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Ancient Egyptians
Loan Box

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Introduction to Loan Boxes

LIVE Borders Loan Boxes have been designed to expand people's experience and knowledge of history through object handling. All the objects in this Loan Box are designed to be handled. Fragile and heavy objects are marked accordingly on the [Hazards/Risks](#) page 18 of this Loan Box booklet.

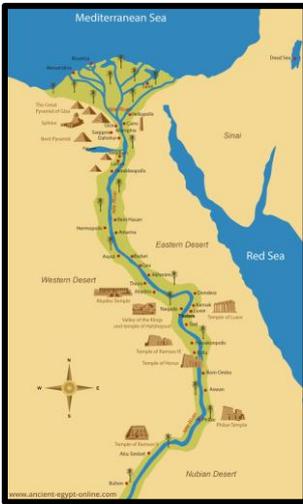
People viewing the Loan Box objects will be very curious about them and where they came from, what they were used for, and how were they made. What we do know about the objects contained in this Loan Box is in the [Content Information](#) section of this booklet, Pages 4-13. We have also provided prompts for [Questions and Activities](#), to aid further learning and understanding of the objects in this guide - pages 14-16.

What to do during a Loan Box session

- All the objects in this Loan Box have been checked and packed securely before being dispatched. Please inform us immediately if objects have been damaged in transit.
- All the objects should be handled with care - the most fragile/heavy have been marked on the [Hazards/Risks](#), page 18 of this booklet.
- Make sure the objects are in a safe, clean environment. Be especially careful of heavy, awkward, and/or fragile objects and supervise/display them accordingly.
- Handle objects with clean, dry hands, and keep away from potential damage hazards such as water, paint, and pens.
- Encourage handling of the objects for a better understanding of what they are.

Ancient Egyptians - Content Information

The River Nile

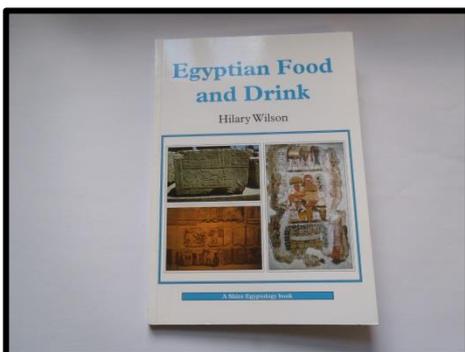


The Nile is the longest river in the world and was essential to life in Egypt. Every year the Nile flooded and left a thick black silt on the ground. This fertile strip on either side of the river is only about 12 miles wide.

People and animals settled in this narrow strip of mineral-rich land. They called the fertile land *Kemet*. Beyond this was barren land and rugged cliffs, followed by arid desert.

Once farming was established, irrigation, fishing, villages, towns and transportation developed close to the river, and Ancient Egyptian society started to develop.

Eating & Drinking

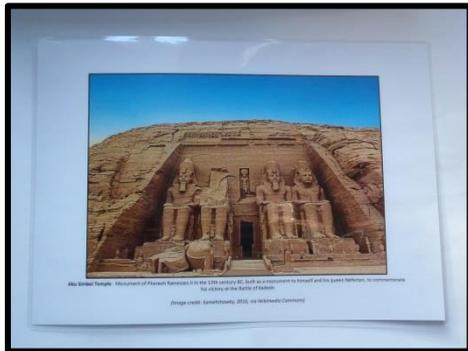


The fertile, black soil on the banks of the Nile was ideal for farming, providing the people with a good harvest. Most years brought cereals (barley and emmer wheat, which could be used to make bread, cakes and beer); vegetables (beans, lentils, onions, garlic, leeks, lettuces and cucumbers), and fruits (including grapes, figs and dates). The river was full of fish which could be caught for food. Animals, coming to drink at the river, could be hunted and many plants grew along its banks. Cattle was farmed by the wealthy, and smaller animals (sheep, goats, pigs, geese) were kept by poorer households.

While rich people dined off meat, fruit, vegetables, and honey-sweetened cakes accompanied by wines, the poor were limited to a more monotonous diet of bread, fish, beans, onions and garlic washed down with a sweet, soupy beer.

The Nile River offered fresh water, but people became sick after drinking from it, so they drank beer made from barley as it was safer than the water. The beer was very thick and did not have very high alcoholic content. The Egyptians also made both white and red wine from grapes, adding spices and honey for variety.

Gods & Worship



Abu Simbel Temple



Wall decorations

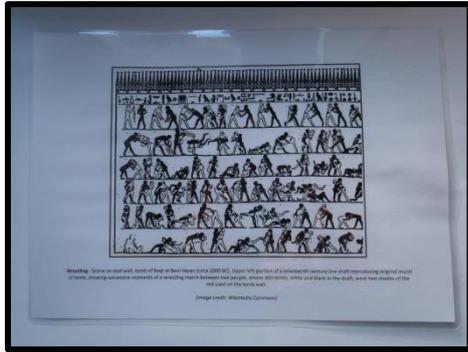
Religion was central to life in Ancient Egypt, and the people believed in many gods. Some gods were known all over Egypt, others were very local. Some grew in importance over time, others faded. Each part of Egypt had different stories about how the world and the gods were created.

Egyptian gods were often shown with the heads of the animals of the Nile Valley. Each god stood for something in life. Thoth had the head of an Ibis and was the god of scribes and learning. Anubis, the jackal-headed god, was linked to mummification and funerals.

The Ancient Egyptians believed that temples were the homes of the gods. Every temple was dedicated to a god and they were worshipped there by the temple priests and the pharaoh. The most common temple ritual was the daily morning offering ceremony, performed in temples across Egypt. A high-ranking priest, or occasionally the pharaoh, washed, anointed, and dressed the god's statue before presenting it with offerings. Afterward, when the god had consumed the spiritual essence of the offerings, the items themselves were taken to be distributed among the priests. There were also numerous festivals throughout the year involving processions, offerings, and rituals.

Egyptians of all classes used people called oracles to ask the gods for knowledge or guidance. Their answers could even be used to settle legal disputes or inform royal decisions.

Sports, Wrestling



Sports played a large social and political role in Ancient Egypt, and of all the disciplines, wrestling has the best visual documentation.

The earliest wrestlers in the Old and Middle Kingdoms practiced naked, with short skirts similar to those worn by soldiers being introduced in the New Kingdom.

Despite the number and variety of wrestling scenes that have been preserved, information on the rules and ways of determining victory or defeat are unclear.

Reading & Writing

The ancient Egyptians were among the first people to devise a form of writing, but not everyone learned to read and write. Only some government officials, army leaders, and a group of people called 'scribes' were allowed to have this knowledge and ability.

Training to become a scribe could take between four to seven years, and often the children of scribes carried on the family tradition and became scribes themselves. They spent hours sitting cross-legged, copying hundreds of signs until they could make them well enough to please their teachers. This was hard work, and many students did not like the work they were given. Sometimes they were punished for skipping classes or not doing their work. Discipline in an ancient Egyptian school was strictly enforced with some tutors resorting to the stick. This harsh discipline is underlined by the fact that the root of the word "teach" ("seba") also means "beat."

Although experts believe that most scribes were men, there may have been female scribes, especially among women training to be doctors. Seshat, the god of writing, historical records and accounting, is female, her name transcribed as "female scribe".

Scribes were important people in society as they were not just writers, but accountants and recorders of governmental and religious affairs, recording how many soldiers were in the army, harvest records, numbers of workers, and the number of gifts given to the Gods at temples. Using scripts, scribes were also able to preserve the beliefs, history and ideas of ancient Egypt on temple and tomb walls and on papyrus scrolls. Almost all of our knowledge about the ancient Egyptians came from the work and art of the ancient Egyptian scribe.

Writing Sets



Scribes used pens and ink made from natural ingredients. Pens were made from thin, sharp reeds that grew by the river which were picked, dried, and then sharpened for writing. Reed pens were stiff and broke and became blunt very quickly.

Ink was made by grinding brightly coloured minerals into powder, then mixing the powder with liquid so that it was easier to apply. It was carried in a flat pallet with two depressions cut into it; one for red ink and the other for black ink. The scribes would dip the pens into the ink to then write on paper-like papyrus.

Scribes generally wrote in red or black ink, with red ink being employed for important or magical terms and by tutors when correcting the work of their students (a practice which exists to this day!) Red ink was also used to indicate titles, and headings and to mark the beginning of a new section of text.

Papyrus



For important writing, paper was used which was made from the papyrus reed, which grew along the River Nile. The outer rind of the reed was peeled from the stems, and the soft pith inside was cut into strips. These were laid flat and woven at right angles to each other, then pounded with a mallet to mash them together. The dried papyrus was then polished to give a smooth, flat surface that made it easier to write on.

Papyrus had the advantage of being relatively cheap and easy to produce, but it was fragile and susceptible to both moisture and excessive dryness. Papyrus also served as a political symbol through its use in the insignia of the unity of Upper and Lower Egypt. This symbol is a bouquet of papyrus (Lower Egypt) bound with a lotus (Upper Egypt).



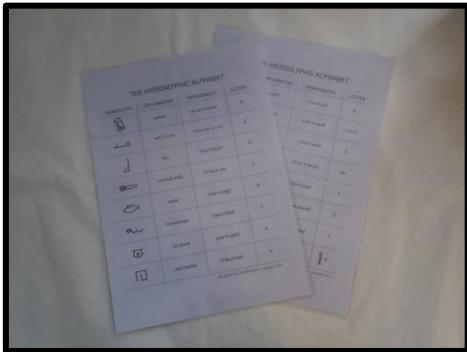
Stone Hieroglyph of Papyrus

Stone etchings of Papyrus reeds can be found in temples and monuments, symbolizing life and eternity - the Egyptian afterlife. This was known as the 'Field of Reeds' and was thought to mirror the fertile Nile River Valley right down to the abundance of papyrus.

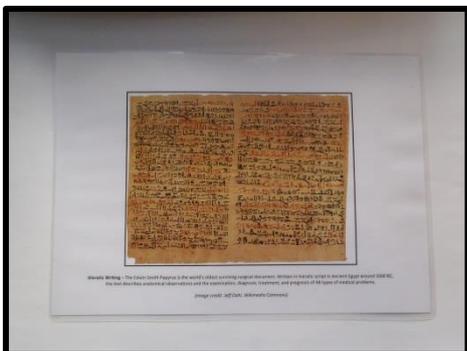
Hieratic and Hieroglyphs



Hieroglyphs



'The Hieroglyphic Alphabet'



Hieratic script

The Egyptians wrote using a system of picture writing. Each picture, or hieroglyph, could stand for an object and a sound; some represented one letter, others up to five letters. There were more than 700 characters in the Hieroglyphic alphabet. Hieroglyphs were only used for important or sacred inscriptions such as on tombs and for affairs of state and were often carved in stone.

Hieratic is an abbreviated form of Hieroglyphic script. The scripts were developed at the same time and are structurally the same, but Hieratic is made of simpler characters so it was easier to write quickly in everyday scenarios. Hieratic was written from left to right in horizontal lines using ink on papyrus.

The Rosetta stone



Hieroglyphs were last used about 400 AD and were then forgotten. For 1400 years no one could understand the symbols found inscribed on ancient Egyptian artifacts. They wanted to decipher them – but how?

An important clue was found in 1799 when France, invaded Egypt. At a place called Rosetta, French soldiers found a stone that had three equal sections of writing on it, including Greek and Hieroglyphs. If the sections said the same thing then the meaning of the hieroglyphs could be determined by comparing the three scripts. Using this method, it was discovered that the text on the Rosetta Stone is a decree establishing the divine cult of the new ruler, King Ptolemy V. Despite the stone being broken and therefore incomplete, it was enough for people to begin studying for translation.

In 1801, the British defeated the French, and the Rosetta Stone became a British possession as part of the treaty at Alexandria. It was transported in 1802, and placed in the British Museum in London where Thomas Young began to work on it to translate the hieroglyphs. His research stalled as he thought hieroglyphs were mainly picture-writing. In 1822, in Paris, Jean Francois Champollion realised that many hieroglyphs were sound-writing and began deciphering everything he could. He went to Egypt and wrote a dictionary and a grammar book of hieroglyphs which allowed scholars to begin translating the hieroglyphs and understand a great deal more about Ancient Egyptian life which had been a secret until then.

Egypt has regularly called for the return of the Rosetta Stone as part of a program to return stolen antiquities from all over the world, offering to give the British Museum a replica when the original is returned to its country of origin.

Burial Customs

The Ancient Egyptians believed in life after death and made careful preparations for the afterlife. They believed that the dead person's soul traveled into an Underworld where it would have to go through many trials before being allowed into the next world. In the afterlife, a person could live a life very similar to the one they knew, except it was free from troubles. Essential to this belief was that the body must never decay and that it should be placed where it would never be disturbed. This led to the bodies being mummified and placed in tombs. If the body was destroyed, the spirit would die too.

Sarcophagus Tin



Most ordinary ancient Egyptians were probably buried in the desert. Their relatives would wrap their bodies in a simple cloth and bury them with some everyday objects and food. The dry desert preserved their body for the afterlife.

Those with more wealth would be able to afford a better burial. The graves of some craftsmen and workers have been found containing a mummified body as well as bread, fruit, amulets and furniture for the afterlife.

Nobles and very wealthy people were often buried in tombs with an underground burial chamber and an above-ground offering chapel. These tombs would contain the person's mummified body, as well as food, jewellery and special objects.

A Pharaoh's sarcophagus was typically painted with detailed, ornate pictures and hieroglyphs that offered spiritual protection. They believed the artwork came to life in the afterworld and helped the deceased in the journey from one place to another. Most sarcophagi included paintings of large human eyes that provided a window so the dead could see out of the coffin into the afterlife.

Canopic Jar & Lid



Preparing a body for mummification was an elaborate process that took about 70 days to complete. When someone died, their body was taken to be embalmed by priests who also performed holy rituals throughout the process.

The first step was to remove the brain by drawing it out through the nose. The internal organs were then removed and each was stored in a special jar known as a Canopic jar. These were made from limestone or pottery, and each jar had a lid in the form of an animal head which represented the form of one of the gods they worshipped. The gods were:

Hapy - the baboon-headed god representing the north, whose jar contained the lungs and was protected by the goddess Nephthys (Hapy is often used interchangeably with the god Hapi, though they are actually different gods).

Duamutef - the jackal-headed god representing the east, whose jar contained the stomach and was protected by the goddess Neith.

Imsety - the human-headed god representing the south, whose jar contained the liver and was protected by the goddess Isis.

Qebhsenuf - the falcon-headed god representing the west, whose jar contained the intestines and was protected by the goddess Serket.

These jars were later placed in the tomb with the body. The heart was left in the body, which was then packed in natron crystals to dry it out for several months. Finally, the body was padded with cloth to make it look more life-like, and then it was oiled and wrapped in layers of linen where magical charms were wrapped inside the bandages to help the spirit reach the afterlife. The form was coated with warm resin and the wrapping resumed once again. At last, the priests wrapped the final cloth or shroud in place and secured it with linen strips. The mummy was complete.

Tutankhamun's Death Mask

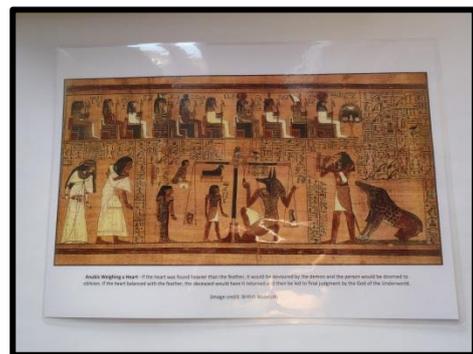


It was considered very important for the soul to be able to recognize the body so it can return to it. For that reason, death masks were made in the likeness of the deceased. All death masks were made to resemble the deceased but with slightly enlarged eyes and a faint smile and also showed fashion of the moment with painted jewellery and makeup. These death masks later evolved into a full-body inner coffin in the human shape with the same decorations and ornaments.

Early masks were made from wood, in two pieces and connected with pegs. After that Egyptians used a material made from papyrus or linen soaked in plaster which was then shaped on a wooden mold. This was a cheap variant intended for the lower class. Royal death masks were made from precious metals such as gold or gold leaves on bronze.

In 1922, Tutankhamun's tomb was the only royal tomb of the New Kingdom to be found intact after centuries of grave robbing by Egyptians and colonisers. The tomb was built deep into the rock of the Valley of the Kings and it was full of treasures that Tutankhamun would need in the afterlife.

Anubis



Anubis Weighing a Heart

In the afterlife, a dead person would stand trial before the god, Osiris, in the Hall of Judgement. Anubis, the god of embalming the dead, who appeared as a jackal or jackal-headed man, brought the deceased in before 42 assessor gods. Using a balance, Anubis then weighed the heart of the deceased against a feather, the symbol of truth. If the deceased had led a sinful life, the heart would weigh heavier and would be consumed by the Devourer, a monster with crocodile, lion and hippopotamus parts. If the deceased had led a good life, they would be presented to Osiris and be admitted into the next world.

Shabti Figure



Ancient Egyptians had many ideas about what happened to them after death. The most common was that the afterlife was similar to normal life, except without problems or hardship. Egyptians were therefore buried with items that would be useful to them in the afterlife. For example, Ancient Egyptians who spent their lives farming or working the fields believed their Shabti would take their place doing that work in the afterlife.

From the end of the Old Kingdom, it became customary to include a wooden model of servants in burials, usually connected to the production of food. Later, these models began to be replaced by agricultural figures, usually in mummy form. In the tomb of Tutankhamun, a total of 413 Shabtis were found.

Pyramids



The pyramids are still amongst the greatest engineering projects in the world. They were built as permanent tombs for the Pharaohs, where they and the treasures they were taking into the next world would be safe from robbers. Initially they were built with stepped sides so the pharaoh's soul could walk up to heaven, later they were built with smooth sides to represent the sun's rays.

The Ancient Egyptians worked in teams and dragged the huge stone blocks into place using wooden sledges and ramps. The pyramid was covered in limestone blocks and the ramp was dismantled. Most of the workers were ordinary farmers, paying their dues to the pharaoh while their fields were inundated by the Nile.

Many of the pyramids did get robbed in Ancient Egyptian times. This is why they decided to build the tombs of the New Kingdom, such as Tutankhamun's, hidden deep into the rock of the Valley of the Kings.

What questions should I ask during a loan Box session?

The question prompts below can help you to get the most out of using the objects for learning.

Questions about the physical characteristics of an object		
What does it look, feel, sound, smell like?	How big is it?	What shape is it?
What is it made of?	What colour is it?	How heavy is it?
Is it mass produced or unique ?	Does it have any marks , which show us how it was made, used or cared for?	Is it complete or part of an object?
Is it in good condition or worn/used?	Has it been altered, adapted, repaired or changed ?	Does it look like anything modern?

Questions about the functions of an object		
Why was it made?	What is it used for?	What would it have been like to use it?
How might it have been used?	Who might have used it?	Where might it have been used?
What skills were needed to use it?	Might it have been used with other objects ?	Has its use changed ?

Questions about the design and construction of an object

What material is it made of?	Why were the materials it was made of chosen?	Could different materials have been used to make it?
Is it attractive to look at?	When and where might it have been made?	Is it hand-made or machine-made ?
Who might have made it?	How was this object made?	How might this object work ?
Can it be taken apart ?	If it can be taken apart, then how is it put together ?	What do these tell us about the people who made and/or owned the object?
Is it decorated or plain ?	Are there any marks or images on the object?	What does this object tell us about the period we are studying?

Questions about the value and importance of an object

What difference did the object make to people's lives?	What does the object tell us about the people who owned it?
How important was the object to the people who made it and/or the people who used/owned it compared to today?	Is it mass-produced, rare or unique ?
In what way is the object important today ?	Is the object financially, sentimentally, culturally or historically valuable ?
How much do you the object cost when it was made?	How much do you think the object is worth now?

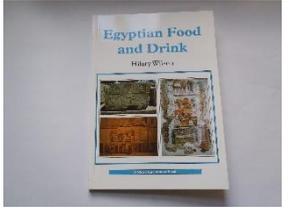
Activity Ideas

Below are some ideas for activities that will help your students get the most out of learning from the objects in the Loan Box and the period they came from.

Before & After	
<p>At the start of a Loan Box session, place the objects either on general display or divide a few objects amongst smaller groups of students. Set a timer for 2-5 minutes, and get them to spend the time quickly looking at the objects and writing down guesses as to what they are. A rule can be set that objects are not to be handled to make guessing more difficult. Once the time is up, reveal the answers either in one go, or spread throughout the session as part of the introduction to that object. At the very end of a Loan Box session, return to the original answers to review what the students have learned about the objects since their initial guesses.</p>	<p>Skills developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive• Observational• Questioning• Thinking Skills

Asking and Answering Questions about Objects	
<p>Get students to write down all the words they can think of that would be used to describe an object that they have with them (e.g. their school bag), then get them to write down the questions they would need to ask in order to identify the object. They could also prioritise the questions into categories (i.e. physical characteristics/descriptive, design and construction, function and value) and importance (i.e. pick five questions that are essential to understanding this object).</p>	<p>Skills developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive• Questioning• Thinking skills• Categorising

Object images at a glance - to check off

			
<p>1x Anubis Statue</p>		<p>1x Food and Drink book</p>	<p>1x Canopic Jar Lid</p>
			
<p>1x Canopic Jar</p>		<p>1x Metal Tin Sarcophagus</p>	<p>2x Writing sets</p>
			
<p>2x Papyrus sheet</p>		<p>1x Photo pack, 10 sheets</p>	<p>1x Rosetta Stone, Replica</p>
			
<p>1x Shabti figure</p>		<p>1x Tutankhamun's Death Mask</p>	

HAZARDS/RISKS

FRAGILE OBJECTS

Papyrus sheets

Shabti figure

Canopic Jar & lid

HEAVY OBJECTS

Tutankhamun's Death Mask

Rosetta Stone replica

What to do before returning the Loan Box

- Check the objects against the [Object Images at a glance](#) page, above. You can print this page out to help you ensure all pieces are present.
- Pack the objects securely into the box, making sure that fragile objects are protected and in original packaging.
- Please let us know if any items are damaged or lost by phone or email.
- Pack any damaged items separately with a note inside the box.
- Boxes can either be returned directly to St Mary's Mill in Selkirk, or left at your nearest library. You will already have arranged which library this is when you booked the loan box. For any queries please get in touch at libstock@liveborders1.org.uk

Feedback Form

Before returning the Loan Box, please fill in the feedback form with this pack.

This will help us to try and improve our services. Please send the completed feedback form to libstock@liveborders1.org.uk

Thank you very much!

We hope that you have enjoyed your Loan Box experience. We have more in our collection! Please get in touch or see the live Borders website for more details. www.liveborders.org.uk