

**Grade Level:**

3rd-8th

Curriculum Components:

- Interactive Theater Experience (pp.1-3)
- Guided Exhibit Inquiry (pp. 4-5)
- Post-Visit Assessment

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

Language Arts

WI Model Academic Standards:

Social Studies:

B.4.1

Language Arts:

C.4.2

Common Core State Standards:

English Language Arts:

CCSS.ELA-SL.4.1

Reading Informational Text:

CCSS.ELA-RI.4.7

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Mummies: Unwinding the Myth

Lesson Guide

Overview:

This program provides teachers and students with an understanding of the origins and purpose of ancient Egyptian mummification, and how it connects to general concepts of an afterlife. The Museum educator will conduct a step-by-step recreation of Egyptian mummification that engages students, and employs multiple screens to convey images and text that support inquiry and discussion. Our staff sets the stage for teachers and chaperones to guide the students in an exhibit-based activity during which students consider an overarching question as they make observations and discuss key exhibits.

Background:

The word “mummy” describes a human body that has been preserved by intentional embalming techniques or by nature. Mummies have been found throughout the world in many places including North America, South America, Asia and China among other regions. The ancient Egyptians are the most famous practitioners of mummification due to their skillful embalming techniques and elaborate burial customs. For them, mummification was a deeply religious act. Every living being, they believed, possessed a spiritual force, a life force and a body. Death shattered the bond between these three elements. They believed that, by preserving a dead body in recognizable form, the deceased would enjoy eternal life.

Embalmers removed the internal organs through an incision made in the left flank of the body. The liver, lungs, intestines and stomach were commonly mummified separately and stored in four canopic jars. The remaining organs, except the heart, were discarded including the brain which was commonly removed through the nose. The heart was dried, wrapped and replaced in the body. The emptied body was then covered and dried with natron salt. After the body was dried, it was coated with ointments, oils and resins to keep the skin as supple as possible, help with preservation and diminish odors. The body was then wrapped in bandages and placed in a decorated wooden coffin. Royalty and other elite were subsequently sealed in a carved stone sarcophagus to be entombed.

Focus Question: What is a mummy and what can we learn from them?

Student Objectives:

1. Define “mummy” and discuss examples of mummies throughout the world.
2. Learn why ancient Egyptians thought mummification prepared them for the afterlife and how it was similar to life in the physical world.
3. Understand the importance of Tutankhamun’s tomb to our understanding of ancient Egyptian culture.
4. Participate in the step-by-step procedure of ancient Egyptian mummification.
5. Observe, discuss, compare and contrast historic exhibits with their life today through interactive dialogue.

Assessment:

1. Students can differentiate between natural and intentional mummies.
2. Students can understand the importance of the discovery of King Tutankhamun's tomb to modern archaeology.
3. Students can explain why the ancient Egyptians mummified their dead.
4. Students can describe the principle steps of the ancient Egyptian mummification process.
5. Teachers are provided a post-visit assessment using a focus question in a short essay.

Program Vocabulary:

Amduat: A funerary text intended as a guidebook to the afterlife for deceased pharaohs.

Amulet: Small charms made from stone, metal, glass or faience, endowed with magical powers to protect the body from evil and placed at specific points within the wrappings of a mummy.

Ba: The personality of the deceased. It was depicted as a bird with the deceased person's head.

BCE: Before Common Era (aka BC).

Canopic Jars: A set of four containers in which some of the internal organs of the mummy would be placed. Made of pottery, carved limestone or alabaster, the lids often represented the minor deities called the "Sons of Horus."

Desiccant: A material that is highly effective at removing moisture, in this case from soft tissue.

Embalming: A process which preserved a corpse by extracting the organs, desiccation with natron salt, filling the body cavities with various materials and wrapping it in bandages. The aim was to preserve the body as an eternal home for the ka in the afterlife.

Ka: The spiritual "double" of the person. It was created at the same time as the body and survived after physical death. It remained in the tomb, preferably housed in the mummy, to be nourished by the offerings provided. The ka was commonly depicted in hieroglyphs as an upraised pair of arms.

Mummy: A human or animal corpse whose skin, soft tissue and various internal organs have been preserved by either intentional or incidental exposure to hot or dry conditions, chemicals, extreme cold, low humidity or lack of air.

Natron: A type of salt occurring naturally in the Egyptian desert used to dry the body and organs before wrapping and entombment.

Pharaonic Pose: A common pose for mummified pharaohs of ancient Egypt in which the arms are crossed over the chest. This pose became fairly common for non-royal mummies in the later periods.

Sarcophagus (Greek: "flesh-eating"): A stone container that usually housed the coffin and mummy of royalty or other elite. The surface was often inscribed with texts to assist the deceased in his journey through the underworld.

Ushabti: A small figurine placed in tombs to do the bidding of the deceased in the afterlife (Also spelled, "shabti.").

Enrichment Vocabulary

Abdomen	Bacteria	Balance	Biographical
Chronic disease	Dental disease	Demonstrate	Pectoral
Preventative Medicine	Salts		

Procedure:

Meet at the Gromme Theater located next to the elevators on the Museum’s 1st floor. Plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to your program start time.

At the end of the theater portion of the program, MPM educators will provide chaperones and teachers with an *Expedition MPM* guide to the 3rd floor (pages 4-5). Individually, these program components support a gain in content knowledge and critical thinking , and create relevancy of the subject to the students’ lives. In addition, they combine to form the background for a post-visit assessment in which students write a short essay.



Expedition MPM—Mummies: Unwinding the Myths
Explore and Discover

Directions for Teachers and Chaperones –

- Gather your small group.
- Go to the 3rd Floor.
- Choose any of the topics below that interest your group and explore them further.
- Leave 5 minutes at the end of your visit there to answer the final question.

As you reach the 3rd Floor from the escalators, you have your choice of starting points:

- If you go LEFT, you'll enter the Arctic gallery and start at the IGLOO.
- If you go RIGHT, then go around the Guatemalan Market, enter Middle America, and begin at the Lacandon Godhouse.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Holy Place—Lacandon Godhouse</u></p> <p>The Lacandon people used items like ceremonial godpots and offerings of burnt food and tobacco to show that the godhouse was a special, holy place. What are some objects or symbols you use today to show a place has spiritual meaning?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>House of Ice—Igloo</u></p> <p>Both the people of Wisconsin and the Arctic region know about living in the cold. What are some ways that you stay warm during Wisconsin Winters that are similar to the people of the Arctic? What ways are different?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Neighborhood—African Huts</u></p> <p>Families and their relatives would often live in small compounds with many huts. What are some similarities and differences with between these and what you have in your homes?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gardens—Japanese Home</u></p> <p>Japanese gardens used plants, rocks and gravel to create a space as close to nature as possible. People in Wisconsin grow gardens for many different reasons. How is the Japanese garden the same or different from ones you have or that you might see in your neighborhood?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Home—Moroccan Courtyard</u></p> <p>When you see some of the items in this house, do any remind you of things that interest you, or that you might use in your daily life?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Room of Great Importance—Chinese House</u></p> <p>The temple room was very important in the Chinese home. Consider your own home. Does any one room have a greater spiritual purpose than the others?</p>

Final 5 Minutes - After having the chance to examine the evidence more closely and discuss the similarities and differences of life here and around the world, ask yourselves:

- How is your home or community similar to any of those from the cultures visited today?
- How is your home or community different from any of those from the cultures visited today?

Similar	Different

If you have any questions or comments, please email the education department at curriculum@mpm.edu.

Post-Visit Assessment

Write a persuasive essay, using the information gained from this Expedition MPM activity (pp. 4-5), to answer the question: *What objects could you leave behind that would convey a sense of your life to archaeologists examining our world thousands of years from now?*