

Empires of Early Africa

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: World History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

The Nile: Where Egypt Began (5 min.) – Examines the Nile's role in the birth and growth of Egyptian civilization. *Nefertiti Resurrected* (32 min.) – Investigates whether a recently discovered defaced and discarded mummy is the remains of the most-powerful woman of ancient Egypt. *Sub-Saharan Survey* (5 min.) – Treks through this region's history to examine how thriving gold and salt trades helped bring Islam to Africa. *Islam Comes to Timbuktu* (4 min.) – Looks at how Mansa Musa used his wealth and influence to turn this captured city into a center for Islamic learning.

Onscreen Questions

- Why do civilizations rise near bodies of water?
 - How do archaeologists learn about the past?
 - How can trade affect a growing civilization?
 - How can wealth help make leaders and their ideas more popular?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Understand that Nefertiti and Akhenaten were controversial rulers of ancient Egypt and founded a new capitol in Amarna.
- Explore how archaeologists have learned about life in the ancient city of Amarna by studying artifacts found there.

Materials

- *Empires of Early Africa* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Computer with Internet access

Procedures

1. After watching the video, ask students: Who was Nefertiti? (*She was the wife of the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten; she may have ruled as pharaoh herself.*) Review basic facts about Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Why was their rule so revolutionary and controversial? (*They did not worship all the traditional Egyptian gods; instead, they worshiped a single god named Aten.*) What was the name of the city they founded? (*Akhetaten, now called Amarna*)
2. Next, talk about how archaeologists looked for clues to determine the identity of the mummy they found in the Valley of the Kings. What led them to believe the mummy was Nefertiti? (*long neck, band mark around head, double-ear piercing, skeleton, fused bones*) What clue led them to believe Nefertiti had actually served as a pharaoh? (*The mummy might have been buried with her right arm bent, the sign of a pharaoh.*)
3. Talk about how archaeologists use evidence to learn about ancient cultures. They analyze evidence, such as artifacts and ruins, to piece together the puzzle of life long ago. In fact, archaeologists have used artifacts to learn about the world of Akhenaten and Nefertiti and the city they founded.
4. Tell students they'll be exploring a Web site called "Pharaohs of the Sun" to discover what ancient artifacts have revealed about the world of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. This site provides images and explanations of artifacts, from simple objects to stone carvings, found at Amarna.
5. Divide the class into groups. Explain that they'll be exploring different types of artifacts from Amarna that reflect different aspects of life in the ancient city. The artifacts can be found at http://www.mfa.org/egypt/amarna/ex_toc.html. Be sure to explore the entire site, as there are numerous images. Assign each group to study one of the following subject areas:
 - The Worship of Aten
 - The Arts in Amarna
 - Daily Life
 - Women's Lives in Amarna

Each group should select and print five images that illustrate their subject.

6. Have each group prepare and present a report on their findings as if they are a team of archaeologists who discovered and analyzed the artifacts. They should present an image for each artifact, explaining where it was found and what it reveals about life in Amarna during Akhenaten's rule.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; demonstrated a clear understanding of Nefertiti, Akhenaten, and their controversial rule; gave a clear and thorough class presentation highlighting five artifacts from Amarna.

- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions; demonstrated an adequate understanding of Nefertiti, Akhenaten, and their controversial rule; gave a complete class presentation highlighting five artifacts from Amarna.
- 1 point: Students did not participate in class discussions; demonstrated an incomplete understanding of Nefertiti, Akhenaten, and their controversial rule; gave an incomplete class presentation highlighting less than five artifacts from Amarna.

Vocabulary

archaeologist

Definition: A scientist who studies ancient peoples by analyzing the things they left behind.

Context: Some archaeologists say there is evidence that Nefertiti may have ruled as pharaoh.

mummy

Definition: A body preserved after death by natural or artificial means.

Context: Mummies have been found in many areas of the world, including South America and Asia.

pharaoh

Definition: a ruler of ancient Egypt

Context: The pharaoh was seen as a direct link between the gods and the people.

sacrilege

Definition: The disrespectful treatment of something others consider holy or sacred

Context: Many of the priests in ancient Egypt saw Akhenaten's decision to worship only Aten as sacrilege.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- World History: Era 3 – Understands the major characteristics of civilization and the development of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley; Era 4 – Understands the causes and consequences of the development of Islamic civilizations between the 7th and 10th centuries
- Historical Understanding: Understands the historical perspective.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to

<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
 - Time, Continuity, and Change
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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