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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume II: Cultures and Their Myths

From Atum-Ra to Horus -- Using Egyptian Myths of Gods and Goddesses as Springboards to Increased Literacy

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.02.01
by Christine Elmore

In this curriculum unit I have set forth a literature-based program which focuses on Egyptian mythology. To better appreciate the background of Egyptian myths, we will explore some aspects of the ancient Egyptian civilization and the role that the Nile River played in people's view of life, death, and the afterlife.

We will examine adapted versions of three types of myths: cosmological, order, and life-crisis, and we will look at particular mythological symbols in the case of each myth. The introduction of such symbols will help my young students make initial associations and distinctions between stories, and from such a concrete study we can more easily move into exploration and experimentation with hieroglyphic writing to develop a greater appreciation of ancient Egyptian art.

To bring further clarity and meaning to the myths examined, I have chosen relevant interdisciplinary extension activities to accompany each myth, particularly stressing the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Although I have designed this unit with second-graders in mind, I am confident that it could be easily adapted by teachers of K-5, if not older.

(Recommended for Reading and Language Arts - Grades K-5)

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