

The Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago

1155 E. 58th Street, Chicago, IL. 60637 (773) 702-9507

http://www.oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/ED/TRC/trc_home.html

LIFE IN ANCIENT EGYPT: Religion

Ancient Egyptian & World Religions: Views of the Afterlife A Classroom and Museum Activity

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Social Sciences (World Studies, World History)

Created By: Mia Henry, Amundsen High School, Chicago, IL

For Grade Level: 9-12

Meets Illinois State Goals: 1, 3, 4, 5, 16

Time Needed: 7 – 9 45-minute periods

Objectives:

To compare and contrast major world religions of today with the religious beliefs of Ancient Egypt.

Materials:

Research materials including books, primary sources, video, and the internet.

Suggested Procedure:

Using various methods, students should spend 1 - 3 days learning about the religious beliefs of ancient Egypt. This may be done through lecture, video, mini-research, guided internet-based searches, etc. Teachers are also encouraged to use text-based primary sources, such as excerpts from an ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, to illustrate the views of the afterlife. A good primary source for this can be found in the book by Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Volume II: The New Kingdom, University of California Press, 1976, p. 124-126.

After familiarity is established with the topic, the students are placed in groups of 4 - 6 students and each group is assigned one of the five major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. The groups' task is to create a presentation comparing and contrasting the views of the afterlife in ancient Egypt to those beliefs in their respective world religion. This lesson focuses on views of the afterlife, but the teacher may choose to look at other aspects of religious beliefs, such as creation myths or religious texts, or each religion as a whole. Students should be given 1 – 2 days to research the view of the afterlife according to their religion as well as the religion's origins. Students should conduct research and take notes individually before meeting in groups.

After their research, students should meet in groups and share their findings. In preparation for their presentation, students may be asked to complete individual Venn

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diagrams and taba charts (see samples) to guide their group discussions. These may be assessed in addition to or as part of the final presentation. Student groups should be allowed 1 – 2 days to discuss their presentation.

After students have researched and shared their findings, the class should visit the Egyptian Gallery at the Oriental Institute. There they will receive a guided tour focusing on the afterlife and gather additional information for their presentations. Students will use the new information to make on the spot comparisons to their world religion.

After the visit to the Oriental Institute, students should have 1-2 additional days to make final preparations for the presentation. During these days, students may look at excerpts from holy texts of their world religion and compare them to the Book of the Dead.

Evaluation:

The presentation of each group should include the following:

- An overview of the world religion the group was assigned
- At least four aspects of the afterlife compared (students are encouraged to use the taba chart as a guide).
- A visual aid
- A bibliography of sources used to gather information
- Evidence of all team members' contributions

Allow 1-2 days for presentations. A suggested rubric follows.

Extensions:

1. In addition to or instead of the presentation, students may be required to write a 2 - 3 page compare/contrast paper detailing the outcome of their research. Teachers are encouraged to develop a rubric for this assignment as well.

2. Students may examine through additional research and discussion the links between creation myths and views of the afterlife.

3. For a more challenging assignment, teachers might ask students to explore the theories of Carl Jung in regards to the collective unconscious. The class could discuss the similarities that they found between ancient Egyptian religion and today's most prominent faiths through the lens of a belief in the evolution of knowledge. Students may debate whether the similarities are happenstance or a result of complexities derived from direct influence through the ages. Teachers would then ask students to write a journal or paper that details their thoughts on this topic in relation to their research.

Ancient Egyptian & World Religions: Views of the Afterlife

Venn Diagram Sample

Views of the afterlife in ancient Egypt

Views of the afterlife in _____

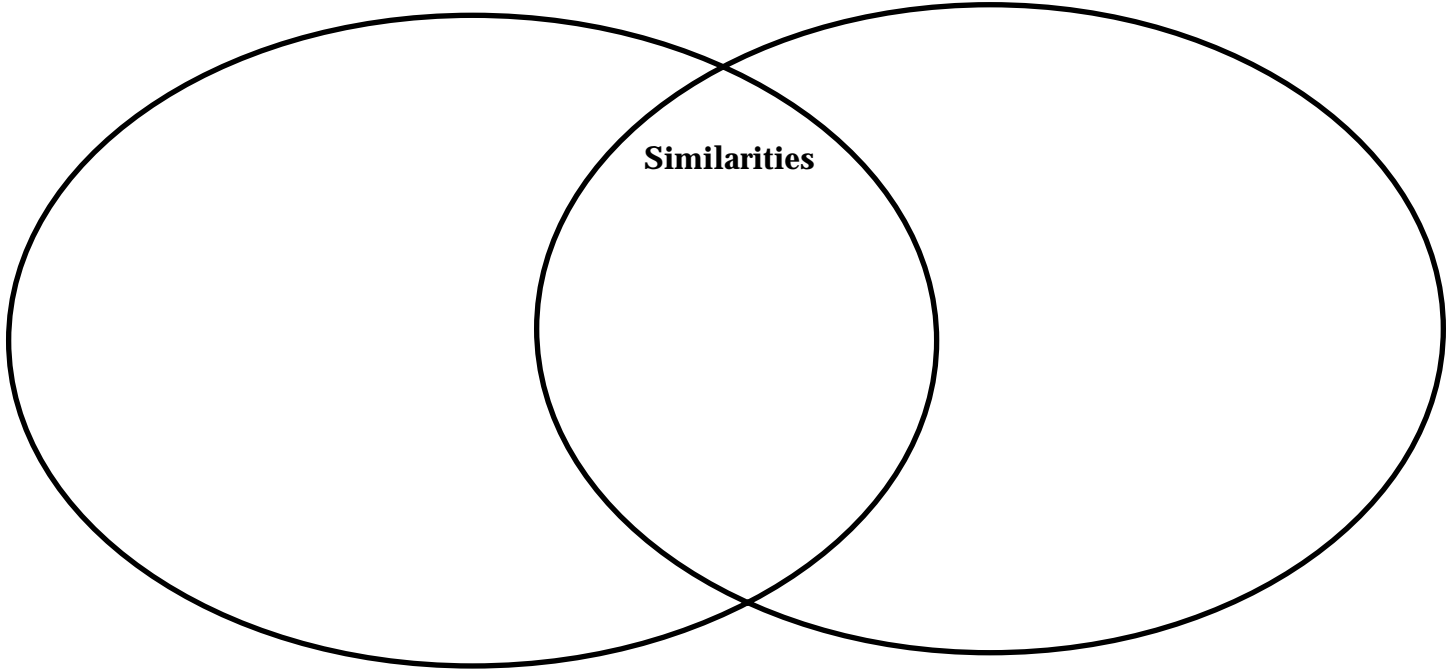


Table Chart Sample

| | Influence of morals/values on the afterlife | Preparation of the physical body | Ceremonies performed for the deceased | The fate of the soul | "Final" destination |
|--|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Beliefs of Ancient Egyptians | | | | | |
| Beliefs of World Religion: _____ | | | | | |

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Presentation Rubric:

Your group is to compare and contrast the views of the afterlife in Ancient Egypt to that of _____.

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

Depth, clarity and accuracy of information

A clear comparison was made between both religious cultures, including similarities and differences. At least four aspects were covered regarding the afterlife.

Variety and use of sources

A bibliography of at least five sources is submitted. Information from class discussion and the museum visit is integrated

Evidence of Teamwork

All students in the group contributed to the presentation in a significant and constructive manner

Efficiency and Clarity of Presentation

Presentation is no longer than 10 minutes. A useful visual aid is presented. Speaking voices are loud and clear. Eye contact is made throughout the presentation.

Final Grade

Each category is worth a maximum of 25 points, totaling a possible 100. All group members will receive the same grade. Class time will be allotted for this research. However, it will be necessary for you and your group to use a significant amount of time outside of class to create the best possible presentation.

Please keep this rubric as a guide as you prepare and then submit it to the teacher on the day of your presentation.

