Social Studies Day 4 – Ancient Egypt: Making Mummies

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Ancient Egypt: Making Mummies

by ReadWorks



mummy coffins

Thousands of years ago in ancient Egypt, pharaohs were buried inside huge pyramids. Before **burial**, however, their bodies were **preserved**. To do this, the ancient Egyptians would *mummify* their kings. Mummification was a very careful process. In fact, it took 70 days to complete.

First, embalmers would **remove** organs from the body. They **removed** the brain by sticking a hook up the pharaoh's nose. This would loosen up the brain so it could be pulled out through the nose. The ancient Egyptians didn't think the brain was important, so it was thrown away. The stomach, liver, intestines, and lungs were also **removed**. These organs were carefully wrapped and kept in jars. They thought the heart was most important. They left the heart in its place.

The body was now a shell. The embalmers stuffed it with fabric and sawdust. Then it was covered in salt, which dried it out. When the body was completely dry, it was wrapped in layers and layers of linen bandages. Then it was placed in a **coffin**.

Sometimes, the **coffin** was placed inside another coffin. These **coffins** were made out of wood or stone. They were either shaped like a rectangle or like the mummy itself. The **coffin** was placed in a tomb. Next to it were many objects for the mummy to use in the afterlife.

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Vocabulary

burial

noun

definition: the act of putting a dead body underground or in the sea.
The family went to the cemetery for the burial.

Spanish: entierro, sepelio

coffin

noun

definition: A coffin is a box that is made to hold a dead person.
Six men carried the coffin into the church for the funeral.

Spanish: ataúd

preserve

verb

definition: When you preserve something, you protect it from being hurt or harmed, or you keep it from changing.
A lot of people in our town want to preserve the old buildings instead of building new ones.

Spanish: proteger, conservar, mantener, preservar

forms: preserved, preserves, preserving

remove

verb

definition: When you remove something, you make it go away. You get rid of it.
This product removes paint very easily.
The stain was set in, and I couldn't remove it.

Spanish: remover, quitar, sacar

forms: removed, removing

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1. Before you start reading...

Here are the vocabulary words that will be in this reading. Let's see how well you already know them.

Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

	Don't know it	Have heard of it but not sure of its meaning	Know something about its meaning	Know it well
burial				
coffin				
preserve				
remove				

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2. Word Builder

Words are made of smaller parts that are called syllables. Some words have one syllable, but many have two or more. Draw lines to show how the syllables build each vocabulary word.

cof fin i al
serve pre
move
re bur

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____

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3. After reading and exploring the words through some activities...

Do you know these words better? Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

	Don't know it	Have heard of it but not sure of its meaning	Know something about its meaning	Know it well
burial				
coffin				
preserve				
remove				

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. According to the text, what happens when embalmers cover a body with salt?

A. The body becomes soft.

B. The body turns white.

C. The body dries out.

D. The body disintegrates.

2. Which step comes last in the sequence described in the text?

A. The body is placed in a coffin.

B. Organs are removed from the body

C. The body is wrapped in linen bandages.

D. The coffin is placed in a tomb.

3. Read this paragraph from the text.

> First, embalmers would remove organs from the body. They removed the brain by sticking a hook up the pharaoh's nose. This would loosen up the brain so it could be pulled out through the nose. The ancient Egyptians didn't think the brain was important, so it was thrown away. The stomach, liver, intestines, and lungs were also removed. These organs were carefully wrapped and kept in jars.

What can you conclude about ancient Egyptian mummification based on this information?

A. Embalmers removed fingernails and toenails because they believed these would cause damage in the afterlife.

B. The ancient Egyptians didn't think the brain was important because they didn't know how it worked in the body.

C. The kidneys were not considered important to ancient Egyptians, so they threw these away as well.

D. The ancient Egyptians thought that the stomach, liver, intestines, and lungs were all equally important.

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4. What can be inferred from the text about the ancient Egypt?

A. The ancient Egyptians thought the brain was the most important organ.

B. Usually only special people like pharaohs were mummified.

C. Everyone who died in Ancient Egypt was mummified.

D. The ancient Egyptians did not think that people had an afterlife.

5. What is this text mostly about?

A. the different kinds of coffins used in Ancient Egypt

B. the different organs inside the human body

C. what is inside the Egyptian pyramids

D. the long, careful process of mummification

6. Based on the text, what process is the word "**mummification**" describing?

A. preserving bodies

B. hiding bodies

C. burying bodies

D. destroying bodies

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Some people in ancient Egypt used to be mummified before being buried, _____ the way people are buried today.

A. because

B. despite

C. in contrast to

D. as a result of

8. Based on the text, why were objects placed in tombs along with the mummies?

9. Based on the text, why did embalmers stuff the bodies with fabric and sawdust?

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