



# Hieroglyphics

Can you successfully write your name and other phrases in hieroglyphics?

## MATERIALS



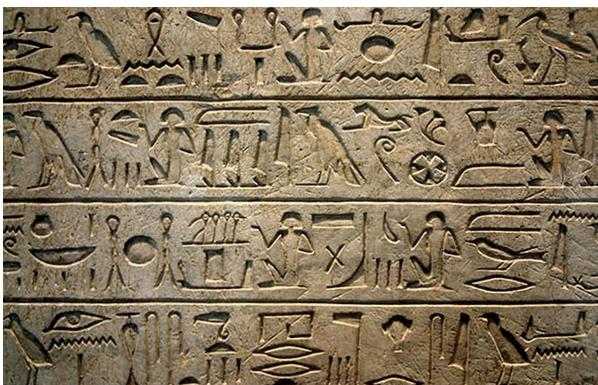
- ❖ 3x4 Index Cards
- ❖ Markers
- ❖ Hieroglyphic Template
- ❖ Shopping Bags
- ❖ Paint
- ❖ Paint Brushes
- ❖ Cups
- ❖ Tape
- ❖ Scissors

## GET SET UP

1. Print out the hieroglyphic alphabet template.
2. You will need as many index cards as your first name. Line them up along your table or desk. Refer to the hieroglyphic alphabet template to find what symbols represent each letter in your name. Draw each letter of your name on a different card. They don't have to be perfect but try your best to represent each symbol accurately.
3. Once you are done share with your family.
4. Using a pair of scissors, cut the lengths of your brown shopping bags and spread them out. Put some paint in a cup and gather some paint brushes.
5. Using hieroglyphics, write some phrases on the bags. You can use hashtags if you like.
6. Challenge your family to guess what your hieroglyphic message says.

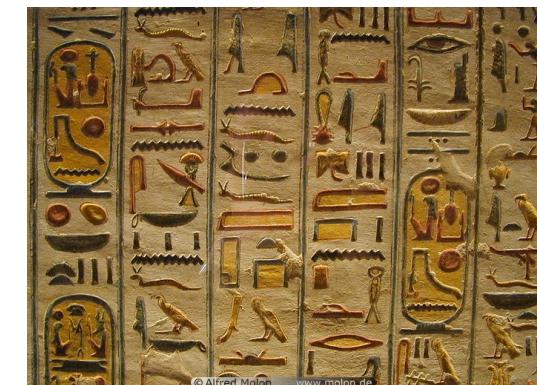
## DID YOU KNOW...

The word within **hieroglyphics** that you want to focus most on is **glyph**. In typography (the art of arranging type to make a written language legible and readable), a glyph is a stylized symbol within an agreed set of symbols that is created to represent a readable character for the purpose of writing. All this means is that a particular symbol has a particular meaning and follows a set of rules. The reason an anthropologist would be very interested in studying hieroglyphics is to see how the hieroglyphics evolved and changed throughout the centuries. And centuries is an accurate time estimate. Egyptian hieroglyphics lasted for 3600 years beginning in 3200 BCE and lasting through 400 AD. Not everyone in ancient Egypt used hieroglyphics—it was mainly the domain of priests and artisans—but as the language evolved more and more people started using them on an everyday basis. Unfortunately, the understanding of hieroglyphics was almost lost. For 1400 years they were undecipherable until Jean Francois Champollion, a noted French philologist (a scholar who studies languages), used the Rosetta Stone (think of it like a decoder ring), to start to understand once more what each symbol represents. In the 200 years since the deciphering began, our knowledge has grown and anthropologists can create a clear timeline of when certain glyphs entered and left the language. This is very important to understanding the language as a whole.



### (Optional) For young scientists ages 4-6

Young scientists might have some difficulty recreating the hieroglyphics. Suggest to them that instead of trying to make exact copies of each symbol that they create a symbol that is similar. If the hieroglyphic looks like a bird have them draw their own version of a bird. That way they get the idea without having to stress too much about making a perfect copy.



## CHALLENGE

1. Using the Egyptian hieroglyphics as a guide can you create your own unique alphabet system? What symbols would you use to represent A-Z?
2. Why do you think hieroglyphics stopped being used after 400 AD?
3. Why are hieroglyphics important to an anthropologist?

**STEAM Challenge:** As hieroglyphics evolved almost 900 distinct symbols were used at its apex. If the evolution continued there would have certainly been more symbols. How many symbols would be in use if the amount of symbols multiplied 76 times? 127 times? 342 times?