Archaeologists are scientists who study human history by uncovering objects and artifacts from research sites. These objects can help us better understand what life was like for the ancient Egyptians!

JOURNEY TO THE AFTERLIFE

The Ancient Egyptians devoted lots of time and attention to preparing for the spirit’s journey to the afterlife. They placed helpful texts along with small tokens for good luck and safety, called amulets, inside tombs to help them on their journey.

These sandals belonged to Queen Nefertari! The Egyptians believed that the afterlife was similar to life on earth—including sleeping, dressing, and eating.

Small shabti figurines were believed to help take care of work and chores in the afterlife. This shabti is made of a bright blue material called faience, which was believed to harness the perpetual shimmer of the sun.

BEAUTY

Ancient Egyptians paid great attention to beauty and fashion. The wealthy loved wearing the latest clothing, wigs, jewelry, and makeup styles.

Kohl eye makeup was both beautiful and practical: it kept light and bacteria away from the wearer’s eyes.

MUSIC

A sistrum is a rattle-like instrument played during dances and ceremonies. The shakers that provide percussive sounds are missing from this sistrum.

ARTIST’S TOOLS

Most paints were made from rocks and minerals. Artists used a palette and brush like this to apply paint to sculptures and murals. The bristles are made from plant materials!

LET’S LOOK

Can you find the objects to the right in the galleries? What can a personal object tell us about the person who used it?

GALLERY ACTIVITY

List some similar items you use today. What do you use to get ready in the morning, make music, or communicate with others?

MAKE AT HOME

Imagine you are an archaeologist of the future! Choose items from your home to “discover” and analyze. Make a drawing, take notes, and create a museum-inspired display.

LET’S LOOK

Look carefully at the murals and objects from Queen Nefertari’s tomb. How do they tell the story of her journey?

GALLERY ACTIVITY

Ask a friend: how does your family or community honor the lives of loved ones?

MAKE AT HOME

Design and build your own 3D amulet using common household items like bottle caps, buttons, cardboard, glue, or tape. Make your amulet small enough to fit in your pocket so that you can take it with you on your journeys!
**MEET QUEEN NEFERTARI**

**Queen Nefertari** was a well-loved and respected ruler of ancient Egypt, known for her beauty and intelligence. She was married to a powerful pharaoh, or ruler, named Ramesses II.

**Where is Egypt?**

Egypt is located in northeastern Africa. Queen Nefertari lived in the ancient city of Thebes along the Nile River, the longest river in the world.

Cairo, the modern-day capital of Egypt, shares the same latitude, or distance from the equator, as New Orleans! For this reason, we have a similar subtropical climate.

**When did Queen Nefertari rule?**

Queen Nefertari lived during a period called The New Kingdom, nearly 3,500 years ago. To compare, the United States is only 304 years old!

**What is BCE?**

Dates are labeled BCE (Before Common Era) or CE (Common Era) to indicate if a year took place before or after year 1.

The name “Nefertari” was popular in ancient Egypt! It includes the prefix “nefer,” which means “beautiful”.

Researchers believe Queen Nefertari could read and write— a skill that few women had during her time. **Hieroglyphics** is a writing system that uses pictures and symbols instead of letters and words. Stories and messages written in hieroglyphs, especially those that were painted in Queen Nefertari’s temple and tomb, help us understand the Queen’s importance.

**ANIMAL POWER**

Animals held special importance to the ancient Egyptians. Many animals’ features were associated with gods and goddesses. Can you find the following goddesses in galleries 1 and 2?

- **Sekhmet** [SEK-met], “The Powerful One,” is a fearsome warrior and goddess of healing. Daughter of the sun god Ra, she often appears as a woman with a lion’s mane and a sun disc crown.

- **Bastet** [BASS-tet] is the domesticated form of Sekhmet who appears as a house cat! She is known as the protector of women and children.

- **Hathor** [HAA-thor], the goddess of joy, music, and rebirth, appears with a woman’s face, cow ears, and a curled headdress inspired by cows’ horns. You will find her image on musical instruments.

- **Taweret** [TAAW-AIR-et], “The Great One,” appears with features of a hippopotamus. She is another fierce protector, known to look after children and soon-to-be mothers.

**GALLERY ACTIVITY**

What are some ways that humans try to harness the powers of animals today? For example, in American culture, we often name sports teams after animals. Act out your example!

**MAKE AT HOME**

Draw yourself with animal features that represent your powers!

Stela with the Face of the Goddess Hathor, unknown provenance, New Kingdom, 19th dynasty (about 1290–1190 BCE), painted limestone. Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy

**Let’s Look**

Notice animal features like faces, ears, or paws. How do the goddesses’ animal features symbolize their powers?

**Stela with the Face of the Goddess Hathor**, unknown provenance, New Kingdom, 19th dynasty (about 1290–1190 BCE), painted limestone. Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy

Amulet Representing the Goddess Taweret, Unknown provenance, Late Period, 26th - 31st dynasty (about 664–332 BCE), Faience, Cat. 538

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