

Teacher's Guide for DIG™: Egypt's Valley of the Kings

September 2008

Teacher's Guide prepared by: Lois Sepahban, B.A., M.A. Lois has taught students of all ages from kindergarten to high school. She teaches and writes in California.

Anatomy of a Tomb (8-9)

Reading for Understanding

1. Why was the entrance to the tomb not decorated? *The tomb was meant to be out of sight.*
2. Why were the chamber and corridors tunneled into the ground? *Tombs were carved directly into the limestone rock of the valley.*
3. What do scientists think shafts were used for? *Traps to keep robbers out of tombs, collect rainwater, prevent debris from getting into the tomb.*
4. In most cases, where was the burial chamber located? *The last and deepest chamber.*

Activity

Draw a diagram of a tomb on a large sheet of paper. First, mark the entrance to the tomb. Remember, you will tunnel down from this point. The passageway from the entrance should lead to a chamber with a shaft at the end. How many chambers will your tomb have? The final chamber should be the burial chamber. Will the passages spiral down to the burial chamber, or will they descend in a straight line from chamber to chamber? Take your time with this diagram. You will use it in the culminating activity.

The Valley (9)

Reading for Understanding

1. Why did kings decide to build their tombs in the Valley of the Kings? *Their remains were safer there than in giant pyramids.*
2. How many royal tombs have been found in the Valley of the Kings? *20.*

Let's Step Inside (10-14)

Reading for Understanding

1. Which tomb is the only intact royal tomb to be discovered? *KV62.*
2. Who was buried in KV62? *King Tutankhamun.*
3. Who was buried in KV17? *King Seti I.*
4. What feature is unique to KV17? *It has a passageway leading down to the level of groundwater that was meant to be used by Seti I to reach the Underworld.*
5. Why was no one buried in KV13? *Chief Minister Bay, who owned it, was executed for treason.*
6. Who was buried in KV14? *Queen Tausret and Setnakht.*

Activity

Create a biography for the person buried in your tomb. Explain the person's important role in Egyptian society: Is it a tomb for a king or queen? chief minister? Who were his/her parents? spouse? If he/she was a king/queen, for how long? Who was his/her successor?

Builders at Work (16-17)

Reading for Understanding

1. What tools did workers use to cut a tomb out of rock? *A copper or bronze spike and a heavy wooden mallet to split stone, a wooden-handled bronze hoe similar to a pick axe, and leather and wicker baskets to hold rock chips.*
2. How were stone walls prepared so that artists and sculptors could begin their work? *They were coated with plaster and whitewash.*
3. How were the "candles" the workmen used made? *Twisted pieces of linen greased with oil or fat were set into pottery bowls and lit with a flame.*

Activity

Make a model of a burial chamber. Use an old shoebox to represent the chamber. Discard the top and cover the outside of the shoebox with earth-colored paper. Work carefully and neatly, as you will use this burial chamber in future activities.

Men of the Gang (18-19)

Reading for Understanding

1. Who were the "men of the gang"? *The men worked on the construction of a tomb.*
2. What did the scribe of the tomb do? *Kept attendance records of the workmen, and worked with the foreman to get material from the storehouses, distribute wages, oversee the local court, witness oaths, and recommend people for jobs.*
3. What did the guardians of the tomb do? *They were in charge of handing out tools and materials needed for building the tomb.*
4. What did the doorkeeper of the tomb do? *Guarded the entrance to the tomb, acted as peacekeeper, and collected debts.*

Activity

Create a sarcophagus for your model burial chamber. Use air-drying clay to form the shape of the sarcophagus. Once it is dry, paint it.

Decorating the Tombs (20-21)

Reading for Understanding

1. What part of the walls did workers begin straightening first? *They started at the ceiling level and worked their way down.*
2. What work happened after the quarrymen finished? *Plasterers applied plaster to the walls.*
3. Why did the painters first apply vertical and horizontal lines to the walls? *To help guide them in painting on the design.*

4. What were the responsibilities of the draftsmen, sculptors, and painters? *Draftsmen drew the scenes on the walls, sculptors carved the wall, and painters painted the scenes.*
5. Why did craftsmen work after hours? *They didn't make much money working on the tomb, but if they got work after hours, they made much more money.*
6. What training did a young artist receive? *Practice copying his teacher's sketches of scenes to learn to draw, practice with chisel to learn to sculpt, and practice with brushes and color to learn to paint.*
7. What was used to make the color for the paint? *Natural materials, including ocher for brown, red, and yellow, sulfide of arsenic for bright yellow and red, dolomite and gypsum for white, and charcoal for black, as well as man-made materials from copper for blue and green.*

Activity

Decorate your burial chamber. Cut five pieces of white paper to fit the inside walls and floor of the model burial chamber. Before pasting them to the shoebox, decorate the walls with hieroglyphs and Egyptian art. Think of images that would have been used in real burial chambers.

"The Place of Truth" (22-23)

Reading for Understanding

1. What was the purpose of Deir el Medina? *It housed those who worked on the tombs of the Valley of the Kings and their families.*
2. What was the interior of each house like? *There were three main rooms, including an area for religious worship, an area for eating and drinking, and a bedroom.*
3. What was the exterior of each house like? *There was an open-air kitchen, and houses shared common walls.*
4. What were houses made from? *Mud bricks, and palm trunks and stalks.*
5. What are ostraca? *Pieces of limestone that were used by scribes to write notes and receipts, and by students to practice hieroglyphs.*

Activity

Create artifacts for your model burial chamber. Using air-drying clay, mold five artifacts that would be found in a burial chamber. Once they are dry, paint them. Keep the artifacts small—they must fit into your burial chamber with the sarcophagus.

Theban Mapping Project (24-25)

Reading for Understanding

1. What made Thebes an important place to protect? *It was the capital of Egypt during the Middle and New Kingdoms and has many important archaeological remains.*
2. What was the first step in creating mapping grids? *Scientists took photographs from the air.*
3. How was the system for naming tombs developed? *In the 1820's John Gardner Wilkinson assigned numbers to each tomb, beginning at the entrance to the Valley.*

Activity

Make a map of your tomb's location. Copy the map of the Valley of the Kings on page 13 onto a large sheet of paper. Decide where your tomb will be located, and then add a marker on the map to show your tomb's site.

So Much to Tell (26-27)

Reading for Understanding

1. Who was buried in KV5? *The sons of Ramesses II.*
2. Why were Kent Weeks and his team exploring KV5? *To clear it out as part of the mapping project.*
3. Why did it take more than six years to clean out KV5's first two chambers? *The passageways and chambers were filled with rubble.*

Are There More? (28-29)

Reading for Understanding

1. What chamber was discovered in 2006? *KV63*
2. What was this chamber used for? *It contained objects used in the mummification process*
3. What is ground penetrating radar used for? *It sends radio waves into the earth to measure the density of the ground in order to locate tombs.*
4. Why do scientists think there are more tombs to be discovered? *Not all of the kings of the 18th, 19th, or 20th Dynasties have tombs that have been identified.*
5. What is magnetometry used for? *It uses magnets to show soil density in order to locate tombs.*

Culminating Activity

You have created several pieces in the activities in this unit: a map showing the location of your tomb, a biography of the person buried in your tomb, a model burial chamber, and a sarcophagus. Gather these items and assemble the burial chamber—set the sarcophagus and artifacts inside. Assume the role of the person you've described in the biography and present your work to your class. Dress in costume if you're able.