

Teacher's Guide Calliope: Akhenaten: Egypt's Heretic King

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Getting Ready: Review the cover of this issue with the class. What important information does the class receive from the text? List suggestions on the board, e.g., the issue is about a king named Akhenaten; he lived in Egypt around 1350 BC; he may have changed his religious views or those of the country; he may have been related to Nefertiti, etc. Then ask, what can you learn from the picture? Add new ideas to the list, e.g., the face seems young; it is wearing a particular type of crown, etc. You may wish to extend this activity by splitting the students into small groups to list questions they may have that they would like to answer as they read and study the magazine.

Vocabulary: Encourage students to make a list of words that are new to them as they read the magazine. You might include this list as a starter: heretic, monotheist, ankh, crook (secondary meaning, not a villain!), coregent, dynasty, revolution, element, emanate. Challenge students to define these words for themselves, either orally or in writing, and use these words in sentences during the time they study AKhenaten.

The Throne Beckons, pp. 2-3

Reading for Information:

1. Who was Akhenaten's father? *Amenhotep III*
2. What is a heretic? *Someone who encourages a religious belief opposed to that of the orthodox teachings.*
3. How did Amenhotep III go against Pharaonic tradition? *He married a commoner.*
4. Who was Akhenaten's mother? *Tiye, the daughter of a wealthy non-royal family in Middle Egypt.*
5. Who should have followed Amenhotep III as Pharaoh of Egypt? *His first son Thutmose.*
6. Why didn't Thutmose become Pharaoh? *He died prematurely.*
7. How was Prince Amenhotep IV, later called Akhenaten, prepared to be Pharaoh? *He studied with the priests of Memphis.*
8. With whom did the young Prince probably rule as co-regent? *His uncle Anen.*
9. What evidence supports the idea of coregency? *A letter from, Tushratta, the King of Mittani.*
10. Why does this letter indicate, but not prove, the coregency? *The phrase "year 2" can also be read as "year 12", thus leading to two interpretations.*

Enter the New Kingdom, pp. 4-6

Reading for Understanding:

1. Explain the Egyptian concept of dynasty, specifying why the same family was central to both the 17th and the 18th dynasties.
2. Why was the New Kingdom an important time in the history of Egypt?
3. What indicates to the author that from the beginning of his reign Amenhotep IV may have been moving toward different religious beliefs?

A New Belief, pp. 8-11

Organizing Information:

Divide the class into small groups and have each group do one of the following:

1. Draw a family tree or chart for the Egyptian gods before Akhenaten.
2. List the sequence of events that led to the conflicts between Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten's family and the priests of Amen.
3. List the differences between the Aten and the Amun.

4. Explain the political effects of Akhenaten's decision to change the religion of Egypt.

A Move to the East Bank, pp. 12-15

Exploring Art, Poetry, and Creative Writing:

Have students read the article and choose one of the following projects:

1. After reviewing the examples of art in the magazine and the text of the article, design a floor, stele, or wall painting for the new city of Akhetaten.
2. Write a diary entry or letter by someone on the boat expedition to found the new city – would they agree with the idea? What would they be looking for? How would they react to the site chosen?
3. Using the information from the article, draft a plan for the new city, showing temples, palaces, houses, shops, etc.
4. Imagine that you are a poet or priest in the new city. Write a poem or prayer to the new god Aten.

The Search for Nefertiti, p. 16-18

Discussion: How are the mysteries of Nefertiti's life – who she was and why she disappeared from public life – explained; How did Nefertiti transform the role of the Queen (give examples).

The Amarna Princess, pp.20-22

Choose a princess project:

1. Build a diorama of a scene which features the princesses, with or without their parents.
2. Write a story in the "voice" of one of the princesses.
3. Research the later life of one of the princess Queens – Meritaten or Ankhenseneperunne – and share your info with the class.
4. Create a cartoon or comic strip featuring one or more of the princesses.

Akhenaten's Art, pp. 24-26

Discussion:

1. What do students like and dislike about the art on these pages and in the rest of the magazine?
2. Can they think of other examples of exaggeration and distortion in art that they appreciate? That they dislike intensely?

Activity:

1. Many cultures have celebrated the sun as a source of life and growth. Have students draw their own "sun disk" pictures, either drawing from the Egyptian art, other sun or mandala paintings with which they are familiar, or from their own imaginations. OR
2. Using clay, try sculpting an egg-shaped portrait in the Egyptian manner of someone you know.

A Reversal, pp. 28-30

Discussion:

This article indicates that the city of Akhetaten did not last long after the death of Akhenaten. What does this indicate about the Egyptian people's opinion of Akhenaten as Pharaoh and religious leader? How would the movement away from Akhetaten have been impacted by the confusion about succession to the role of Pharaoh because no son was born to Akhenaten and Nefertiti?

The Amarna Letters: Write On!

Divide students into groups of four. As they read the article together, have them list ten new facts they discover about Akhenaten's Egypt. Then bring groups together to share their facts.

Digging for Answers and Who's Buried in KV55, pp. 40-45

Discussion:

1. What role have archeologists played in discovering Egypt's past?

2. What skills do archeologists use to solve the puzzles of history?
3. What would you like or dislike about being an archeologist?
4. Which of the archeologists mentioned made the most important or exciting discovery? Why do you think so?
5. Who do you think is buried in KV55? Why? If you can't decide, what additional information do you need to make a decision?

Wrap-up:

Share the final article "Akhenaten's Legacy in the Arts" with the class. Discuss the final sentence:

For all Akhenaten tried to do, in the end, none of it lasted and yet he is one of the most celebrated and well-known kings in history.

1. Is this a fitting description of Akhenaten? Why or why not?
2. From what you know of Akhenaten as a person, would he be pleased with this description of his historical significance? Why or why not?
3. You are an individual with plans and goals for the future. Would you like to go down in history with this type of description, that everything you tried to do has disappeared, but you are still remembered and celebrated?