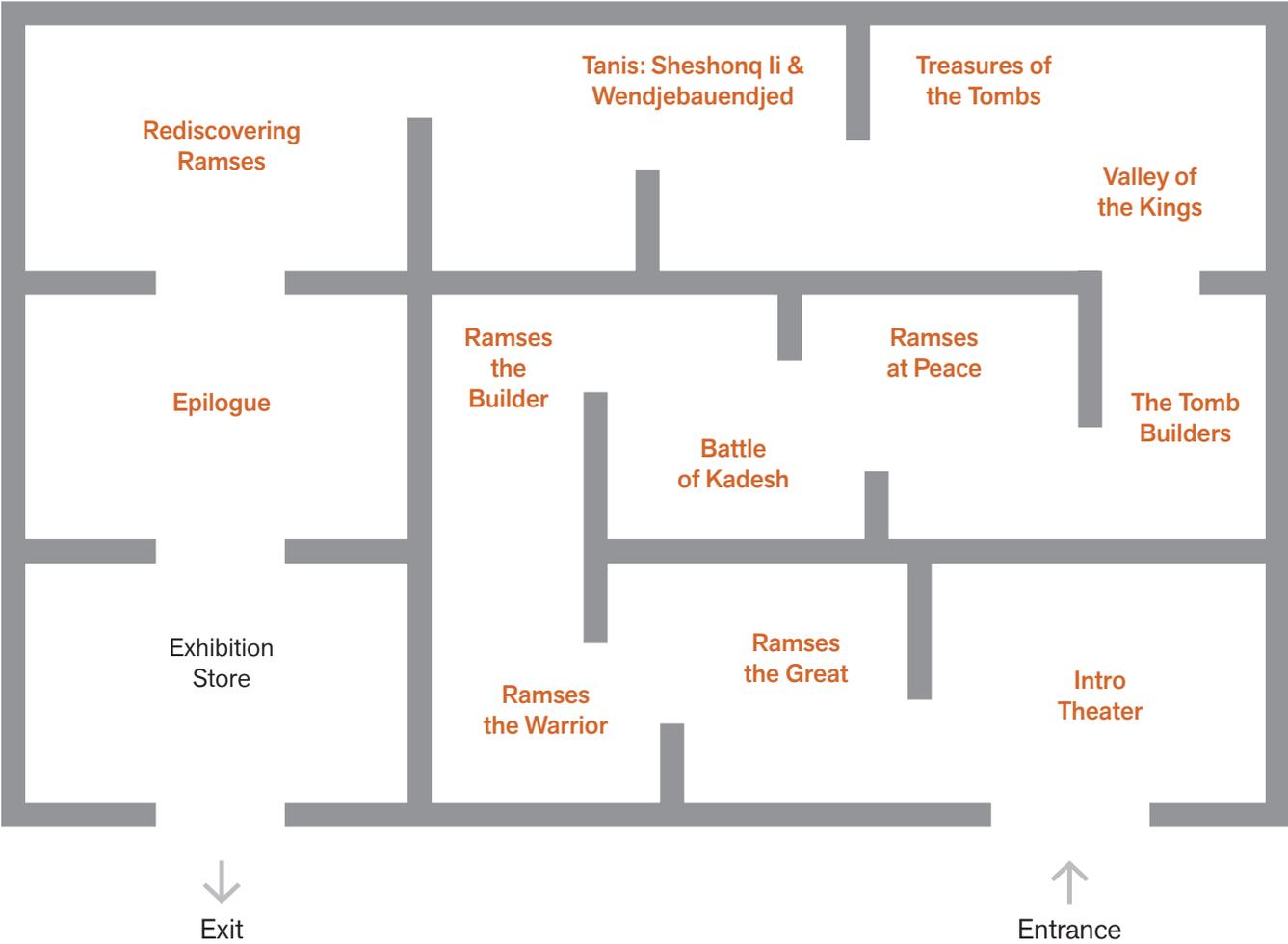


Image List for Student Guide

All following exhibition photographs by Sandro Vannini.
Images courtesy of World Heritage Exhibitions

Location in
exhibition



Statue of Ramses II as a sphinx offering a
ram-headed vessel
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Limestone
34 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 67 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (87 × 47 × 172.1 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ramses the
Warrior



Relief block of Ramses II massacrering his enemies
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Limestone and pigment
39 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 34 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ in. (100 × 87.9 × 50 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ramses the
Builder/
Battle of Kadesh



Upper part of a colossus of Ramses II
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Limestone
76 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 27 $\frac{9}{16}$ in. (194.9 × 70 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Epilogue



Head of a colossal statue of Ramses II*
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Red granite
90 $\frac{9}{16}$ × 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 41 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (230 × 71.4 × 106 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo
*Re-worked from a statue of a Middle Kingdom king

Ramses the Great



Earring with uraei and cartouche of Ramses XI
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 20
Gold
1⁵/₁₆ × 6⁵/₁₆ in. (4.9 × 16 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ramses at Peace



Upper part of a statue of Ramses II holding the
heka scepter
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Granodiorite
32¹/₄ × 27⁹/₁₆ × 21¹/₄ in. (81.9 × 70 × 54 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ramses the
Builder



Relief fragment with deities (Osiris, Isis, and Anubis) and
cartouches of Ramses II
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Limestone, gold, and pigment
21⁵/₈ × 17³/₄ × 6¹¹/₁₆ in. (54.9 × 45.1 × 17 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ramses the
Builder



Ring with the throne name of Ramses II
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Faience
Height: 1³/₁₆ in. (2.1 cm). Diameter: 1⁵/₁₆ in. (2.4 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ramses at Peace



Funerary mask of Wendjebauendjed
Egyptian, Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 21
Gold, alabaster, and glass
8 × 7 × 6 in. (20.3 × 17.8 × 15.2 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Tanis:
Wendjebauendjed



Bracelet of Sheshonq II with Eye of Horus
Egyptian, Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 22
Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, and faience
1³/₄ × 4³/₄ × 4³/₄ in. (4.4 × 12.1 × 12.1 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Tanis: Sheshonq II



Falcon-headed collar and counterweight
of Princess Neferuptah
Egyptian, Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 12
Gold, carnelian, and feldspar
Diameter: 14½ in. (36.8 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Treasures of the
Tombs



Kneeling statue of Ramses II offering a rebus of his name
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Schist
10¹³/₁₆ × 5¹/₈ × 15³/₈ in. (27.5 × 13 × 39.1 cm)
Alexandria National Museum

Ramses the
Builder



Outer coffin on a sledge with lid of Sennedjem
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 19
Wood, pigment, and plaster
52 × 36¼ × 101⁹/₁₆ in. (132.1 × 92.1 × 258 cm)
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

The Tomb Builders

Additional images



Installation photograph by Randy Dodson
Courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco



Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*, 1963
Director: Joseph L. Mankiewicz
Cineclassico / Alamy Stock Photo



Scene from *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, 2014
Director: Ridley Scott
Photo 12 / Alamy Stock Photo



Tutankhamun statue from the tomb—
wooden guardian statue of the Ka of the King, wearing
the Nemes headcloth
Imagedoc / Alamy Stock Photo



National Geographic cover, February 2008