

**Mollie Thompson  
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Howard County  
Language Arts and Visual Arts**

**Lesson Title:** Egyptian Symbols: What story do they tell?

**Grade:** 3

**Purpose:** The students will discuss the symbolism in Egyptian art and how it is used to express ideas.

**Fine Arts Standard:**

2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate understanding of visual arts as a basic aspect of history and human experiences.

**Fine Arts Indicator:**

1.0 Determine ways in which works of art express ideas about oneself, other people, places and events.

**Fine Arts Objective(s):**

Select symbols that represent important aspects of life to express personal meaning in visual compositions.

**Language Arts Standard:**

4.0 Writing

**Language Arts Indicator:**

1.0 Write to express Personal Ideas objectives: The student will be able to compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.

**Language Arts Objective (from Howard county curriculum):**

e. Present a message that is clear and guides the audience's understanding of key ideas.

**Arts Integrated Objective:**

The students will demonstrate understanding of the importance of symbols in Egyptian art by creating a symbolic stele using model magic to express personal ideas. The students will also write a description of their drawing in order to present a guide to their audience.

**Vocabulary:** Composition, Symbols, Hieroglyphs, Relief, and Stele

**Materials & Resources for the Class:**

White paper, crayons, color pencils, writing paper, model magic, paints

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**Materials & Resources for the Teacher:**

Poster or electronic copy of the Funerary Tembu, Computer, projector

**Museum Resources:**

Funerary Relief of Tembu

**Teaching Artist Resources:** N/A**Prior Knowledge:** Egypt, Mummies, pictures, Egyptian beliefs, memorials**Procedures:**

**Motivation:** To help activate prior knowledge of the Egyptian culture, begin the lesson by showing the students a variety of Egyptian pieces including high interest pieces such as Mummies and hieroglyphics. (From the Walters' collection: Seated Statue of Nehy, Usekh with lioness head and Gilded Mummy Mask with Glass Inlays.) After showing and discussing the pieces, the class will complete a KWL chart for the lesson. We will brainstorm all the things that we know about the Egyptian culture.

Help the students to recall the idea of death or afterlife. Give the students some background information about the afterlife and how important it was in the Egyptian culture. Explain how the Egyptians prepared for the afterlife by collecting all the things that they would need including, food, pets, jewelry etc. Continue the discussion to include the idea of having a replica on oneself and protection.

In order to give students a more structured background on the Egyptian practices, we will go through the mummy interactive found on the Walters website (this can be found under Interactive Media/Science/Ancient/Mummy Mask).

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/ED/mummy.html>

Introduce the students to the Funerary Stele of Tembu from the Walters website(found under Interactive Media/Language Arts/Ancient Art. The piece will be projected onto the screen in order to see details. At this time, have the students generate some questions about the Stele for the W (What do we want to know) section of our KWL chart.

**Modeling:** Explain that this piece was most likely part of Tembu's tomb and preparation for the afterlife. Define relief for the students and explain how the pictures and hieroglyphics were carved into the medium.

Once students have had a few minutes to study the piece, discuss the objectives that we will be working on. The lesson will be about using symbols to represent important aspects of life to express personal meaning. Explain to the class that this piece of artwork is actually similar to a headstone. We include important information like names, dates and something about our loved ones in writing on a headstone. The Egyptians were able to do this as well using symbols and pictures to express their ideas.

To better understand the Stele, show the students the *Archeologist's Notebook* interactive activity on [www.thewalters.org](http://www.thewalters.org) (found under Education/Teachers and Students/Interactive Media/Integrating the Arts (look under the Language Arts section in

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the ancient art to find the stele and the activity)). Using this program, the students can match up the symbols and family members to the stele while discussing their importance to Tembu. Once we have completed the *Archeologist's Notebook* activity, we will complete our KWL chart adding all the things we have learned about the Stele.

**Guided Practice:** To show our understanding of using symbols to express personal meaning, we will create a stele as a class. Explain to the students that we want to create a work of art that will remain in the school for centuries. We will use this artwork to tell people about our class. Discuss the things most important to our class. Assign symbols and discuss the composition or size and placement on the stele. Ideas for class stele: Education, Running Brook, Friendship, Respect, Responsibility, Readiness, and cooperation.

**Independent Practice:** The students will demonstrate understanding by creating an individual stele. The students will identify the things that are most important to them and assign symbols. The students will also provide an explanation of their choose of symbol. The students will consider the placement and size of their symbols in order to express their importance in a clear way. The student will sketch their stele by using pencil, crayons or color pencils and paper. Once they have a final plan, the student will then carve their symbols into Model magic. The Model magic could also be painted is there is time or desire by the students. The model magic will be left out to dry and thereby fixing the carvings into the clay.

**Assessment:** Assess basic understanding of composition and symbolism through student discussion and their stele. The students will also be assessed on their ability to clearly express their feelings or personal ideas using only symbols. The rubric used for this activity is similar to that of the 6+1 writing traits for ideas.

Points	Main Ideas	Details/ Symbols
5	The main idea is very clear	I used a variety of interesting details/symbols to keep viewer's interest.
4	The main idea is clear.	I used some interesting details/symbols to keep the viewer's interest.
3	The reader can identify my main idea.	I used one or two details/symbols to keep the viewer interested.
2	The main idea is hard to figure out.	I used general details/symbols.
1	There is no main idea.	I didn't use details/symbols.

Each student can receive a total of 10 points on this assignment, 1 to 5 points will be awarded for each of their objectives, written details for language arts and choice of clear symbols for the fine arts.

**Closure** Discuss all the ways people can express ideas and feelings without using words. Lead discussion on how art transcends time and language.:

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**Thoughtful Application:** Students need to understand the importance of expressing their ideas clearly and concisely.

**Lesson Extension:** Students will trade stele designs. Each student will attempt to decode or decipher another students stele using the techniques learned from the engagement and guided practice.

**Lesson Adaptations:** The lesson can be adapted to incorporate more of the reading objectives such as: Identifying and explaining the elements of a story including main characters, problem, sequence or chronology of events and solutions to a problem.