

Introductory Lesson 3

More than You Think You Know

The Basics

Age range: 4th grade to adult.

Objectives: To introduce the participants to artifacts from the different cultures discussed in the *An Artifact Speaks* series; to help the participants realize they know more about these cultures than they expected to know.

Performance of Skill Expectations/Enduring Understandings: The participants will observe and discuss the artifacts provided and make educated guesses as to which cultures they are from.

Suggested Lesson Plan Prerequisites: *The Key to Understanding Artifacts*.

Estimated Materials Preparation Time: 20 minutes.

Duration: 30-40 minutes.

Materials Provided in the Box: artifacts, master copies for culture tags, master copy for group worksheet, information reports on the artifacts. The detailed Palette of Narmer description is a handout from the class Middle Egyptian Grammar taught by Dr. Gabor Toth at Rutgers University, used with permission of the author. The original is found at: (<http://egypt-grammar.rutgers.edu/Artifacts/Narmer%20Palette.pdf>).

Materials to be Provided by the Instructor: tape, large sheets of paper, pencils or pens for group recorders.

Notes:

1. The participants should be in small groups for this activity.
2. In putting the sari away, it fits best back in the box if you lay it out, fold it into thirds or quarters longways, roll it up, then fold the roll.

Concepts/Vocabulary

The cultures covered in the lesson are the ancient cultures of Greece, Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. The term Mesopotamia may be unfamiliar to the participants. If so, explain that this was a very early civilization around what is now the country of Iraq. People chose to live there because the land was between two rivers, creating an area of fertile land in a place that was mostly desert. We often refer to this area as the Fertile Crescent. Many items we use regularly—like the wheel and the calendar—were invented by the Mesopotamians.

Procedure

Preparation: Prepare for the lesson as follows:

1. Make copies of the culture sheets and cut each sheet into small “tags” that have the name of one of the cultures on it (Greece, India, China, Mesopotamia, Egypt). You will need to have one of each tag for every small group. You can gather the five tags per group together by clipping them or placing them in a zipper bag. It works best and saves time to have all the groupings ready before the activity starts;
2. Make enough copies of the worksheet so that each small group can share one;
3. Place the five artifacts provided on safe platforms (desks, tables) equidistant around the room;
4. On the wall near each artifact, tape a large piece of paper. (A legal sheet works well.) On the surface next to the artifact, put a roll of tape;
5. Divide the participants into groups of 4-6 and have them sit together.

Introduction: This activity can naturally follow *The Key to Understanding* during the same group meeting, or it can be done at a later date. If the latter, a review on the definition of the word “artifact” and a reminder of a few of the things that were put on the list when discussing keys may be in order.

Tell the participants that today they will be looking at a variety of objects representing the culture groups covered in the *An Artifact Speaks* program, and that they may find that some of the objects will look very familiar to them. They may have come in contact with them through the movies they have seen, the TV shows they have watched, or the books they have read. (Many youth participants will have watched a mummy movie or read a Percy Jackson book.) From this information, many of the participants will be able to give good guesses when asked to try to match the 5 artifacts in the room with the cultures they have come from.

Development: Have each of the groups stand up and walk to one of the artifacts. Explain that the groups have 2 minutes to inspect the artifact. Suggested rules for touching:

1. One person touches at a time;
2. Touching is done with two hands at all times and with respect.

Note: Special care should be taken with touching the sari, as it can easily get air caught underneath it and start to “sail” to the floor.

Once the two minutes are over, each group rotates to the next artifact (in the direction indicated by the instructor). This is continued until all groups have seen all the artifacts.

Once they are again seated, the worksheet and a pencil are handed to the person the group has designated as recorder. If the sheet is to be handed in for credit, the names of those in the group are written at the top. The group then discusses the artifacts they have seen and fills the form out in the following manner:

- Circling the name of the culture the group believes matches the artifact. The cultures to choose from are next to each artifact picture. There are no duplicates—each culture name is used only once.

- Writing on the line under the picture the reason they picked that culture. The reasons need not be long or even be complete sentences. “The design” or “The writing” are sufficient answers the first time this activity is done.

Note: Have the participants guess the ones they are surest of first, leaving for last those that are guesses. (Filling in the line with “it was the last one left” is an acceptable reason for choosing the last culture in the set.)

- Give one person in the group the five “tags” with the names of the five cultures that match the artifacts. Have that person take the tags and the completed worksheet to the artifacts and tape the tag that shows the group’s guess to the large piece of paper on the wall. You may need to remind the participants that the tape rolls need to stay with their artifacts: they often “walk away” from their artifacts.

Closure and Reflection: Once all of the artifacts have been tagged, walk to each of them and give information on them to the groups. This information is in the enclosed information sheets. Have the groups that guessed the culture correctly reward themselves at each artifact discussion with raised hands, applause, etc. At the end, ask each group how many of the 5 they guessed correctly. Begin a short discussion of the activity by asking these questions:

- Which artifacts were the easiest to identify? What clues did you use for identification?
- Which were the hardest to identify? Why?
- If you wanted to learn more about these cultures, where would you go?

Assessment: As this activity is to check baseline knowledge, the basis of the assessment will be only to see if the groups filled out the worksheets and placed their guesses correctly.