

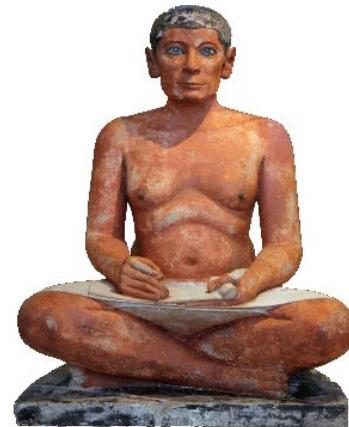
What are Hieroglyphs?



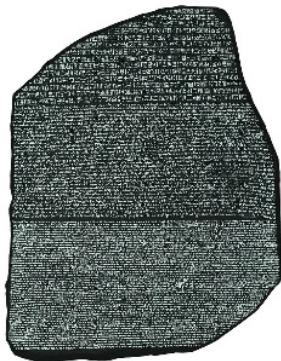
Egyptian **hieroglyphs** or literally “sacred carvings” were in use before 3100 BC. They developed from pictures of objects or things (pictographs), and they always retained their pictorial form. *Pictographs* are simple drawings of objects that prehistoric peoples knew and saw around them, which they used as **symbols** to represent the words for the objects in their particular language. *Phonograms* are “sound signs” that represent the individual sounds which make up the words in a language. The Egyptian “alphabet” are pictographs that function as phonograms.

Scribes were ancient Egyptian writers and carvers serving as administrators, tax gatherers and accountants. They had a high status in society and directed and supervised many others. Their duties included:

- Imposition and collection of taxes
- Keeping accounts
- Keeping army records
- Controlling the law courts
- Composing and copying religious and other texts



The Rosetta Stone



Uncovered by Napoleon’s troops in 1799 in the Nile Delta near Rosetta, Egypt, this black basalt stone carried an inscription in three scripts – Greek, hieroglyphs, and demotic. Ceded to Britain in 1801 CE, the Rosetta Stone now resides in the British Museum. In 1822 CE, French Egyptologist Jean-François Champollion decoded its meaning and now, after nearly 2000 years, hieroglyphs can be read once again!

Try these fun activities with Egyptian Hieroglyphs!

1. Decode the Egyptian Tomb wall panel into English

Below is a simplified translation of the hieroglyphic alphabet into English letters historians have come up with.

- A. Use this alphabet key to decode the ancient Egyptian tomb wall panel on the following page. For our purposes, you will be decoding words in English written in Egyptian hieroglyphs.
- B. Think about logical letter pairings in English when deciding which letter the symbol may represent. Hieroglyphs can be written from left to right, right to left, or top to bottom.
- C. The direction to read is indicated by the way the humans and animals are facing. Read towards the faces. Often hieroglyphs will be written within registers. These are divided spaces among a text marked off by horizontal or vertical lines.
- D. The answer to this writing mystery can be found below.

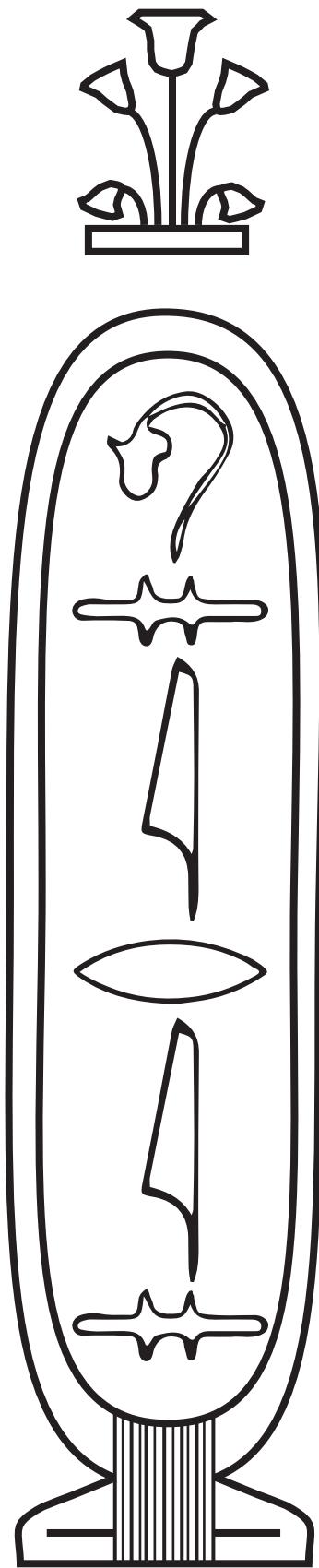
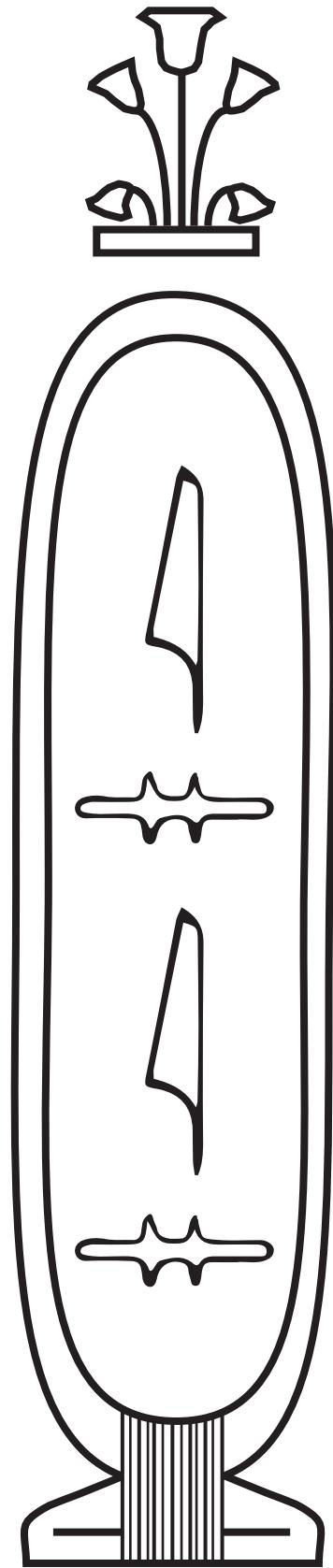
2. Make your own cartouche

A **cartouche** is an oval circle with a name written in it, rather like a nameplate. In the early days of ancient Egypt, a cartouche was attached to the coffins of kings and queens. As time went on, many people hired an artist to create a cartouche for their own coffins. The ancient Egyptians believed that you had to have your name written down somewhere, so that you would not disappear when you died. By attaching a cartouche to their coffin, people made sure their name was written down in one place at least!

- A. See below for a blank cartouche image to fill in with your name.
- B. You can write your name as you would in English, letter by letter, or write the letters for just the sounds in your name, eliminating any silent or repeated letters.
- C. Check out our resource section below for instructions for making your own clay cartouche!

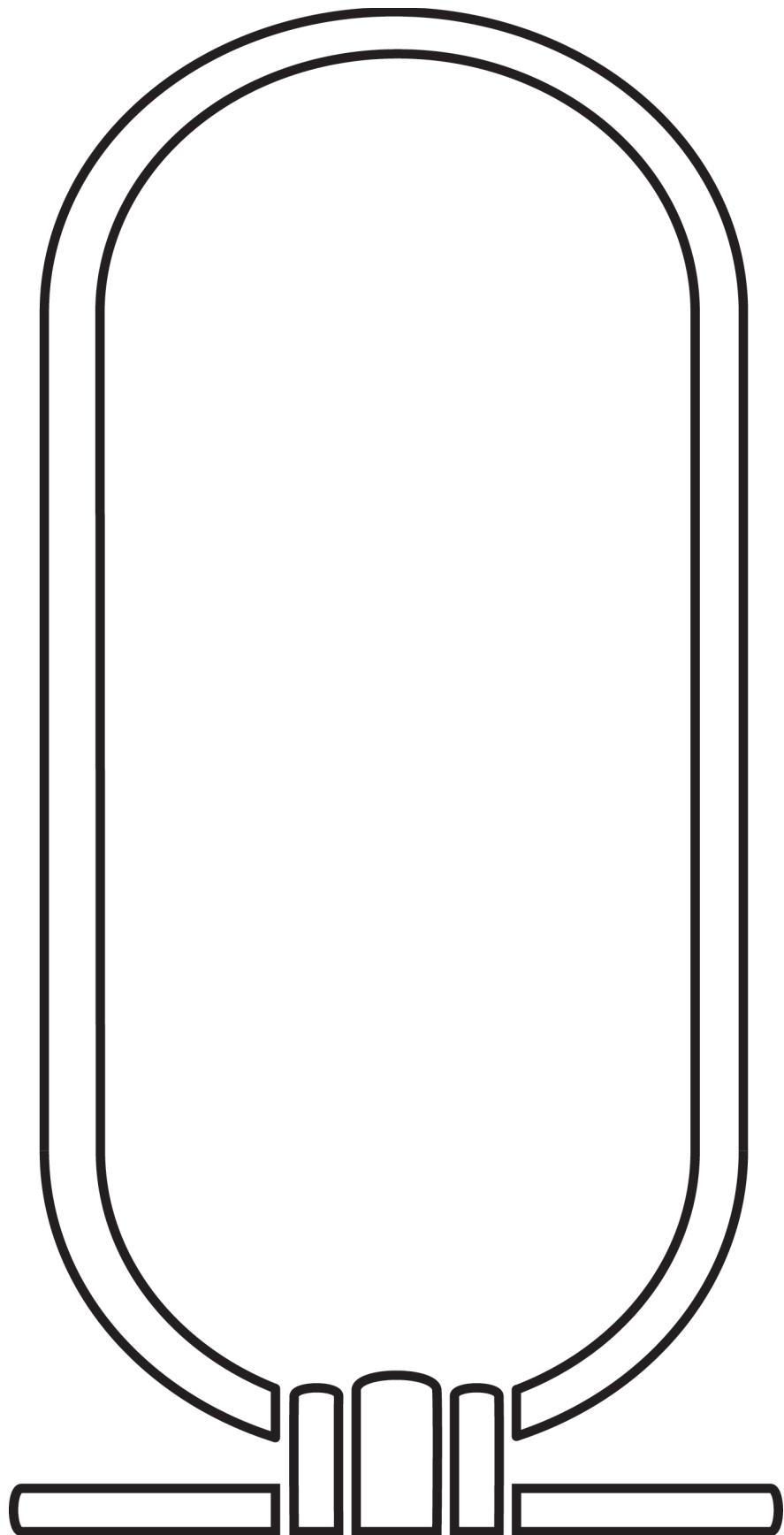
HIEROGLYPHIC ALPHABET





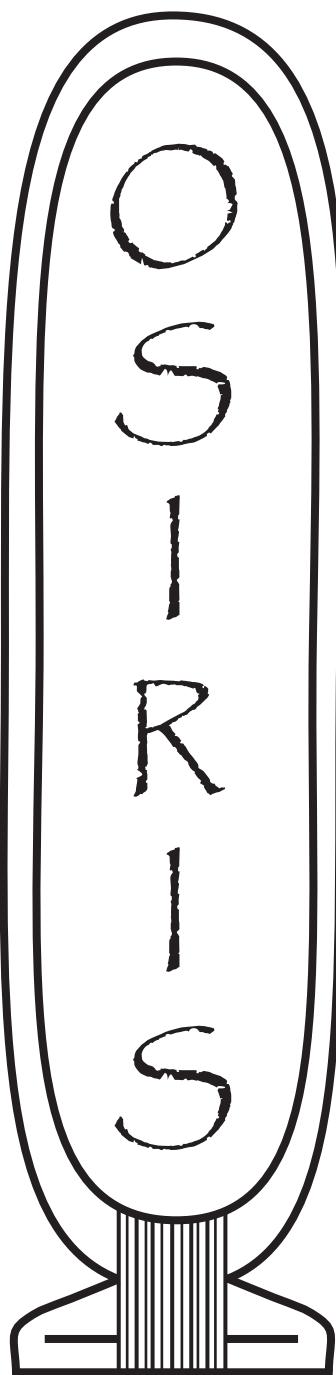
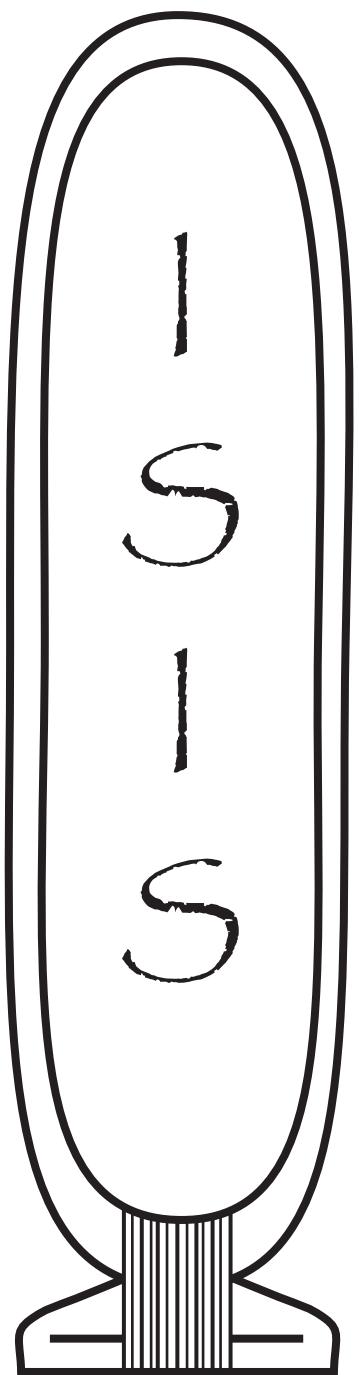
Name _____

Date _____



CONGRATULATIONS

YOU CAN READ AN ANCIENT TEXT MESSAGE





Lulu sporting her collar with ancient Egyptian dog tag. With ankh (symbol of life) top and scarab (symbol of luck) bottom.



Papyrus sample – Maxwell Museum education collection

Papyrus is the term used to indicate a plant that grew in the marshy areas around the Nile and also paper used for writing. The English word “paper” comes from “papyrus.” The ancient Egyptians used papyrus to make paper, baskets, sandals, mats, rope, blankets, tables, chairs, mattresses, boats, medicine, perfume, food, and clothes.

Additional resources:

<https://crayolateachers.ca/lesson/egyptian-cartouche-clay-composition-colour/>

Instructions for making your own clay cartouche

<https://www.rom.on.ca/en/learn/activities/classroom/hieroglyphs>

Write your name in hieroglyphs from the Royal Ontario Museum

<https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/history/egypt/hieroglyphics-uncovered/>

Fascinating facts about hieroglyphs from National Geographic Kids

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/hieroglyphs/introduction.html>

Hieroglyphics activities from PBS.org