



Discover Egypt

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About this guide: Little Passports has developed this guide to provide ideas, activities and resources for teachers using the World Edition subscription in the classroom.

Lesson: Discover Egypt

Suggested Use: geography, social studies

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DISCOVER EGYPT



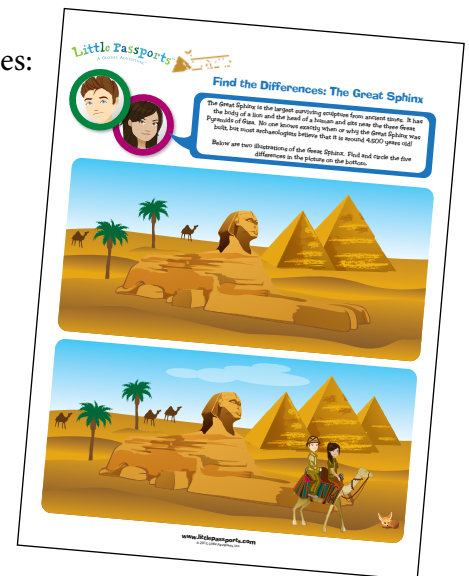
Egypt Profile: Egypt was home to one of the world's most influential ancient civilizations. It's thought that the first people to settle on the banks of the Nile arrived as far back as 8,000 years ago. By about 3,000 B.C., Egypt's two kingdoms were unified and the civilization began building major monuments, including the ones that are still standing today. Modern Egypt is a living museum of sites and artifacts from ancient times.

What's included in the Little Passports Egypt Package?

- An adventure letter from Sam and Sofia
- 4-page activity sheet
- Souvenir pyramid dig kit
- Photo postcard
- Stickers to place on the suitcase, passport and map
- Luggage tag, with code to enter the online Boarding Zone

Teacher's Guide Bonus:

- Activity Sheet: "Find the Differences: The Great Sphinx"



See Page 8

Pop Quiz Answer Key: 1-c, 2-b, 3-c, 4-a

GEOGRAPHY

Facts

- Capital City: Cairo
- Official Languages: Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic



Egypt

Egypt is a desert nation in northern Africa that's bordered to the east by the Red Sea and to the north by the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile River runs through the country south to north, which contributed to Egypt's habitability for early civilizations. Even today, it's estimated that more than 90% of the country's population lives in the Nile Delta, an area which comprises only about 5% of Egypt's total land.

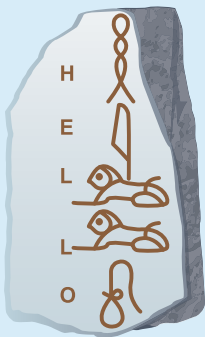
Egypt's capital is Cairo, which is the second largest city in Africa and the largest city in the Arab world. Roughly ten percent of Egypt's population lives in Cairo. Cairo, like much of the rest of Egypt, has a long and rich history. The historic walled center of Cairo, called Islamic, or Medieval, Cairo dates back more than a thousand years. Islamic Cairo is famous for its historic architecture and for its markets, like the Khan el-Khalili marketplace.

Just south of Cairo is Giza, the site of the Great Pyramids and the Great Sphinx. The Great Pyramids, the three most famous pyramids in Egypt, are the tombs of ancient Egyptian kings named Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure. They date back to Egypt's 4th dynasty, which lasted from 2575-2465 B.C. The Great Sphinx, which is a carving of King Khafre's head on the body of a lion, is one of the largest monolithic statues (a monolith is a single, massive stone) in the world.

CULTURE

Fun Fact

- The ancient Egyptian alphabet consisted of about 700 hieroglyphs.



Ancient Culture

The ancient Egyptian societies made many important technical and scientific contributions that we still use today in some form: they developed their own writing system based on an alphabet of symbols called hieroglyphics; they were among the first to use a form of paper, made out of papyrus; they developed a numbering system and they practiced astronomy, medicine and ship building. A guiding principle of ancient Egyptians' lives was a concept called *Ma'at*, which referred to cosmic order, or harmony, and which made joy and happiness the central aspirations of their lives. A common ritual in Egyptian culture was called *The Five Gifts of Hathor*, in which the fingers of a laborer's left hand represented the five things that they were most grateful for every day. These highlights show only a small portion of the positivity, ingenuity and creativity of ancient Egyptian culture.

Nubian Folk Music

Some of the first kingdoms in Africa rose up in an ancient region called Nubia, which encompassed the central Nile valley, in what is modern-day southern Egypt and northern Sudan. Ancient Nubian kingdoms were in such close relations with the ancient Egyptian civilization that some Nubian kings even became Egyptian pharaohs around 750 B.C. One of the cultural legacies passed down from ancient Nubia is its music. Nubian folk music has its roots in the land: many songs were inspired by their farming customs and the changing of the seasons. Nubian music has also been inspired by love and religion. The main components of traditional Nubian music generally include the playing of the *oud* (a predecessor to the guitar), the *rababa* (a fiddle, with one to three strings), the *daf* (a sort of mix between a drum and a tambourine), clapping, snapping and call-and-response singing. Among the most popular musicians to continue the tradition of Nubian folk music in contemporary times was a man named Hamza el-Din.

Leylet en Nuktah

Another ancient tradition that has survived the test of time is a festival called Leylet en Nuktah. In ancient times, Egyptians worshipped and gave thanks for the Nile River, and the life provided by its water and fertile soils. The festival aligns with the annual flooding of the Nile. Today, Leylet en Nuktah is celebrated on June 17th of each year. Egyptians celebrate by picnicking along the edges of the Nile and celebrating together in the streets. It is also tradition for the women in every family to put out balls of dough at sunset for each person in the household. In the morning, they look at the cracks in the dough to make predictions about each person's fortune and future.

Links:

- Tour of Egypt - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBduAiC2-XM>
- Nubian folk music - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAPfjrVb650>



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Look at the wall map as a class. Have students come up and locate Egypt, the Nile River and Egypt's capital, Cairo.
2. Discuss: Why do you think the Nile was the center of ancient Egyptian civilization? Why was it then (and today, still) so important in Egypt? Why does the majority of Egypt's population live near it?
3. Read the letter from Sam and Sofia.
 - a. Discuss: To build the Great pyramids, Egyptians didn't have things like cranes and machines that we have today. How do you think they positioned so many large stones to build them? What does the great amount of work that must have gone into building them tell you about ancient Egyptian culture and what they valued?
4. Discuss: What do the ancient Egyptians' concepts of Ma'at and The Five Gifts of Hathor tell you about their culture? How could you practice making joy, happiness and gratefulness central goals of your own life?
5. Watch National Geographic's "Tour of Egypt" video.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBduAiC2-XM>
 - a. Discuss: What stood out to you in seeing some of the sites in Egypt? Does seeing ancient monuments beyond just the Great Pyramids (like the temple complex in Luxor, the tombs in the Valley of Kings and the temples of Abu Simbel in the south of Egypt) change your idea of what ancient Egyptian civilization may have looked like? Often when we talk about Egypt we only talk about ancient times, but Egypt today is also a very vibrant place. What about the images of Egypt's cities changed your idea of what Egypt looks like today?
6. Play the video of Nubian folk music - listen to as many of the songs as you like.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAPfjrVb650>
 - a. Discuss: What sorts of things did you hear while listening? What instruments did you hear? Was there clapping, chanting or singing? How did the music make you feel? What do you think they're singing about, based on the rhythms and melodies? How is this kind of music similar to—or different from—the music that we listen to in the United States?
7. Activities: Make copies of the four pages in the included activity book and have students complete the activities.
8. Make a chart with topics titled "Geography" and "Culture." Have students call out facts that fit under each topic, or read out facts and have students decide which column the fact goes in. Hang the chart up somewhere in class so that students can remember what they learned about Egypt.
9. Passports: Have students design stamps in their passports that incorporate something—or several things—that they learned about Egypt.

POP QUIZ

Read each question. Circle the letter next to the correct answer.

1. What is the name of the important river that runs through Egypt?

- a. The Amazon River
- b. The Yellow River
- c. The Nile River
- d. The Colorado River

2. What is the name of the statue in Giza, Egypt, that has the body of a lion and the head of a man?

- a. The Great Pyramid
- b. The Great Sphinx
- c. The Pharaoh
- d. The Moai

3. Which of the following was developed in ancient Egypt?

- a. Ink
- b. The philosophy of Daoism
- c. A writing system called hieroglyphics
- d. The wheel

4. Which of the following is an instrument used in Nubian folk music?

- a. The daf (hand drum)
- b. Synthesizers
- c. The saxophone
- d. The banjo

VOCABULARY

Artifact – An item made by humans that has cultural or historical significance.

Civilization – The society, culture and way of life of a particular region.

Daf – An instrument that combines a drum and a tambourine used in Nubian folk music.

Great Pyramids – Three large pyramids in Giza, Egypt, that were built as tombs for three ancient Egyptian kings named Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure.

Great Sphinx – An ancient sculpture depicting King Khafre's head on the body of a lion.

Hieroglyphics – An alphabet of symbols created by the ancient Egyptians and used as their writing system.

Kingdom – A territory ruled by a king or queen.

Leylet en Nuktah – A traditional Egyptian festival celebrating the fertility of the Nile River.

Ma'at – An ancient Egyptian cultural concept making harmony and happiness central to life.

Mediterranean Sea – A sea between southern Europe, Africa and Southwestern Asia that connects the Atlantic Ocean, the Red Sea and the Black Sea.

Monolith – A statue built out of a single stone.

Nile River – A river in Africa that originates in Burundi, south of the equator, and flows north through Egypt, emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

Oud – A type of lute used in Nubian folk music.

Papyrus – A material made from water reeds that was used by ancient Egyptians to make paper, rope, sandals and even to construct boats.

Rababa – A bowed string instrument used in Nubian folk music.

Red Sea – A sea that separates Africa from the Arabian Peninsula and that links the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.

Ritual – A religious or traditional ceremony or series of actions performed in a particular order.

The Five Gifts of Hathor – An ancient Egyptian ritual in which the fingers of a laborer's left hand represented the five things that they were most grateful for every day.

Find the Differences: The Great Sphinx

The Great Sphinx is the largest surviving sculpture from ancient times. It has the body of a lion and the head of a human and sits near the three Great Pyramids of Giza. No one knows exactly when or why the Great Sphinx was built, but most archaeologists believe that it is around 4,500 years old!

Below are two illustrations of the Great Sphinx. Find and circle the five differences in the picture on the bottom.

