

Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs



Name

Date / Period

Student Guide: English

de Young
museum

When you visit the de Young museum to see the exhibition *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs*, you will see many objects from ancient Egypt. These objects belong to the Egyptian government and will be returning to Egypt after they tour the world. As you prepare to visit the museum exhibition, this guide will help you and your classmates explore big questions regarding museums and Ramses II's legacy.

This guide was developed by Maha Nusrat, sixth-grade social studies teacher in the Oakland Unified School District.

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Taking a Critical Stance



Big Question

What responsibilities do museums have when showing art objects from other cultures or periods of time? Whom do the art objects truly belong to?

Connecting: Class Exhibition

Imagine you work for a museum and you are asked to create an exhibition about the cultures and experiences of you and your classmates. What topics might you explore? What objects would you include in your display? Whom would you need to talk to in order to get permission to use the objects?

Art museums were created to preserve objects and teach people about history and culture. When you visit a museum, it is also critical to think about where objects come from. The history of museums includes some practices that are now illegal, like buying illegally acquired artworks, such as looted objects. Now there are rules and regulations about what a museum can own and show. But what about objects that have been in collections long before these rules were created? Museums are faced with ethical questions. In some cases, the original owners are no longer around to say how they feel about their objects being in a museum. In other cases, descendants or governments are speaking up and asking that these objects be returned. **Repatriation** is when a museum returns an object requested by a group of people, community, or government.

Should objects that were originally stolen long ago be returned? Does the opportunity to learn from stolen objects justify their being in museums? What is fair or unfair?

Take a Poll

Objects should be returned to the community

Educational importance justifies keeping objects

Most of the objects you will see come from excavations. To create an exhibition like this, archaeologists and museum curators work together. What ethical questions do you think archaeologists and curators might need to think about?

Archaeologist: Someone who studies human history by legally digging up objects and studying the remains of a civilization.

Curator: Someone who is responsible for taking care of and presenting objects so that people can learn from them.



Taking a Critical Stance



For this exhibition, the Egyptian government and Egyptian archaeologists and curators decided to share the legacy of an ancient Egyptian ruler named Ramses II with the rest of the world. People often visit museums to learn about cultures other than their own. Is it OK to take objects from tombs without permission for the sake of education and learning?

I think . . .

Take for example, the ancient Egyptians. In ancient Egypt, special objects were placed in the tombs of rich and royal people to help in the transition to the afterlife. Every object played an important part in the death ritual. Yet archaeologists excavate them to study them, keep them safe, and share them with others. Ancient Egyptians believed “to speak their names”—that is, the names of the dead—“is to make them live again.” For this reason, some scholars who study ancient Egypt believe tomb owners would want burial objects displayed to encourage people to honor their memory.

I think . . .

Curators decide what story to tell and what art objects to display. When you visit an art museum, you will see objects that are beautifully made and arranged to tell a story. Are you seeing the whole story if only certain objects are displayed?

I think . . .

Discuss with a Partner

Is it fair for museums to put another culture or people's art on view for the sake of education?

Me

My Partner

How would you decide what objects to include and exclude? Would you consider rarity, beauty, and importance to the culture?

Me

My Partner



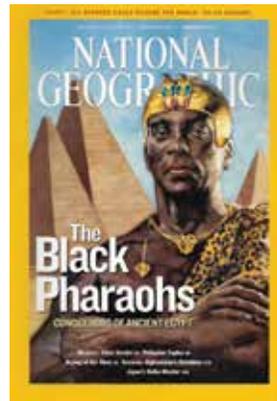
Taking a Critical Stance



Who were the ancient Egyptians? How are they represented in modern times?



VS.



I notice:

Ancient Egypt was called Kemet by the people of the region, which means “black land.”

Early historians of ancient Egypt, some of whom held racist beliefs, disconnected ancient Egyptians from the blackness of the African continent.

Depictions of ancient Egyptians over the past few 100 years often show individuals with light or white skin.

Discussions about the multicultural nature of ancient Egypt remain a vital area of research today.

This information makes me think:



Seeing with a Critical Eye



Is it possible for historians to have biases?

In my opinion, it (is, is not) possible for historians of ancient art to have biases because . . .

Is it possible that the history we learn is not 100% true?

In my opinion, it (is, is not) possible for the history we learn to not always be true because . . .

Do art museums show the full range of society from a specific time in history?

I believe that . . .

What do we lose by looking at only one part of society?

I believe that . . .

My Partners

Based on my partner discussion, I believe . . .



Ramses the Great



What does it take to be called "great"?





Anticipatory Guide



Connect

Great leaders think about the immediate moment, not their legacies.

agree disagree

Explanation:

Great leaders do what is in the best interest of their people.

agree disagree

Explanation:

Great leaders should brag about themselves and their accomplishments.

agree disagree

Explanation:

Great leaders create temples to keep the gods happy and create order.

agree disagree

Explanation:

Great leaders sometimes have to use force to defend their people.

agree disagree

Explanation:

My Partner Shared



Novel Ideas Only



Share only new ideas (no repeats). Write down your list of ideas as a team.

What do you think are the qualities of a great leader?

Say: I believe a great leader is someone who . . .

1

2

3

4

5

6

7



Image Observation



What does this image tell us about ancient Egypt?
What qualities of leadership does it show?

I notice ...

I wonder ...

I infer ...



The Magic of the Pharaoh



Read with a purpose: as you read, underline information that answers the question, "What were pharaohs responsible for?"

Pharaohs ruled ancient Egypt. It was believed that their power was granted by the gods and that the pharaohs acted on the gods' behalf. A pharaoh's position was passed down through family lineage; in general, the eldest son of a pharaoh would be next in line to rule, but this was not always the case.

Pharaohs connected the world of the gods to the world of humans. Pharaohs were in charge of religion and politics. One religious responsibility was to maintain the laws of *ma'at*, which promoted truth, justice, balance, and order. Pharaohs constructed temples to please the gods. They created laws and rules of taxation. They organized trade and labor and they protected their people.

Pharaohs adorned themselves in art and life with objects and symbols that represented power. The most popular symbol of power was the crook and flail, which provided a connection to the god Osiris. In Egyptian myth Osiris's son, Horus, avenged his father's death and used the crook and flail to represent the legitimate rule of pharaohs.

Ancient Egyptians believed in the power of magic and in the power of the written word. A pharaoh's sarcophagus (or coffin) contained hieroglyphic writing representing spells of protection for the dead. Symbols were also included to lead the pharaoh safely to the afterlife and protect them throughout eternity.



The Magic of the Pharaoh



Give One, Get One

Me

I understand that the pharaoh . . .

My Partner

I learned that in ancient Egypt, leaders . . .

This is (similar to, different from) my perspective of a leader's role because . . .



The Life of a Pharaoh



Connect

What do you think a responsible leader needs to do for their community?

What were the pharaoh's jobs?

Military Leader

- Protected the people, land, and empire
- Maintained an army to defend the land
- Created treaties

Political Leader

- Made laws
- Collected taxes
- Oversaw the cultivation of land and the storing of grain

Religious Leader

- Carried out sacred rituals
- Built and restored temples
- Connect the gods and the people

Given this list of jobs, why would the pharaoh be thought of as a god on Earth as well as the representative of the gods?

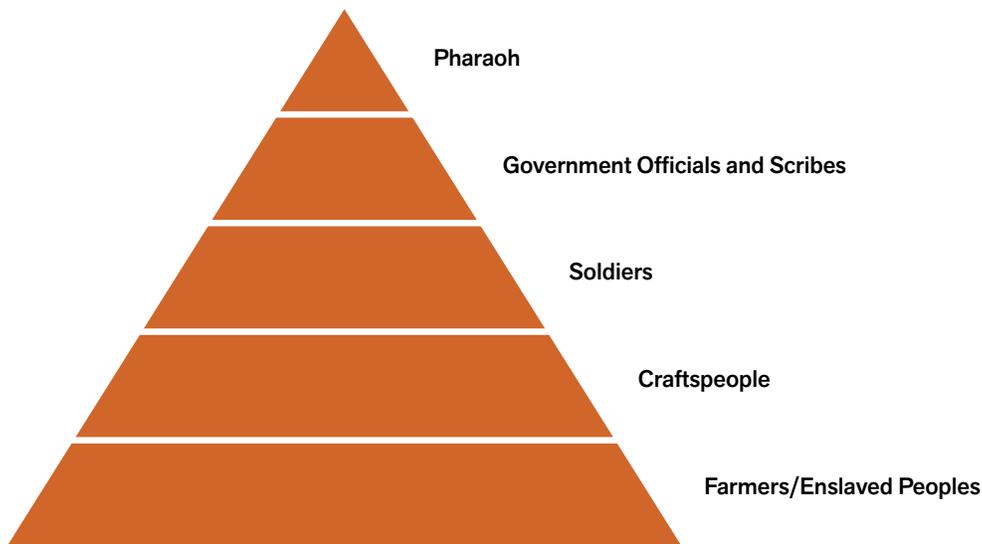
How are these roles similar to or different from what you think a leader should do?



Social Structure



In ancient Egypt, everyone had a role to play. There was a clear social structure showing who had the most power and who had the least. The pharaohs relied on everyone under them to execute their duties as religious and political leaders.



What is the hierarchy at your school? What is the hierarchy in this country?
Who has the most power and the least?

Hierarchy: A system or organization in which people or groups are ranked according to status or authority.

Explain:

Draw:



Social Structure



Think Critically

Are social hierarchies good or bad in societies? What can be harmful about one person holding almost all of the power? Can it ever be a good thing? What would happen if everyone had the same amount of power?

What forms of power do you think will be displayed in the exhibition *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs*? Who will or will not be represented through the objects you will see?

Power: The ability to control one's circumstances and the circumstances of others.

Partner-Share

Benefits of shared power

Benefits of individual power

Today, do societies value the work of everyday people like cooks, custodians, teachers, customer-service workers, office workers, farmworkers, construction workers, and others?

How does a person's social status effect what objects go on display in a museum? If you were a curator, what objects would you like to display to teach about a particular group(s) of people?



Who is Ramses II?



As you observe these images, ask yourself: what do these art objects reveal about Ramses II's power or his role as pharaoh?





Who is Ramses II?





Ramses II Clues



What do these images reveal to you about Ramses II?

Notes about the images:

What this makes me think:



These images reveal to me that Ramses II ...

Partner-Share



Block Party



Block-Party Analysis

My cards in my own words . . .

From others' cards, I learned . . .

1

2

3

4

5

The block-party activity helped me understand . . .

I was surprised to learn . . .



Before You Visit



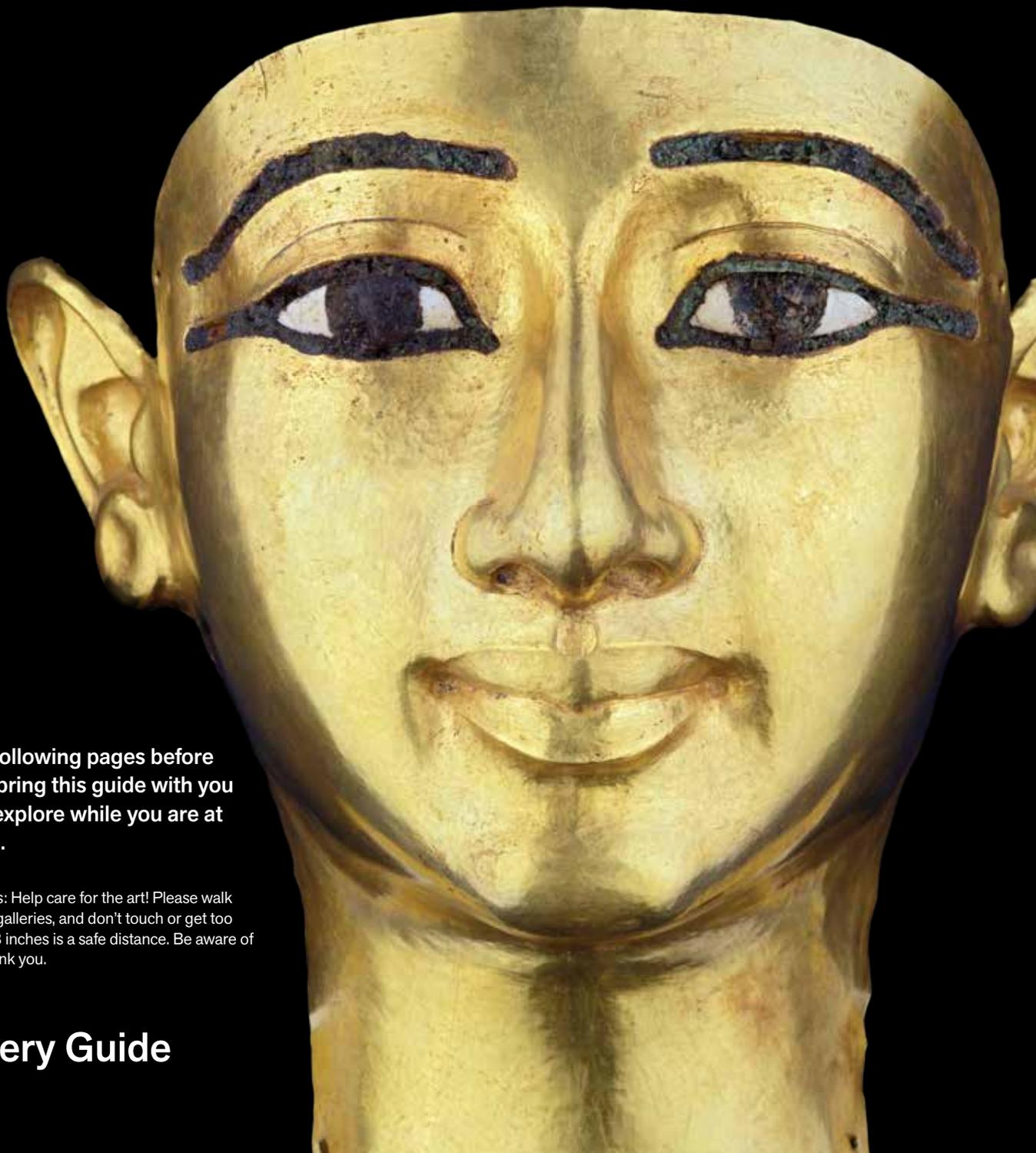
As you view the exhibition, consider the ethical issues of the materials on view.

What are the pros and cons of these art objects being on view?

How do *you* think ancient Egyptians would feel about these items being exhibited?

What can museum visitors learn from these particular art objects?

Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs



Review the following pages before visiting and bring this guide with you to help you explore while you are at the museum.

Gallery Guidelines: Help care for the art! Please walk (don't run) in the galleries, and don't touch or get too close to the art; 18 inches is a safe distance. Be aware of other visitors. Thank you.

Discovery Guide

The Great

As you journey through this exhibition, you will travel back over 3,200 years to the time of one of Egypt's most well-known rulers, Ramses II. As pharaoh, he held one of ancient Egypt's longest reigns, beginning in his 20s and ending with his death, in his 90s. He outlived 12 of his own sons. After his death, the empire gradually fell. Early Egyptologists gave him the title "The Great" because of his leadership, accomplishments, and long period of rule.



SIGNIFICANT SYMBOLS

Pharaohs were depicted with the *heka* scepter as shown above to symbolize the legitimacy of their rule. The word *heka* is also a word for magic.

How many more times do you see this *heka* scepter within the exhibition?

DISCUSS:

What do you think makes a great leader?

If you had to step up as a leader in your school, what would you do to make yourself a great leader?

THINK AND OBSERVE:

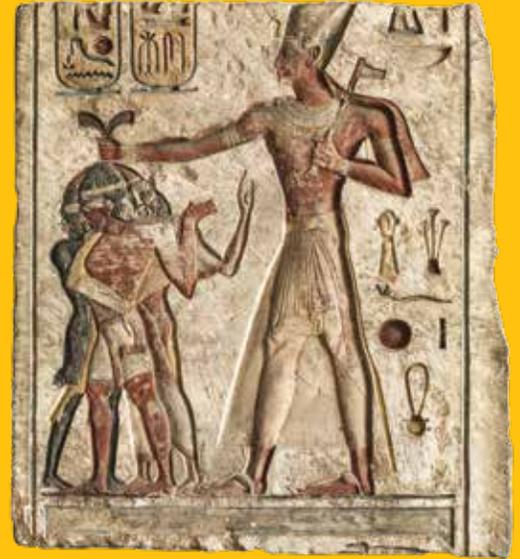
Have you noticed patterns and symbols repeating throughout this exhibition?

Do the patterns or symbols remind you of anything in nature or the world around you?

Discuss what the symbols could mean. Explore what ancient Egyptians seemed to honor based on the symbols you observe.

A Pharaoh's Role

Ramses II grew up as a prince and showed military might at a young age, which helped him become pharaoh. Pharaohs had the responsibility of military leadership to protect and expand the empire. The image at right shows Ramses II massacring his enemies. However, when you explore the Battle of Kadesh, you will learn that he also signed one of the world's first peace treaties, showing his strategic thinking as a military leader.



THINK AND OBSERVE:

What do you think was the intended message of this carving? Whom was it meant to intimidate?

What could intimidation do to protect an empire?

As you explore the exhibition, what are you learning about the Battle of Kadesh? Why was it strategic for Ramses II to sign a peace treaty?

SEEING DOUBLE?

Pharaohs had representations of themselves carved and placed throughout their kingdom.



“To speak the name of the dead is to make them live again.”

Any depiction of a pharaoh had to include their name in hieroglyphs. Statues would show a pharaoh's status as all-powerful. They also had a purpose depending on what objects were shown with them. Art was considered alive and magical.

DISCUSS:

If you were in charge of a community, how would you treat neighboring communities and leaders?

What are symbols or images in your life that hold power or have meaning?

INTERACT:

How would you represent yourself as a statue?

What objects would you carry?

What would represent your status or power?

The White Crown



Sketch it at home.

← False Beard



Adornment

In your journey through the exhibition, you are going to see amazing jewelry full of valuable stones in many shapes and designs. Jewelry was not just decoration. A stone's color had symbolic meaning connected to Egyptian religion. Adornments were believed to have had magical protection for those who wore the item. Amulets of the gods and goddesses were worn for protection. Even the dead were adorned with jewelry.



DISCUSS:

How do people around you adorn themselves?

THINK AND OBSERVE:

What colors are common throughout the jewelry?
What do you think the colors represent or mean?

Discuss what you notice about the types of jewelry you see and what they may represent.

INTERACT:

What designs do you observe on different pieces of jewelry?



Design your own at home.

Hieroglyphics

Ancient Egyptians used a hieroglyphic writing system where symbols can represent the objects they depict or, similar to our alphabet, sounds. These symbols are put together to make up a word.

WORD POWER

Words and names had magical power in ancient Egypt. The word *hieroglyph* means sacred carvings.



THINK AND OBSERVE:

Where are hieroglyphs written?

What types of pictures do you notice?

Why do you think certain objects have hieroglyphic writing on them?

DISCUSS:

In what ways do you observe that words have power?

How do different types of words, whether spoken or written, affect people differently?





Reflecting



After listening to my classmates' perspectives, I think the exhibition . . .

Draw some key elements or moments you remember from the exhibition. What stood out to you?



Final Thoughts



What fascinated you about these particular art objects?

Think Critically

Bring back your “before your visit” thinking questions. Let’s consider your ideas before the exhibition and explore if your ideas changed.

Before the exhibition, I thought . . .

During the exhibition, I discovered . . .

My ideas (changed, stayed the same) because . . .

My partner