

E D U C A T I O N

SCHOOL GROUP
SELF-GUIDE

ART OF ANCIENT
EGYPT

Use this guide to prepare for your self-guided visit to the Metropolitan Museum with your students.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



This guide will help you prepare for your self-guided visit to the Metropolitan Museum with your students. Use the links to the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, the Egyptian curatorial department, and other areas on the Museum's website to access descriptions of works of art, thematic essays, and further relevant content.

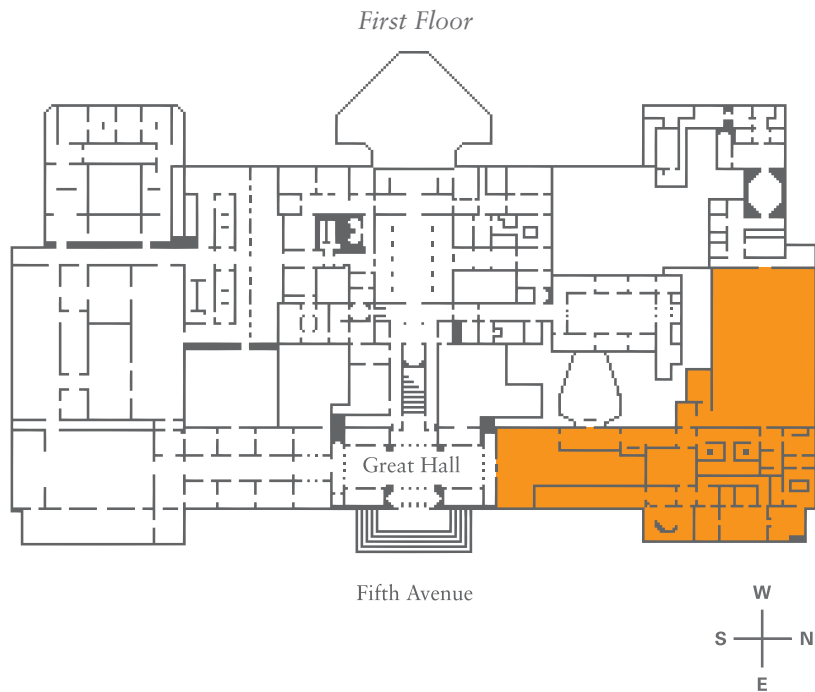
Introduction

Egyptian art was made for religious and magical purposes. A primary function was to serve as burial equipment that would magically assure an eternal afterlife. Equally important was the depiction of the king, stressing his divine ability to maintain universal order. This power was granted by the gods, who controlled the forces of the universe. The balance, order, and clarity of Egyptian art, the use of durable materials such as stone and metals, and the keenly observed details of the natural world effectively expressed the Egyptians' desire for order, their beliefs about eternity, and their love of life.

The Galleries

The Egyptian galleries are located on the first floor at the north end of the Great Hall and are usually quite crowded. Tens of thousands of works of Egyptian art are on view. The Museum's collection, one of the finest and most comprehensive outside of Egypt, is particularly rich in the art of the Middle and New Kingdoms, and contains objects dating from the fifth millennium B.C. to about A.D. 400. Many of the objects were excavated in Egypt by the Museum's staff of archaeologists from 1906 to 1936, and excavations continue to this day.

The galleries are arranged chronologically. The Old Kingdom *Mastaba Tomb of Perneb* is at the entrance to the galleries. To view works chronologically, turn right at the tomb and proceed through the Predynastic, Old Kingdom, and Middle Kingdom galleries to the New Kingdom galleries at the north end of the building. Turn left and then left again past the Temple of Dendur and late dynastic art, and end with art from Roman Egypt.



Teachers of students with visual impairments: Note that six sculptures in the Egyptian galleries may be explored as a tactile experience. This Touch Tour may be taken by appointment with a Museum guide or independently with the use of a large-print or braille booklet, available at the Information Desks. For more information or to make an appointment for a Touch Tour, please contact Access Coordination at (212) 650-2010, TTY (212) 570-3828.

Planning a Tour

When visiting the Metropolitan Museum with your students, prepare your tour with the following in mind:

- Less is more. Select five or six works of art to discuss over the course of an hour in the galleries.
- Choose works that are located away from doorways and areas that are heavily traversed by visitors.
- Include works that are visible to all students in your group for purposes of discussion and viewing.
- Make sure that there are enough chaperones in your group to divide the students into smaller groups for gallery discussions.
- While touring the galleries, please give priority to lecturers wearing Museum IDs who are guiding groups. If they are discussing a work that you would like your students to see, please select another work to view and discuss in the interim.

Please Note: Although most of the suggested works in this guide will be on view when you visit the Museum, some gallery installations may be subject to change. We recommend that you use [Search the Collections](#) online or come to the Museum to verify that the objects you want to discuss are on display prior to bringing your group.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's school tour program is made possible by the generosity of Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman.

Themes to Consider

Beliefs about the Afterlife

[An Artisan's Tomb in New Kingdom Egypt](#)

[Egyptian Tombs: Life Along the Nile](#)

[The Private Tombs North of the Senwosret III Pyramid Complex, Dahshur](#)

[The Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III in the Cemeteries of Dahshur](#)

[The Tomb of Wah](#)

[Tutankhamun's Funeral](#)

The Role of the King (Pharaoh)

[Kings and Queens of Egypt](#)

[List of Rulers of Ancient Egypt and Nubia](#)

[List of Rulers of Ancient Sudan](#)

[Queens and Princesses in the Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III, Dahshur](#)

[The Temples of Senwosret III at Dahshur](#)

The Role of the Gods

[Egyptian Amulets](#)

Recommendations for Engaging Students with Works of Art in the Galleries

- Allow your students to look closely at an object *before* beginning discussion. Give them time to take it in and organize their thoughts about the work.
- Begin with visual analysis. Ask questions and facilitate open discussion about the fundamentals of the work of art—line, shape, color, texture, form, subject matter, and composition. Challenge your students to articulate and describe what is right in front of their eyes.
- Build on their observations and help them consider an artist's choices when creating a work of art with a closer examination of composition, size, style, function, and medium.
- Finally, discuss when the work of art was created and how historic events, patronage, literature, science, or technology may have shaped or influenced its production.

Suggested Works of Art to Explore

Please note that titles, dates, and other object information on the website and on gallery signage may vary as the result of ongoing research.

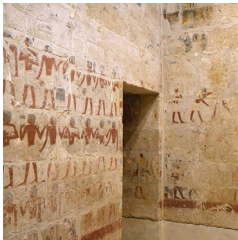


[Nikare \(Ni-ka-re\), His Wife, and Their Daughter](#), Old Kingdom, Dynasty 5, reign of Niuserre (ca. 2420–2389 B.C.) or later

Probably from Saqqara

Painted limestone; H. 22 1/2 in. (57 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1952 (52.19)



[Mastaba Tomb of Perneb](#), Old Kingdom, Late Dynasty 5, reigns of Isesi to Unis (ca. 2381–2323 B.C.)

From Saqqara

Limestone, paint; H. 15 ft. 9 13/16 in. (482.2 cm)

Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1913 (13.183.3)

Learn more about [the Tomb of Perneb](#).



[Travelling Boat being Rowed](#), Middle Kingdom, Early Dynasty 12, reign of Amenemhat I (ca. 1981–1975 B.C.)

From Thebes, Southern Asasif

Wood, paint, plaster, linen twine and cloth; H. 14 9/16 in. (37 cm), L. with rudder 68 7/8 in. (175 cm), W. with oars 12 in. (30.5 cm)

Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1920 (20.3.1)



[Coffin of Khnumhotep \(Khnum-hotep\)](#), Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 13 (1802–1640 B.C.)

From Asyut

Painted wood; H. 26 3/4 in. (68 cm), L. 81 11/16 in. (207.5 cm), W. 20 3/8 in. (51.8 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.2.2)



[Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet \(Sit-Hathor-yunet\)](#), Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 12, reigns of Senwosret II–Amenemhat III (ca. 1887–1813 B.C.)

From Lahun

Gold, carnelian, feldspar, garnet, turquoise; W. of pectoral 3 1/4 in. (8.3 cm)

Rogers Fund and Henry Walters Gift, 1916 (16.1.3)



Sphinx of Senwosret (Sen-wosret) III, Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 12, reign of Senwosret III (ca. 1878–1840 B.C.)

Thebes

Gneiss; L. 28 3/4 in. (73 cm)

Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1917 (17.9.2)



Heart Scarab of Hatnofer (Hat-nofer), New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (ca. 1479–1458 B.C.)

Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna

Serpentine, gold; scarab: L. 2 5/8 in. (6.6 cm); W. 2 1/16 in. (5.3 cm);

H. 1 1/8 in. (2.8 cm); chain: L. 30 1/2 in. (77.5 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1936 (36.3.2)



Seated Statue of Hatshepsut (Hat-shep-sut), New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (ca. 1479–1458 B.C.)

From Thebes, Deir el-Bahri

Indurated limestone; H. 76 3/4 in. (195 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1929 (29.3.2)



Fragmentary Face of a Queen, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Akhenaten (ca. 1353–1336 B.C.)

Yellow jasper; H. 5 1/8 in. (13 cm); W. 4 15/16 in. (12.5 cm); D. 4 15/16 in. (12.5 cm)

Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926 (26.7.1396)



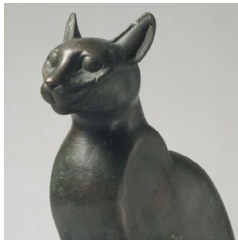
Head of Tutankhamun, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, reign of Tutankhamun (ca. 1336–1327 B.C.)

Indurated limestone; H. 5 7/8 in. (14.9 cm)

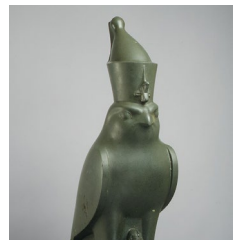
Rogers Fund, 1950 (50.6)



Section from the *Book of the Dead of Nany*, Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 21, reign of Psensennes I (ca. 1040–992 B.C.)
From Thebes, Deir el-Bahri
Painted and inscribed papyrus; H. of illustrated section 13 3/4 in. (34.9 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.3.31)



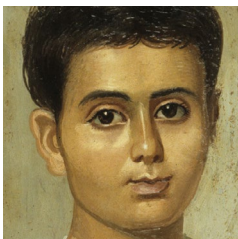
Cat, Ptolemaic Period, ca. 332–30 B.C.
Bronze; H. 11 in. (27.9 cm)
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1956 (56.16.1)



Statue of the god Horus protecting Nectanebo II, Late Period, Dynasty 30, reign of Nectanebo II (360–343 B.C.)
Basalt; H. 28 1/4 in. (72 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1934 (34.2.1)



The Temple of Dendur, Roman period, reign of Augustus Caesar (ca. 15 B.C.)
From Dendur in Nubia
Sandstone; L. from gate to rear of temple 82 ft. (24 m 60 cm)
Given to the United States by Egypt in 1965, awarded to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1967, and installed in The Sackler Wing in 1978 (68.154)



Portrait of a Boy, Roman period (A.D. 100–150)
Encaustic on wood; H. 15 3/8 in. (39 cm), W. 7 1/2 in. (19 cm)
Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1918 (18.9.2)

More on The Metropolitan Museum of Art Website

[The Art of Ancient Egypt: A Resource for Educators](#)

[Curatorial Departments: Egyptian Art](#)

[Egypt in the Late Period \(ca. 712–332 B.C.\)](#)

[Egypt in the Middle Kingdom \(2030–1640 B.C.\)](#)

[Egypt in the New Kingdom \(ca. 1550–1070 B.C.\)](#)

[Egypt in the Old Kingdom \(ca. 2649–2150 B.C.\)](#)

[Egypt in the Third Intermediate Period \(1070–712 B.C.\)](#)

Selected Resources

These and many more resources are available in Nolen Library in the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education.

Teachers

Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art:

The Temple of Dendur, Summer 1978

Museum Excavations in Egypt, Summer 1975

Egyptian Art, Winter 1983–84

An Egyptian Bestiary, Spring 1995

Life along the Nile, Summer 2002

Lesko, Barbara S. *The Remarkable Women of Ancient Egypt*. 3d ed. Providence, R.I.: B. C. Scribe, 1996.

Mertz, Barbara. *Temples, Tombs & Hieroglyphs: A Popular History of Ancient Egypt*. 2nd ed. New York: William Morrow, 2007.

_____. *Red Land, Black Land: Daily Life in Ancient Egypt*. 2nd ed. New York: William Morrow, 2008.

Shaw, Ian, and Paul Nicholson. *The Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*. New York: H. N. Abrams, 1995.

Smith, W. Stevenson. *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*. New

Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Tyldesley, Joyce A. *The Mummy: Unwrap the Ancient Secrets of the Mummies' Tombs*. London: Carlton, 1999.

Watts, Edith. [The Art of Ancient Egypt: A Resource for Educators](#). New York: MMA, 1998.
(Part of the circulating collection available to educators in Nolen Library)

Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003.

_____. *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1992.

_____. *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994.

Elementary Students

Aliki. *Mummies Made in Egypt*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1979.

Middle School Students

Berger, Melvin, and Gilda Berger. *Mummies of the Pharaohs: Exploring the Valley of the Kings*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2001.

Filer, Joyce. *The Mystery of the Egyptian Mummy*. London: British Museum Press, 2003.

Hart, George. *Ancient Egypt*. Eyewitness Books. New York: DK Publishing, 2004.

High School Students

Cline, Eric H., and Jill Rubalcaba. *The Ancient Egyptian World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

What Life Was Like on the Banks of the Nile: Egypt, 3050–30 B.C. Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1996.