

The Pharaoh's Afterlife

A fast-moving enquiry with lots of short, fun questions. It works best when led almost entirely by pupil ideas once you get past the opening stages.



Begin with some light-hearted questions to get pupils excitedly recapping their Egyptian knowledge. For example, in pairs, let them debate which would have been better: to be a Pharaoh, or a normal Egyptian citizen? Or to live near the Nile, or far from it? Or which are more important – the Sphinx, or the Pyramids?

Briefly recap on the afterlife as believed in Ancient Egypt, and that of another religion you have studied. If you have a session longer than 30 minutes, invest some time in creating a name for a fictional Pharaoh by asking three or four pupils to give a one syllable sound. Recently, we've had I did Pharaoh '**Sha-a-man**', and a few weeks later '**Om-ba-sa**.'

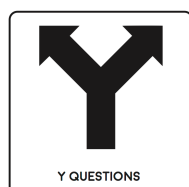
Follow up with a series of questions for paired talk, such as:

If they were an advisor to the Pharaoh, what would they recommend he be buried with?

What will our Pharaoh do when he gets to the afterlife?

Eventually, he's going to get a bit bored. What could he do to stay entertained? Previously, I've suggestions that Sha-a-man would host Ancient Egypt's Got Talent, have a 1,000 year jubilee party, or demand that he become reincarnated.

These may seem trivial questions, but they lay the groundwork for the thinking in the main Y-Question.



You might find your group arrive at Y-Question organically, such as 'Does everything get boring after time'? If so, run with it and see where it goes!

A more dependable option is to present 3 or 4 pre-made Y-Questions – each taking a concept or issue raised in the Get Moving activities – and let them vote for which they find most interesting:

- What would be better – an eternal afterlife in paradise, or reincarnation in our world?
- What would a 'perfect' afterlife look like?
- Could the afterlife get boring?
- Are people naturally good? (based on the weighing of the heart to judge whether a soul passes into the afterlife)



The next stage will depend on which question was chosen. Each bring deeper concepts at play, and as it is such an imaginative topic, our advice would be to take a slighter more active role in helping pupils connect their ideas to each others. For example, repeating back what they say in a simpler form for the benefit of all, and being vigilant to make sure what is said directly responds to previous ideas. Otherwise, there's a risk it could turn into a big round-robin of '*I think's...*' with little critical dialogue.

NEXT STEPS

Keeping with the improvisational theme, you can take one of their questions to give as 'home-talk.' Alternatively, you could ask pupils to write a diary entry for Pharaoh, giving his thoughts on the nature of the afterlife. Is it what he expected? Is it boring or brilliant?