

The Right to Write:
Communicating
through
Hieroglyphics

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One of my favorite movies of all time is “The Mummy.” It’s irreverent attitude towards one of the greatest civilizations in mankind’s history just cracks me up. An example of this humor is the line:

Beni: Prince Im-Ho-Tep thanks you for your hospitality... and for your eyes... and for your tongue... but I'm afraid more is needed.

I choose my topic of “Communicating through Hieroglyphics” because I am an Egyptophile. I watch all the various documentaries on Egypt, Mummies, Pharaohs, and etcetera. It just seemed only natural for my topic to include these ideas.

I started my research by going to my favorite place on Earth, “Chamblin Bookmine.” It is a used bookstore with millions of books, all half the cover price. I roamed around for about an hour, finally deciding on a hieroglyphic dictionary. I plugged along reading all of the tedious forward and introduction. This gave the story of how hieroglyphics were deciphered.

My next research pitstop involved the almighty Internet. I started typing “Rosetta stone.” That lead me to a few decent websites. I continued my journey going into such topics as: history of written language, Phoenician, cuneiform, Greek alphabet, and others. One of the neatest websites was all about how to make papyrus. It included a really great set of step-by-step pictures on how to make it.

My topic really got me brainstorming about how to present the information. I had the idea to focus on the Rosetta stone since it was so pivotal in translating hieroglyphics. I asked a friend who is a woodworker if he would help me build the frame of the project. He wound up being a very long and costly ordeal, but it is a very dramatic and life-size replica of the Rosetta stone.

My topic relates to this years theme by focusing on the written part of communication. While oral communication amongst humans started in the dawn of the Earth, written communication is a relatively recent invention. However, man's civilization has grown at an astronomical pace since the written words' inception. Word count 341.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary sources

Chavuet Cave page. ©2004

<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnet/chauvet/en>

This website is from France and has many pictures of man's earliest cave paintings.

Rosetta Stone page. ©2004

<http://www.crystalinks.com/rosetta.html>

This website contained many pictures of the Rosetta Stone.

Secondary Sources

Budge, E. A. Wallis. "An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary." New York. Dover Publications, Inc. 1978

This book detailed the entire story of the decoding of Hieroglyphics.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Write like an Egyptian." New York. Tangerine Press. 2003.

This book included templates to write hieroglyphics.

Jean-Francoise Champollion page. ©2003

<http://www.touregypt.net/featuresotries/champollion.html>

This website contained many pictures and stories of Champollion.

Paper making 101. ©2004

<http://www.papermaking101.org>

This website gave step-by-step instructions on how the Egyptians made paper.