

THE
BRITISH
MUSEUM

Nebamun goes hunting



Cross-curricular literacy activities
Key Stage 2 classroom resource

Introduction

This resource pack contains instructions and resources for five cross-curricular literacy activities. The starting point for each activity is an ancient Egyptian tomb painting; one of eleven paintings from the tomb of Nebamun held by the British Museum. Images of the other paintings can be seen by using the Explore section of the British Museum website www.britishmuseum.org. The paintings are currently all on display in Room 61 at the British Museum (together with fragments lent by other museums in Europe).

The activities are aimed at lower Key Stage 2 students but the ideas can easily be adapted for different age groups. They are primarily designed to be used during a class topic on ancient Egypt, but can also be used as stand-alone activities.

Each activity follows the same format:

- Whole class introduction
- Whole class focused work
- Paired or individual independent work
- Whole class plenary

The pack incorporates most of the resources you will need to teach the activities (including photocopiable text and activity sheets at the end of the pack). If extra resources are needed these are highlighted at the top of the activity sheet.

The five activities suggested in the pack cover the following skills:

- Activity 1 Spoken description, instruction writing
- Activity 2 Grammar (adjectives)
- Activity 3 Using reference material
- Activity 4 Reading comprehension, grammar (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs)
- Activity 5 Writing (fact and opinion)

Activity 1

Key skills: Spoken description, instruction writing

Whole class shared reading and spoken descriptions

- Use the text for activity 1 to introduce the painting to the class.
- Use image of tomb painting and ask students to describe it. They should include information about the position and actions of each person, describe how they are portrayed and describe their surroundings.

Whole class sentence work

- Ask the students how they would choose to be portrayed if an artist was to paint them doing their favourite thing and being with their favourite people.
- Choose one idea and sketch it, then get the students to make up instructions which would enable a painter to paint the picture from these instructions alone.
- The students should include clear instructions on
 - location of any people e.g. put me in the middle
 - actions of the people e.g. I am kicking a ball
 - size of the different people e.g. paint me larger than everyone else
 - location of objects e.g. next to me there is a goal post
 - description of surroundings e.g. paint me standing on spiky green grass

Paired independent work

- Each student sketches a picture and writes clear instructions that will enable their partner to draw the picture.
- Students swap sets of instructions without letting their partner see their picture.
- Using the instructions, each student draws a picture and then compares it with the original to check how clear the instructions were for the student following them.

Whole class plenary

- Put all the pictures up on the board. Read out various instructions and ask the class to work out which picture the instructions refer to. Discuss why it is important to be clear when giving instructions

Activity 2

Key skills: Grammar (adjectives)

Whole class introduction

- Discuss the use of adjectives as a vocabulary tool for describing nouns. Select a noun and ask the students to think of as many suitable adjectives as they can.
- Using the image of the tomb painting, ask the students to brainstorm adjectives which describe the tomb painting e.g. ancient, colourful, crowded, interesting, mysterious.

Whole class word work

- Sort the adjectives into different categories e.g. adjectives that describe what you can physically see, as opposed to adjectives that describe how you feel about the painting.
- Draw up a table of categories and enter the words into the appropriate categories.

Individual independent work

- Ask the students to fill in the record card for Activity 2, describing the painting in an informative and interesting way. Students can make up a suitably impressive object number!

Whole class plenary

- Read out some of the record cards and experiment with deleting the adjectives. What effect does this have on the text in terms of how well it describes the painting?
- What information could you add to the record card if you could actually see and touch the painting? e.g. texture, weight, size, condition

Activity 3

Key skills: Using reference material

Whole class shared reading

- Ask the students what they already know about writing in ancient Egypt.
- Use the shared reading texts for Activity 3 and check how close the students were with their previous knowledge.

Whole class word work

- Look at the table of ancient hieroglyphs for Activity 3.
- Tell the students that the sign for the letter k was the same as for the letter c. Ask them to work out which other letters are missing.
- Using words from the students' spelling list, ask them to write out the word and then transcribe it into hieroglyphs underneath.
- Get them to create their own sign for any missing letters and add it to the hieroglyph table.

Paired independent work

- Ask the students to look carefully at the painting and each write a short sentence about it, e.g. 'In the painting there is a cat catching a bird.' On a separate piece of paper each student should then transcribe their sentence into hieroglyphs. Partners then swap their sheet of hieroglyphs and work out what has been written by transcribing the sentence back into English.

Whole class plenary

- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using hieroglyphs to write.
- Discuss other ways that people communicate where letters, words or sounds are represented by visual symbols (e.g. semaphore) or sound (e.g. Morse Code).
- Discuss the use of pictogram characters in modern languages such as Chinese and Japanese.

Activity 4

Key skills: Reading comprehension, grammar (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs)

Whole class shared reading

- Use the shared reading text for Activity 4.
- Discuss how cats would protect the food storage areas? What other jobs might the cat do? Our modern relationships with pets and whether the students think it was the same in ancient times.

Whole class word work

- Ask the students to look closely at the cat in the image of the tomb painting and examine the realistic way it has been painted. Then ask the students to brainstorm words which describe the cat's appearance and the way it is moving. Contrast this by asking the students to imagine a peaceful cat, lazing in the sun and then think of words which describe this sort of cat.
- Recap nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs and how they relate to each other. Fill the words in on a grid like this one:

<i>adjective</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>adverb</i>	<i>verb</i>
tabby	cat	noisily	pounces
lazy	cat	quietly	sleeps

Individual independent work

- Using adjectives, nouns, adverbs and verbs ask the students to create sentences to describe a cat's day starting with 'The tabby cat crept carefully out into the sunlit garden.' They could describe the cat chasing birds (describing the birds too) or prowling through long grass. In the end the cat can go to sleep in the sun.

Whole class plenary

- Read out some of the passages. Ask the listeners to say what they imagine when they hear the sentences.

Activity 5

Key skills: writing (fact and opinion)

Extra resources required: examples of modern family portraits and photographs

Whole class shared reading

- Use the shared reading text for Activity 5.
- Examine a modern family portrait / photograph and discuss the similarities and differences between the modern and ancient portraits.

Whole class sentence work

- Discuss the difference between fact and opinion.
- Ask the students to think of factual statements about the picture e.g. “There are three people in the painting.” or “Lots of fish are swimming in the water at the bottom of the painting.”
- Then ask the students to express an opinion about the painting and back their opinion up with a reason e.g. “I enjoy looking at this painting because of the colours.” or “I think the two adults should be the same size because it would make the painting look more realistic.”

Individual independent work

- Ask students to write three factual statements about the painting and then write three opinions. Remind them that they need to back their opinions up with a reason.

Whole class plenary

- Discuss the painting making sure that the students support their ideas and opinions with reasons.

The paintings from the tomb of Nebamun

The fragment of wall painting featured in this literacy resource comes from an ancient Egyptian tomb. The tomb was built for an ancient Egyptian, called Nebamun, who lived in the city of Thebes around 1325 BC. Nebamun was a scribe in charge of grain collection for the city. The tomb would have been built before Nebamun died as a safe place for his mummified body and some of his belongings, all of which he believed he would need in the afterlife.

The tomb was constructed by cutting rooms, passages and a grave shaft into a rocky hillside on the west bank of the River Nile. The walls of the tomb were then plastered, firstly with a thick layer of plaster made from mud and straw and then with a thin layer of fine plaster to make a smooth top surface on which to paint. A team of artists would have worked in the tomb, first sketching on the outline of the different scenes (which covered all the walls of the tomb) and then painting on the colour and details. Paint colours were made from a range of natural materials such as soot, ground stone, chalk and ground minerals. Brushes were made from reeds bound on to a wooden handle. The end of the reed would have been chewed to split and soften the reed fibres. The grave shaft containing Nebamun's body and belongings would have been sealed but the upper tomb rooms, containing the paintings, were left open so that they could be entered by his family and friends.

Tomb paintings were created both as a way to commemorate the life of the dead person and as an indication of the type of lifestyle they hoped for in the afterlife. The surviving paintings from Nebamun's tomb show him engaged in a variety of activities such as hunting in the marshes with his wife and daughter, attending a banquet and overseeing a count of geese and cattle as part of his job as a government scribe. Other pictures show the food and drink which Nebamun believed he would need for the afterlife.

The exact position of Nebamun's tomb is no longer known. It could be covered by sand or buried beneath a modern Egyptian village. The painting featured in this literacy pack is one of eleven fragments of wall painting from Nebamun's tomb, acquired by the collector Henry Salt in about 1821, which are now housed in The British Museum.

How to find out more about the wall paintings from Nebamun's tomb

Information about these paintings can be found on the British Museum online database of objects known as Explore at www.britishmuseum.org/explore

For children

Hooper, Meredith, *The Tomb of Nebamun*, British Museum Press, 2008

For teachers

Parkinson, Richard, *The painted tomb chapel of Nebamun*, British Museum Press, 2008



This painting was originally painted on the wall of a tomb built for a rich, important scribe called Nebamun.




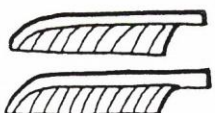








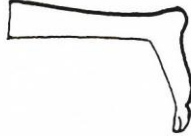
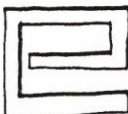



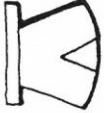


Nebamun was in charge of collecting grain for the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes. The painting shows Nebamun hunting in the marshes with Hatshepsut his wife, their daughter and the family cat. Ancient Egyptians believed in life after death and this painting shows one of the things Nebamun would like to do after he died. He also wanted people to remember him as he is shown in the painting.

Object record card for an Egyptian tomb painting
Object no:
Description of object :
colours
people
plants and animals
other detail
Location of object :

The ancient Egyptians wrote using pictures called hieroglyphs. Each picture represented a word or a letter sound. There were about 700 different hieroglyphic pictures. They could be written from left to right, right to left or top to bottom. Not many people in ancient Egypt could write or read hieroglyphs. Nebamun would have learned to use hieroglyphs as part of his job as a scribe. The writing on the painting of Nebamun hunting in the marshes says that Nebamun is enjoying himself looking at good things.

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f 	l 	q 	y 
d 	j 	p 	u,v,w 
c,k 	i 	o 	t 
b 	h 	n 	s 
a 	g 	m 	r 

Cats in ancient Egypt were generally kept to catch mice. This job was very important as the Egyptians stored crops which needed to be protected from pests. Cats were also kept as pets and are often shown on hunting scenes. Cats might have been used to retrieve the birds that had been knocked out by the hunter. Another idea is that the cat's job was to scare the birds into flying up out of the marsh so that they could be caught. However, cats were probably put in hunting scenes because they were part of the family and other family members were also shown in tomb paintings.

People in ancient Egyptian art were usually shown in profile. Important parts of the body, such as the eye, were shown from the front. Artists would paint the most important person so that they were the largest figure in the painting. The painting would also show people how they wanted to be seen rather than how they really looked. Nebamun would have been much older than the age he is shown in the painting. Hatshepsut is shown wearing her best clothes and jewellery.

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