

HISTORY

Exhibition

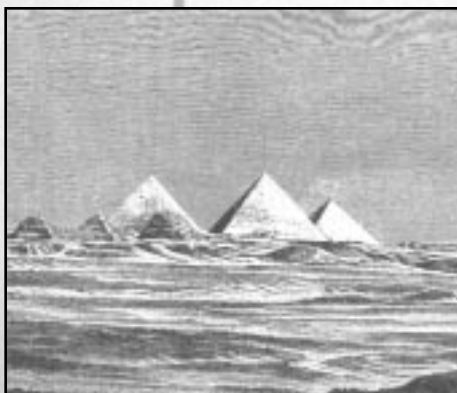
EGYPT

Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations we know about. The Roman Empire lasted 1500 years; the United States is 225 years old. Egyptian civilization began over 5000 years ago!

The Nile River is an important part of Egyptian civilization. The Nile originates in the mountains of east central Africa. From there, the river makes its way north to the sea. When it reaches the wide Egyptian valleys, the waters spread over an area of 12,000 square miles, and by the time they have moved on, they have left behind 200 million tons of soil and minerals. The Egyptian people have harnessed the river, making the Nile valley one of the richest farming regions in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Ancient Egypt was a prosperous civilization with many accomplishments. Ancient Egypt had a large, highly educated bureaucracy, gifted artists and craftsmen, talented engineers and scientists. Egyptian physicians drew medicines from plants and herbs, and passed their knowledge on to the Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. Egyptian mathematicians measured the year to the nearly exact 365 days, which they divided into twelve months. Egyptian merchants traded up and down the Red Sea and along the coast of the Mediterranean.

The **pyramids** are Egypt's most famous accomplishment. The first pyramid was built around 2700 B.C.E. The great pyramids that have fascinated generations of scholars and tourists were built a short time later.



Using masses of human beings for power, and technology no more sophisticated than levers and sleds and earthen ramps, they built several of these structures. The largest, the "Great Pyramid of Gizeh," was

460 feet high and 755 feet along each side. These enormous structures have survived for thousands of years to serve the inhabitants of modern Egypt. Many of the blocks were removed to provide building materials for the modern capital of Cairo.

NUBIA

Nubia, "the land upriver," was Egypt's most important neighbor. Nubia included the territories of modern-day Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Relations between Egypt and Nubia go back at least to 2500 B.C.E., and include periods of warfare, trade, colonization, and domination.

Egypt's main interest in Nubia was **economic**. Nubia was Egypt's main source of gold. It also provided hard stone, copper, and other metals. Nubia served as a trade link with regions farther south. This trade included frankincense, myrrh, ivory, ebony, animal skins, and ostrich feathers.

Nubia was also an important source of **manpower**. Over the centuries, Nubians often migrated north to live and work, many serving as soldiers in Egypt's armies. Nubians often achieved high rank in Egypt, and more than one pharaoh had Nubian blood flowing in his veins. But often the labor was involuntary, and Egyptian forces frequently marched south to take prisoners, who were sent back as slaves.



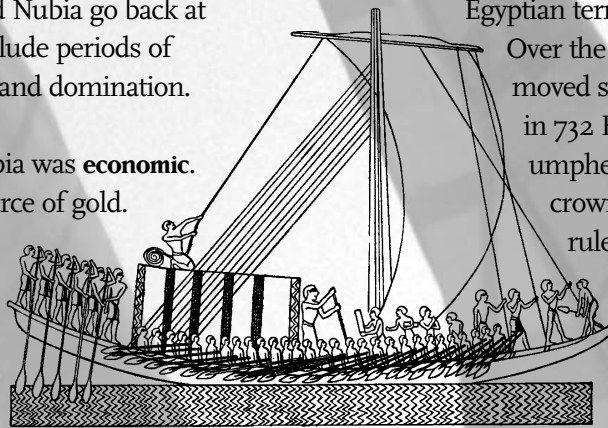
Egypt was not always the more powerful nation; sometimes Nubia was. Often, Egyptians marched into Nubia, killed all

the men, burned all the buildings and the crops, and carried the women and children off into slavery. Other times, Egyptians moved in peacefully, living and working with Nubians, making Nubia a province of Egypt. Around 1079 B.C.E., the Nubians rose up in revolt, declaring their land independent of Egypt. The two regions dealt with each other as equals.

As Egypt grew weaker, Nubia grew stronger. After 1079, Egyptian power declined. Nubia conquered Egyptian territories on their border.

Over the years, Nubian armies moved steadily north. Eventually, in 732 B.C.E., the Nubians triumphed, and a Nubian was crowned pharaoh. Nubian rule ended a century later.

Shortly afterwards, Egypt was conquered by the Assyrians.



InsideAIDA



Aida (Heather Headley) arrives in Egypt after being captured on the banks of the Nile River in Nubia.



HISTORY

Discussion

E X E R C I S E

DISCUSSION Objective

Students will understand how geography can change the fortunes, conquests and enslavements of countries.

TEACHING Tips

- Are there countries you can name in today's world that tend to be conquering nations? What do they get by conquering other nations, e.g. food, labor, access to waterways, increased power for a power hungry leader?
- Is there conquest in today's world by multinational corporations?
- Might aggressive marketing ever replace war as a way to make conquests?

FROM THE Script

Act I, Prologue

Aida opens in the Egyptian wing of a museum where ancient relics detail the drama of the conquest of Nubia by Egypt. A modern day woman, Aida, looks at the exhibition's statue of an Archer as the ancient princess Amneris sings about the love that survived in hateful times.

Amneris

THIS IS THE STORY
OF A LOVE THAT FLOURISHED
IN A TIME OF HATE

OF LOVERS NO TYRANNY COULD SEPARATE
LOVE SET INTO MOTION ON THE NILE'S SHORE
DESTINY IGNITED BY AN ACT OF WAR

EGYPT SAW THE MIGHTY RIVER AS ITS VERY
HEART AND SOUL
SOURCE OF LIFE FOR ALL HER PEOPLE

THAT ONLY EGYPT COULD CONTROL
DESTRUCTION OF HER SOUTHERN NEIGHBOR
JUSTIFIED
NUBIA EXPLOITED, LEFT WITH LITTLE MORE
THAN PRIDE

Exercise

- 1) Xerox two topographical maps. Lead the students in a discussion of the features of each country, mountain ranges, rivers, access, size, borders, proximity to other countries. How are they alike, how are they different? Given its geography, why might one be the conquerer and one the conquered?
- 2) Have students break up into three groups and come up with a basic sketch for a set for *Aida*. Have them first decide as a group what they might provide in terms of shapes, colors, and textures to evoke the Egyptian world.



HISTORY

Writing EXERCISE

WRITING Objective

Empathize with individuals whose lives are changed by conquest and slavery.

TEACHING Tips

■ What is the history of slavery in our country? When did slavery become outlawed and why were those choices made? Can you name some remnants of a slave culture in our country? Do you believe that a history of slavery has been erased?

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene 3

The musical Aida brings a modern world man and woman into an ancient world that they might have inhabited. At the opening of the show a museum exhibition transforms into Ancient Egypt as a large gangplank lowers from one side of the stage, and Egyptian soldiers unload newly conquered Nubian slaves. One of the slaves is Aida.

Aida

THE FUTURE IS A BARREN WORLD
FROM WHICH I CAN'T RETURN
BOTH HEARTLESS AND MATERIAL
ITS WRETCHED SPOILS NOT MY CONCERN
SHINING LIKE AN EVIL SUN
AS MY CHILDHOOD TREASURES BURN

Exercise

After reading historical background information about ancient Nubia and about ancient Egypt, have students write a three-day journal entry from the point of view as either a princess (after she's taken as a slave in battle) or a soldier (after he's taken a slave in battle). As such, describe both the country you've left and the country and people who have enslaved you, or the country you live in and the people you have enslaved. Focus on the sights and sounds in the new lands, on the treatment you're receiving or giving to others, on the feelings you have for your position, the work you do and the home you have left or that you're living in. Be sure that you're speaking from the voice of your character rather than commenting on that character from a modern point of view.



HISTORY

Experiential

E X E R C I S E

EXPERIENTIAL Objective

Students will evaluate modes of living and spiritual survival in different cultures.

TEACHING Tips

■ Ask students what they have read in the newspapers in the last month that pertains to war. See what they know about a specific war, such as the one in the Middle East. Collect facts and impressions. See if you can make sense out of what might be happening in warring nations.

■ Ask students if they think that warring nations can ever really find peaceful solutions to their problems on their own or if they need other leaders and other nations to intervene.

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene 12

The Nubians have heard that their king has been captured and possibly killed. Aida tells them that Nubia will never die, whether they are enslaved or far from home, because it lives in their hearts.

Aida

TAKE ME IN MY DREAMS RECURRING
CHEERFUL AS A CHILDHOOD DANCE
INTO ONE MORE TASTE OF FREEDOM
ONE MORE LONGING BACKWARD GLANCE

IN THE SWAY OF SOMBER MUSIC
I SHALL NEVER, NEVER UNDERSTAND
LET ME SLIP IN, INTO THE SWEETER
CHORUS OF THAT OTHER LAND...

THE GODS LOVE NUBIA
THE BEAUTIFUL, THE GOLDEN
THE RADIANT, THE FERTILE
THE GENTLE AND THE BLESSED

THE PAIN OF NUBIA
IS ONLY OF THE MOMENT
THE DESOLATE, THE SUFFERING
THE PLUNDERED, THE OPPRESSED

Nehebka

THE GODS LOVE NUBIA, THEIR GLORIOUS
CREATION
THEIR SONGS ROLL SWEETLY ACROSS THE
HARVEST PLAIN

Aida and Nehebka

THE TEARS OF NUBIA
A PASSING ABERRATION
THEY WASH INTO THE RIVER AND ARE
NEVER CRIED AGAIN

Aida, Nehebka, Mereb and Nubian women

THE GODS LOVE NUBIA
WE HAVE TO KEEP BELIEVING
THOUGH SCATTERED AND DIVIDED
WE ARE STILL ITS HEART

All

THE FALL OF NUBIA
EPHEMERAL AND FLEETING
THE SPIRIT ALWAYS BURNING
THOUGH THE FLESH IS TORN APART

TAKE ME IN MY DREAMS RECURRING
CHEERFUL AS A CHILDHOOD DANCE
INTO ONE MORE TASTE OF FREEDOM
ONE MORE LONGING BACKWARD GLANCE

THE GODS LOVE NUBIA, THE BEAUTIFUL AND
THE GOLDEN
THE RADIANT, THE FERTILE, THE GENTLE AND
THE BLESSED
THE PAIN OF NUBIA IS ONLY OF THE MOMENT
THE DESOLATE, THE SUFFERING, THE
PLUNDERED, THE OPPRESSED

THE GODS LOVE NUBIA, WE HAVE TO KEEP
BELIEVING
THOUGH SCATTERED AND DIVIDED WE ARE
STILL ITS HEART

Exercise

Compare your culture to the Nubian culture. Pick an aspect that you like (from theirs or from yours). Be prepared to share an anecdote from your life about this aspect of your life and how and why it gives you pleasure. Also talk about something in your life that you absolutely need to survive. If you have nothing that is absolutely necessary for your survival, explain why you think you can survive without anything that you know in your world as it is. If you are convinced that this feature is something that you need explain why this is so important to your survival.



HISTORY

HOME PAGE

NAME _____

DATE _____

CLASS _____

TEACHER _____

1. What do **YOU** think?

Do you think that some countries are justified in conquering other countries? If yes, what situations or principles apply. If not, why hasn't war and colonization ever been outlawed in human history? Is the human race capable of setting up a network of world peace?

2. **EXPRESS** yourself...

Is politics always a negative term? How is Aida political in her treatment of the Egyptians and the Nubians? How is Radames political in his treatment of his father, Zoser, and his fiancée, Amneris? How is this similar and how is it different from the politics of Zoser?

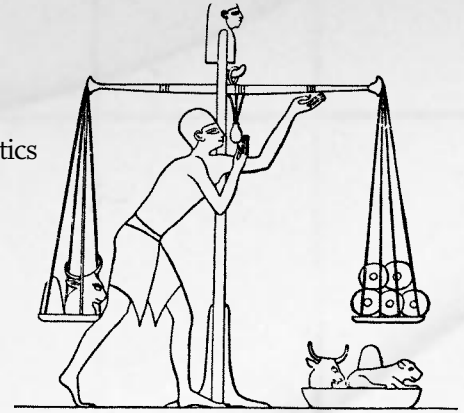
3. After **HOURS**

Identify different cultures that coexist in your community. They can be ethnic cultures, sports cultures, school club cultures. Note features about one of these cultures that will continue if individuals need to leave these cultures as their lives go on. Then look at your own primary cultural affiliation. What would survive for you if you were to leave it? What might you have to lose or leave behind?

MATH &

Exhibition SCIENCE

WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE of mathematics and physical science, the Ancient Egyptians were among the first to create a calendar; observe and record the motions of the stars; and, of course, construct massive pyramids and temples that stand to this day, thousands of years after they were built.



The Egyptians used only addition and subtraction; they had no symbol or concept for “zero,” and no decimal notation, although they did use fractions.

Weights and Measures

- Hekat = “a jar,” approximately one gallon
- Khar = “a sackful,” 16 hekats
- Cubit = approximately 20 inches, about the length from the elbow to the tip of the finger
- Hand = 7 hands equal one cubit

Ancient Egypt used the barter system; there was no currency. Goods were given a value in “debens” — small copper weights. An ox might be valued at one hundred debens, for instance, and traded for an amount of grain of equal value, but no debens actually changed hands. Trading was done locally at outdoor markets. The desert and the Nile were barriers to trading with other countries, but Nubia, being closest, was the country Egypt traded with most frequently.



The Egyptian calendar divided the year into 12 months, each one with three 10-day weeks. At the end of the year were five days of feasting and religious festivals. This added up to 360 days: since the year is actually 365 and 1/4 days long, the Egyptian calendar slowly became out of sync with the seasons. Farmers then watched the stars to find out when the annual flooding of the Nile would begin. Sirius (which they called Sothis) was eclipsed by the sun for 70 days each year — when it became visible again, the inundation of the Nile was near. An Egyptian scribe wrote that the Egyptian civil and agricultural calendars were aligned in the year we call C.E. 139; this will let us pin down the dates of the Egyptian dynasties very accurately.



GREAT PYRAMID FACTS

- constructed circa 2500 B.C.E.
- built on the plateau at Giza
- assembled from 2,300,000 limestone blocks
- each block averaged 2.5 tons, some as heavy as 15 tons
- the blocks are fitted so closely together a hair can't fit between them
- originally 481 feet high, now eroded to 450
- approximately 755 feet on each side
- contains over 30 times the mass of the Empire State Building
- oriented exactly to the compass points
- original limestone facing was stripped away in the 10th century C.E. for use as construction material



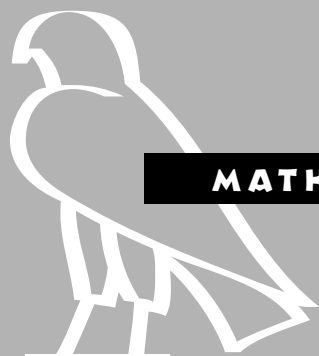
PYRAMIDS

"The Age of Pyramids" lasted for 1,000 years, from 2686 to 1550 B.C.E. By the time of the Third Intermediate Period (1070 B.C.E.), during which *Aida* is set, the pyramids were already ancient. They were built with astonishing skill — in fact, we are still not sure how the Egyptians accomplished some of their feats of engineering. The most famous of the Egyptian pyramids is the Pyramid of Khufu, the Great Pyramid.

InsideAIDA



Thomas Schumacher (Producer), Elton John (Composer), Robert Falls (Director) in a rehearsal for *Aida*.



MATH & SCIENCE

Discussion

E X E R C I S E

DISCUSSION Objective

To encourage students to assess values that may differ from conventional values of their time.

TEACHING Tips

■ Currency and the barter system. How do we assign value to a dollar? Is it the actual worth of the paper, or something else? What values would you assign to some of the things you use everyday, such as tofu, pizza, KFC, Versace jeans, Jennifer Lopez CDs, etc.? What sort of things would you trade if you were an Ancient Egyptian?

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene II

Radames is ready to give up all his worldly possessions to run away with Aida. Aida loves Radames as well, but her choices will become more confusing for her as the story unfolds.

Radames

WE ALL LEAD SUCH ELABORATE LIVES
WILD AMBITIONS IN OUR SIGHTS
HOW AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART SURVIVES
DAYS APART AND HURRIED NIGHTS
SEEMS QUITE UNBELIEVABLE TO ME
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT
SEEMS QUITE UNBELIEVABLE TO ME
I DON'T WANT TO LOVE LIKE THAT
I JUST WANT OUR TIME TO BE
SLOWER AND GENTLER, WISER, FREE
WE ALL LIVE IN EXTRAVAGANT TIMES
PLAYING GAMES WE CAN'T ALL WIN
UNINTENDED EMOTIONAL CRIMES
TAKE SOME OUT TAKE OTHERS IN

I'M SO TIRED OF ALL WE'RE GOING
THROUGH
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT
I'M SO TIRED OF ALL WE'RE GOING
THROUGH
I DON'T WANT TO LOVE LIKE THAT

I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU
NOW AND FOREVER, PEACEFUL, TRUE
THIS MAY NOT BE THE MOMENT TO TELL
YOU FACE TO FACE
BUT I COULD WAIT FOREVER FOR THE PER-
FECT TIME AND PLACE

Aida & Radames

WE ALL LEAD SUCH ELABORATE LIVES
WE DON'T KNOW WHOSE WORDS ARE TRUE
STRANGERS, LOVERS, HUSBANDS, WIVES
HARD TO KNOW WHO'S LOVING WHO

Aida

TOO MANY CHOICES TEAR US APART
I DON'T WANT TO LOVE LIKE THAT
I JUST WANT TO TOUCH YOUR HEART

Radames

MAY THIS CONFESSION

Aida & Radames

BE THE START.

Exercise

Imagine you had to change the basic fabric of your life and could devise new ways of dealing with money. Imagine a future world in which math and science are calculated and understood differently than they are today. Consider the culture you created in the writing exercise. What might the needs of that culture be? What would the currency system be, would money still change hands? What building materials would be necessary? How might the weather have changed in this world? Would people live longer, shorter or forever in this world? Would there still be young, middle-aged and older people?

Most specifically, discuss how you might invent another barter system. What might you use as another unit of value—perhaps CDs, Beanie Babies, marbles, etc.? How would you devise a wage scale for various jobs? Might you choose higher wages for less rewarding jobs and lower wages for more rewarding jobs? Have your students break up into groups of six to set up a new system of either barter or wages. Have them come up with their choices based upon the human and financial values of the community. Have the students write out a new system that the group can accept. Present this system and explain how the group arrived at it.



MATH & SCIENCE

Writing EXERCISE

WRITING Objective

The measurement of time, given the measuring systems in ancient Egypt, compared to the measuring systems today.

TEACHING Tips

■ Assume you are an Egyptian pharaoh, determining a calendar from the date of your birth. What calendar day is it? Given that there is a 1/4 day discrepancy between the Egyptian calendar and the actual length of the year (which we solve by adding an extra “leap day” every four years), how long would it be before the Egyptian calendar was inaccurate by a month? How long would it take until the Egyptian calendar was again in alignment?

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene 9

Radames has met the conquered slave and princess Aida. Attracted to her, he decides not to send her to the copper mines. The depth of this attraction leads him to question his engagement to the Egyptian princess, Amneris, and to question his flippant approach to love and happiness.

Radames

I ONCE KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS
I STOOD ON CERTAIN GROUND
A PICTURE OF TRUE HAPPINESS
CONFIDENCE SO EFFORTLESS
NO BRIGHTER COULD BE FOUND

Mereb

OH, NO.

Radames

I NEVER ASKED THE QUESTIONS
THAT TROUBLE ME TODAY
I KNEW ALL THERE WAS TO KNOW
LOVE WORN LIGHTLY, PUT ON SHOW
MY CONQUESTS ON DISPLAY

Mereb

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S CHANGING

Radames

AND WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT CONFIDENCE COULD DIE?
NOT ME NOT ME
THAT ALL I TOOK FOR GRANTED WAS A LIE

Mereb

OH, NO, NOT ME, NOT ME

Radames

NOT ME NOT ME
AND WHO'D HAVE GUESSED I'D THROW
MY WORLD AWAY

Mereb

NOT ME, NOT ME

Radames

TO BE WITH SOMEONE I'M AFRAID WILL SAY
NOT ME NOT ME

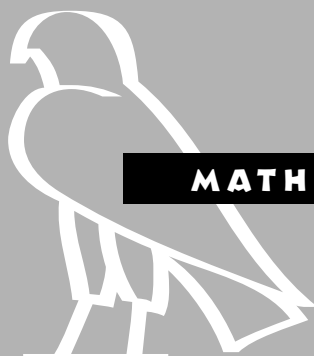
Mereb

THIS CAN NEVER BE
HE'S IN LOVE
BUT HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'LL BE
CHANGED

Exercise

Have students do a group writing based upon specific objects that the teacher will supply. Have the students suppose that these objects will function differently in a future world. Bring in common objects such as a hairbrush, a doll, a hair dryer, a Styrofoam cup, a box of Cheerios, a backpack, a cell phone, etc.. Have each group build a future culture that uses four of these common objects in a way that fits a newly created and conceived future culture. Have them write a description of this culture in terms of the uses of these objects. Then have the groups exchange objects and see how each one has reconceived the same object.

Imagine that you are a reporter for *The New York Times*, interviewing a museum archeologist who has been able to visit this future culture. Write a 10 to 20 sentence interview about his/her visit to this future society (either through time travel or through his imagination). Describe ways in which reading this report increases or decreases your confidence in your present lifestyle.

**EXPERIENTIAL
Objective**

Students will determine normal patterns of natural events vs. abnormal or unnatural events.

TEACHING Tips

■ What natural events do you observe throughout the year? (Days getting shorter/longer, temperature dropping/rising, etc.) What events do these changes signal to you? (Days getting longer means summer is coming/school will be out, days getting shorter in summer means fall is coming, etc.) What natural events have you heard about in the news that are normal for some parts of the country and abnormal for others?

FROM THE Script**Act II, Scene 3**

Radames is confronting his father's assumption that he will live his life "like father, like son" and keep Aida as his slave girl mistress and Amneris as his royal wife.

Ministers

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Zoser

DON'T COME ON SO COCKSURE BOY
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE YOUR GENES
THERE'S NO POINT IN FEELING PURE BOY
YOUR BACKGROUND INTERVENES
LISTEN GOOD AND LISTEN STRAIGHT
YOU'RE NOT THE MASTER OF YOUR FATE
TO THIS YOU MUST BE RECONCILED
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE YOUR FATHER'S CHILD
AT TIMES ACCLAIMED, AT TIMES REVILED
YOU'LL WIND UP DOING JUST WHAT
I'D HAVE DONE
LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Radames

DON'T ASSUME YOUR VICES
GET HANDED DOWN THE LINE
THAT A PARENT'S BLOOD SUFFICES
TO CONDEMN THE CHILD'S DESIGN
I'VE DONE WRONG I CAN'T DENY
BUT AT LEAST I KNOW THAT I
SHOULDN'T BLAME THAT ON MY STOCK
THIS MAY COME AS QUITE A SHOCK
BUT I'M NO CHIP OFF ANY BLOCK
I WOULDN'T WISH THOSE WORDS ON
ANYONE
LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Exercise

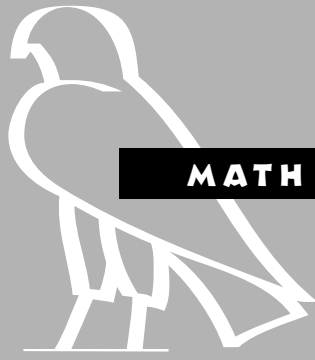
One purpose of Egyptian architecture and other ancient architecture, such as Stonehenge in England, was to be able to view the movement of the sun over time. Have the students observe the position of the sun at the same time each day, for a week, in relation to a landmark, building, etc. Have them bring in a drawing or a graph that describes the location, shape and size of the landmark and the changes that have taken place in the position of the sun each day.

The sun is part of nature's pattern. A building is man-made. How might you redesign your landmark or building to give a better reading of the movement of the sun? Explain how human desires and beliefs might have gone into the original planning of the landmark or building and how that has been in accord or not in accord with the natural cycles around it.

Have the students present their observations with both their visual aid, a description of their daily observations and the changes in the location that would aid them in making these observations.

Alternatively:

Have your students experiment with scenes set in their particular cultures. Imagine that they are characters in their cultures, and that they are faced with a particular conflict that is assigned by the teacher. For example, imagine that there is a conflict between an older culture and a newer culture over the ownership of certain lands, each having different ideas about land development and usage. Or imagine that there is a conflict over who goes to certain high schools, some leading to a higher education, and some training schools for more hands-on occupations. This could be a debate about what one considers the best way to evaluate intelligence. Another conflict could be about who might be able to marry whom and who cannot marry whom. This controversy could be about age, race, economic or social status, gender, etc. Have your students act out these scenes.

**NAME** _____**DATE** _____**CLASS** _____**TEACHER** _____

1. What do **YOU** think?

Do you think your community values people and things equally or unequally? Which is more valued in your opinion? Survey a friend, a family member, and a respected teacher or mentor. What is their opinion on this subject and do you agree with them?

2. **EXPRESS** yourself...

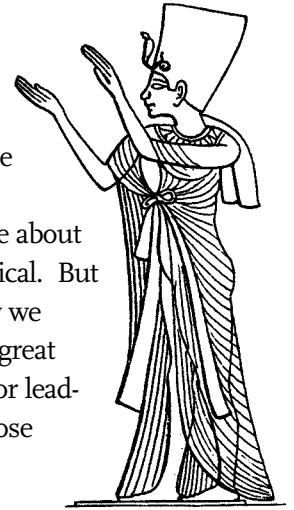
The new gene that can indicate our predisposition to disease and longevity is soon to be identified. Do you feel that this is a good thing for mankind? Imagine that it is your job to introduce the existence of the gene to a very poor family without much access to money or health insurance. What would you say to them about the benefits of this discovery?

3. After **HOURS**

The Egyptian architects built their pyramids and tombs to convey a sense of awe and wonder, celebrating the passage of the pharaoh into the next world. Visit a church, temple, synagogue, mosque, or monument of some kind. Jot down your first impressions. What sort of feelings does the architecture of the building inspire in you? What do you think the intentions of the architects were? What thoughts do you have about the people for whom the edifice was built? In what ways do you relate to the intentions and feelings evoked by the edifice and in what ways do you feel removed and distanced from it?

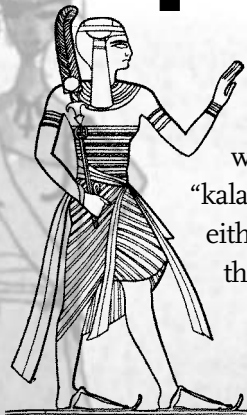
ARTS & Exhibition CULTURE

WHEN TAKING A FIRST LOOK AT AMNERIS, the princess of Egypt in *Aida*, it seems that she is concerned mainly with one thing — her looks. Before learning more about her, one might conclude that Amneris is vain and egotistical. But we have all, at one point in time, been judged for the way we look. Amneris is a princess at a time when Egypt is in a great state of upheaval, and Egyptians look to those of royalty for leadership. To better understand Amneris' feelings, take a close look at the history of **Egyptian fashion**.



Ancient Egyptian men wore primarily triangle-shaped loincloths, usually made of linen or rushes. Both royalty and the common man wore this type of loincloth from the 4th to the 18th dynasties.

- The King wore his **loincloth**, known as the “Shend’ot,” finely pleated and rounded off to show gold trim on the right side and a lion’s tale hanging from the belt.
- The chief justice and governor wore their **skirts longer**, suspended by shoulder bands.
- Commoners would imitate the king’s skirt by adorning their own in gold.



During the New Kingdom, men began to imitate women’s dress and wore a sewn sheath called a “kalasaris,” which varied in length and was supported either with shoulder straps or with a short sleeve on the left arm only.

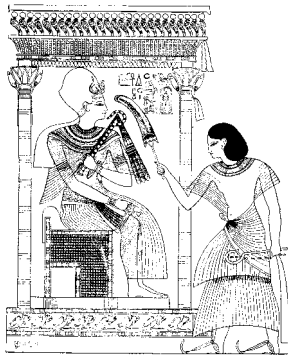
Women's costumes, also made from linen, were far less extravagant than men's, and consisted of simple garments, without folds, that were fairly narrow and tight fitting to the body. They were usually white, but royalty sometimes wore them colored in red and yellow, or hemmed at the top with an embroidered border. Throughout the years, as this style developed and the dress became looser, it fell freely over the arms like a robe.

The more jewelry one wore the higher his or her position in society. The wealthiest people wore broad collars made of silver (which was a more precious commodity than gold). Jewelry was also made from:

- brightly colored pebbles
- semiprecious stones
- gold faience
- glass

Women also wore several pairs of bracelets around the wrist or high up on the arm, as well as rings, anklets, earrings, and bands that wrapped around the head.

Royal women and men clipped or shaved their heads. They replaced their own hair with wigs made of either human hair or wool, often dyed blue, black, or red. Most common people wore their own hair, which was usually plait-



ed with small braids. To guarantee that their hair would smell good, women wore cones of fat on their heads, soaked with sweet-smelling ointments that would melt down over their wigs and dresses.

Both men and women also wore make-up:

- Kohl, a black dye that protected against certain eye infections, was used to line their eyes and eyebrows.
- Men also used kohl to draw themselves thin moustaches or chin hair.
- Women used henna to redden their lips and nails.

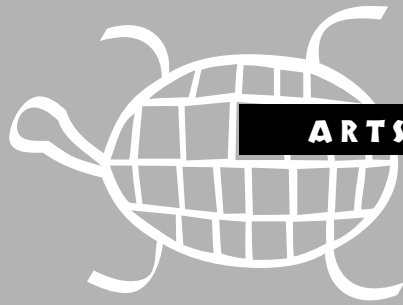
So, as you can see, Amneris is not unusual in being so concerned about her appearance. Fashion was of great importance in the ancient Egyptians' way of life, since it played a crucial role in both the ordinary lives of people and their hierarchical culture.



InsideAIDA



The Nile River acts as a backdrop throughout much of Aida.



ARTS & CULTURE

Discussion

E X E R C I S E

DISCUSSION Objective

How fashion plays a part in historical events.

TEACHING Tips

■ Why do you think so many ancient Egyptians, men and women alike, chose to shave their heads and wear wigs rather than style their own hair? Consider what you've just learned about their climate, hierarchy, and society in your answer.

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene 5

Aida has shown Amneris that she understands fashion and can provide her with unusually beautiful clothes. "There's a dyeing process I use which makes fabric glow. It's a secret that was passed down from the handmaidens of Queen Nefertiti." Amneris decides to keep Aida as her slave rather than send her to the copper mines where she would quickly die. Because Aida has convinced Amneris that she "knows her fabrics," the Nubian princess is safe and Egyptian history is facing a change.

Amneris

AND THE FEW WHO ARE INVITED
TO MY WARDROBE ARE DELIGHTED
AS THEY WANDER THROUGH MY THINGS
TO FIND EN ROUTE
THAT IN NEGLIGEE OR FORMAL
I AM ANYTHING BUT NORMAL
THAT DRESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN
MY STRONGEST SUIT

Exercise

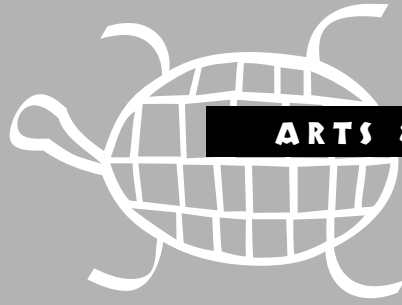
The kings and royal men in Egypt were most elaborately dressed and held in highest esteem. The queens and royal women dressed less elaborately but still relied upon high fashion to make their status known. The slaves and lower classes would need to dress simply in order to make others shine. How does Aida use that information to secure her place in Amneris' court and to keep her identity safe as the secret princess from Nubia? What does Aida's self possession suggest to you about the attitude in Nubia towards the statement "That dress has always been my strongest suit?" What would you describe as Aida's strongest suit?

Have the class pick the five most admired people that they know as a group. They could be movie or stage stars, presidents, first ladies, senators, teachers, coaches and so on.

List in order of priority their three best characteristics.

Is their dress a top priority? How much does it affect their popularity and status? Do you admire them more if they dress well?

Could you admire them if they dressed conservatively or extravagantly? Would people admire them if they only dressed well but didn't have good judgment?



ARTS & CULTURE

Writing EXERCISE

WRITING Objective

How do the arts and fashions of a culture establish status?

TEACHING Tips

■ Do you think that, in our democratic system of government, fashion plays just as an important role to our way of life as it did to the ancient Egyptians? Why or why not?

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene 5

Amneris is the princess of Egypt and fiancée of the young hero Radames. Although Radames has ignored her she is convinced to take heart when Mereb tells her that she is "Princess Amneris – first in beauty, wisdom and accessories. Captain Radames has not forgotten you. He knows you will be at the feast tonight in all your extravagant finery." Immediately, Amneris gets her new slave girl, Aida, to stitch her a new dress.

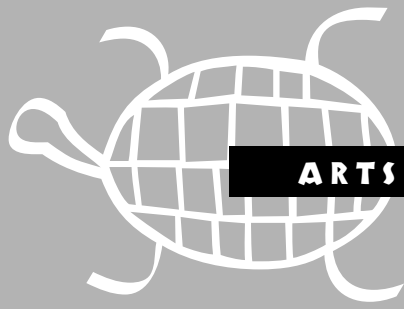
Amneris

STAYING IN OR HITTING TOWNWARDS
FROM THE TOP AND WORKING DOWNWARDS
I ENSURE THAT EVERY STITCH
IS STITCHED IN TIME

WHETHER WIG OR HAT OR TURBAN
WHETHER CLAD BOUDOIR OR URBAN
NOT TO STRUT YOUR STUFF
OUTRAGEOUSLY'S A CRIME

Exercise

Pretend that you are writing a two-minute TV advertising spot. You are selling a new product called Egyptian Beauty Queen. Use information from your Egyptian Fashion notes section to convince a modern TV audience to buy your product. Your product includes jewelry, makeup and clothes. Indicate the visual images that will accompany the script. Indicate the characters you would like to include, if any, and give a description of their physical appearance and personality. This is a two-minute ad costing your company, Egyptian Beauty Queen, one million dollars a minute for prime-time TV, so be sure to make it very convincing.



ARTS & CULTURE

Experiential E X E R C I S E

EXPERIENTIAL Objective

Observe the ways in which symbolic thinking affects our understanding of each other.

TEACHING Tips

■ Ancient Egyptians designed much of their jewelry in the form of symbols, although there is still doubt about what many of these symbols represented. Considering their political culture and their environment, what do you think animal, insect, and flower symbols may have represented?

FROM THE Script

Act I, Scene 5

As Amneris waits for Radames, she hopes that their mutual love of glamour and adventure will attract him to her. She does not know that after meeting Aida, Radames has become more impressed with Aida's wit and fair-mindedness than Amneris' love of material things.

Amneris

SO BRING ME ALL MY FINEST
MOST AUDACIOUS MY DIVINEST
MOST REVEALING
MOST EXPENSIVE AND TO BOOT
MOST ARRESTING
MOST HEART-STOPPING
MOST FREE FLOWING
MOST EYE POPPING
MOST ARRESTING
MOST HEART STOPPING

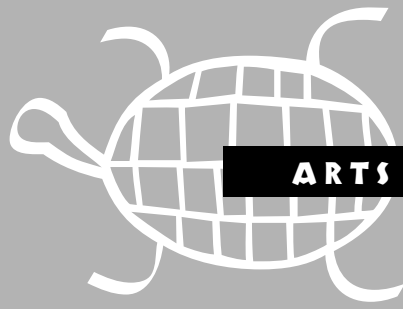
Women

MOST REVEALING MOST EXPENSIVE
MOST ARRESTING
MOST HEART-STOPPING
MOST HEART-STOPPING
OVERWEAR
UNDERWEAR
ANYTIME
ANYWHERE

Exercise

If you were to create a symbol to represent yourself, what would it look like? Explain your answer. Pick a group of people who you know quite well and to which you belong (your family, your class, a club, etc). Come up with symbols for three of them.

In the classroom, break up into groups of four. Present these symbols to the group. Do these symbols come from the ways that they dress, act and make decisions? Explain and expand your thoughts as you present these symbols and the ideas they embody to your group.



ARTS & CULTURE

HOME PAGE

NAME _____

DATE _____

CLASS _____

TEACHER _____

1. What do **YOU** think?

Should clothes make the man/woman, or should man/woman make the clothes? What do you think? Explain your thoughts.

2. **EXPRESS** yourself...

Write a short song describing your "strongest suit." You can use the Amneris song as a model and let it begin with

_____ has always been my strongest suit.

I am what _____

So bring me all my _____

Because _____ has always been my strongest suit.

Etc.

Or you can choose a song style and pattern of your own.

3. After **HOURS**

Check various magazines and newspapers (at least three) that feature people of celebrity, people in the news and people in the street. Don't read anything about them at first—just cut out a pile of photographs. Next, describe what the photographs say to you about their lives. After you read about them, report upon the correctness or the incorrectness of your assumptions based upon their posture and their dress. Once again answer the question, do the clothes make the man/woman?