

Citation metadata

Author: David Cooper
Date: May-June 2005
From: Social Education(Vol. 69, Issue 4)
Publisher: National Council for the Social Studies
Document Type: Article
Length: 3,633 words

Main content

Article Preview :

THE CLICKING OLD FILM PROJECTOR ALMOST LULLS YOU TO SLEEP. Mr. Cooper, your social studies teacher, has decided, for some odd reason, to show an old educational film made in the 1950s. The topic is ancient Egypt. Suddenly, your best friend, Rhana, gets up from her seat and jumps "into" the screen. Pool! You can't believe your eyes!

"I have to save her," you shout, and jump into the screen after her.

You fall a short distance and land upon ... sand. Lots of warm sand. You are in a desert. Nobody is in sight, but you see large pyramids to the left and a river to the right. Where is Rhana? Which way should you go?

* If you choose to go to the pyramids, turn to page 5.

* If you would rather search along the river, turn to page 7.

So begins another quest in ancient Egypt, a classroom project that combines creative writing, basic book design, and social studies content. During this project, my seventh grade students (1) research a variety of ancient Egyptian archaeological sites while reviewing course material from a unit of study on ancient Egypt, (2) practice project management skills needed to complete an assignment that extends over several days, and (3) learn some basics about the craft of book making. Students who are ready for an additional challenge can (4) design their book as an "interactive" adventure, as suggested in the opening paragraph above.

This article gives an overview of the project and discusses the pedagogy of guiding middle school students through its various phases. When first describing the book project, pass around a model or a sample of a student-made book, with the staples removed, so students can observe how the sheets of paper are folded and stacked to make a coherent whole. Many of the step-by-step instructions for doing this project are contained in Handouts 1 through 4. For some students, it may be necessary to read aloud from a handout, pausing for questions and discussion. The adventure book option (Handout 5) is described in more detail toward the end of the article.

1. Researching Archaeological Sites

Searching for a hidden tomb or long-lost civic center, deciphering hieroglyphs found on a wall, or reconstructing a city from crumbled sandstone--these are not simple, one-dimensional tasks. A working archaeologist uses interdisciplinary knowledge to guide her intuition and inform her deductions. Writing creatively about specific archaeological digs in Egypt, while basing their descriptions on fact, is a great way for students to apply the knowledge they acquire from a unit of study about ancient Egypt.

I provide a "research center" on the topic of ancient Egyptian archaeological sites. This center is a table supplied with books and magazines, like National Geographic, that my young researchers can use as sources of information. Handout 1 lists some books that could be included in the center. I've also listed several of the major archaeological sites and guiding questions to help students take thorough notes and make quick sketches. (The...

[Access from your library](#)

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Source Citation

Source Citation

Cooper, David. "Design a Book: a quest in ancient Egypt." *Social Education*, vol. 69, no. 4, 2005, p. M9+. Accessed 14 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A132849857

Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

[Access from your library](#)

Footer

- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

So begins another quest in ancient Egypt, a classroom project that combines creative writing, basic book design, and social studies content. During this project, my seventh grade students (1) research a variety of ancient Egyptian archaeological sites while reviewing course material from a unit of study on ancient Egypt, (2) practice project management skills needed to complete an assignment that extends over several days, and (3) learn some basics about the craft of book making. Students who are ready for an additional challenge can (4) design their book as an "interactive" adventure. However, Ancient Egyptian architecture did not become what we think of today until roughly 2649 BCE. Structures that survived the Old Kingdom, which lasted until about 2150 BCE, include mastabas, the Great Pyramids and the Great Sphinx. All of these structures were built from stone. The earliest example of a burial pyramid in Ancient Egypt was the step pyramid, which was stacked in such a way that the sides formed steps. The first known of these was the Pyramid of Djoser, designed by Djoser's vizier Imhotep and constructed around 2667 to 2648 BCE. This large structure, like those to come This article describes a classroom project that combines creative writing, basic book design, and social studies content. During this project, the authors' seventh grade students research a variety of ancient Egyptian archaeological sites while reviewing course material from a unit of study on ancient Egypt, practice project management skills needed to complete an assignment that extends over several days, and learn some basics about the craft of book making. This article gives an overview of the project and discusses the pedagogy of guiding middle school students through its various phases. This has remained my most-thumbed book on Ancient Egypt for the last 23 years. It has fantastic maps, photographs, illustrations, tables and charts. It presents what is a very complex civilisation in a visually compelling and accessible way, and is written by two of the best Egyptologists in the UK. As opposed to your next book, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilisation*, which is slightly more complicated, because it represents a reassessment of Ancient Egypt – right? Yes. This is, to my mind, one of the most original pieces of scholarship on Ancient Egypt published in the last 50 years – and there is a particular connection to me, because the author, Barry Kemp, was my lecturer at university. He also supervised my doctoral thesis, so I know him very well. For centuries, Egyptian royalty guarded the sacred rituals that guaranteed divine favor after death, but over time all Egyptians, both rich and poor, could possess its secrets. Known in ancient Egypt as "The Chapters of Going Forth by Day," Lepsius dubbed it the Book of the Dead. Its 200 chapters are a thrilling insight into beliefs about the trials, joys, and fears on the journey into death's mysterious realm. For centuries, it was assumed the writings found in Egyptian tombs were passages from ancient scripture. Later, when scholars learned to decipher hieroglyphs, they discovered that these texts were spells—magic "road maps" provided to the dead to navigate their way safely through the afterlife. (Explore the 4,400-year-old untouched tomb discovered at Saqqara .)