

Lesson Plan: Anubis

Summary

In this episode, Blade sketched a small plastic Anubis figurine that kept leaning on its stand, making it a challenge to capture correctly. He explained Anubis's origins in Egyptian religion as the god of the dead, first appearing in the Pyramid Texts around 2400 BCE. The name Inpu or Anpu was later Hellenized to Anubis by the Greeks, who already had Hermes in a similar guiding role. Anubis was credited with introducing mummification, weighing the heart against the feather of Ma'at, and later serving as a guide when Osiris became ruler of the dead. Blade compared Anubis to Hermes, Mercury, and the angel of death in Abrahamic tradition. He noted Cynopolis, the "City of the Dog," as a cult center, and reflected on how museums today display Anubis statues. He also observed modern cultural revivals and pop-culture depictions, showing how the jackal-headed god continues to endure.

Episode link: https://www.youtube.com/live/CZpdJT8EKQs?si=iyNi0mtqWYCSrQT_

Objective

Students will understand the historical and cultural role of Anubis in ancient Egypt, his evolution in mythology, and his ongoing influence in modern culture.

Materials

Required:

- 9 Fun Facts (provided)
- Worksheet (provided)

Optional:

- Map of ancient Egypt showing Cynopolis
- Images of Anubis statues (Tutankhamun's shrine, British Museum figure)
- Chart comparing Anubis, Hermes, and angel of death figures
- Clips from American Gods or Stargate SG-1 for cultural comparison

Introduction

Begin with a discussion of the 9 Fun Facts. Ask students what they already know about Anubis and what surprises them from the fact list. Explain his connection to jackals and cemeteries, and how Egyptians transformed that image into divine protection.

Activity

1. Read through the 9 Fun Facts as a class.
2. Highlight Anubis's role in mummification and the weighing of the heart.
3. Compare his role to Hermes, Mercury, or the angel of death.
4. Have students complete the worksheet individually or in pairs.

Assessment

- Students can explain the difference between Anubis's early role and his later role after Osiris rose in prominence.
- Students identify why jackals were associated with Anubis.
- Students compare Anubis's role to similar figures in Greek or Abrahamic traditions.

Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Understanding of Anubis's role	Clear and detailed explanation of Anubis's evolution and symbolism	Mostly accurate, some detail missing	Partial explanation, lacks clarity	Minimal or inaccurate response
Comparison with other traditions	Strong, accurate comparisons with supporting detail	Some comparisons, mostly accurate	Few comparisons, limited accuracy	No comparisons or incorrect
Use of Fun Facts	Cites and applies multiple facts directly	Uses at least one fact clearly	Vague mention of facts	No reference to facts
Participation and discussion	Actively engages and contributes thoughtful ideas	Participates, with some relevant points	Limited participation	No participation

9 Fun Facts About Anubis

1) Anubis enters the written record in Egypt's Old Kingdom.

He appears in the Pyramid Texts carved for King Unas in the 24th century BCE, the earliest large corpus of Egyptian religious writing. From the start he is tied to death ritual and protection of the dead.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pyramid-Texts>

2) "Anubis" is the Greek form of an older Egyptian name.

Egyptians called him Inpw or Anpu, which the Greeks rendered as Anoubis and Latinized as Anubis in classical literature. The name shift is a textbook case of Greek mediation of Egyptian religion.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Anubis>

3) He had a city, literally called "City of the Dog."

Cynopolis was a major cult center where dogs and jackals connected to Anubis were venerated and mummified, reflecting his role as guardian of tombs. Local priests maintained animal necropoleis and shrines to the god.

<https://topostext.org/place/284307UKyn>

4) Anubis was re-associated with Osiris in later myth.

By the Middle Kingdom, Osiris had become lord of the dead, and Anubis's role shifted to embalmer and guide, maintaining his importance in funerary rites.

<https://www.ancient-egypt-online.com/anubis.html>

5) Greeks and Romans identified him with Hermes, creating Hermanubis.

In the Roman world Anubis was assimilated to Mercury, the soul-guide, and appears in sculpture as a jackal-headed figure with Greco-Roman dress and attributes. This fusion shows how Egyptian and classical beliefs blended.

https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-iv--l_egitto-e-roma/statua-del-dio-anubi.html

6) We truly “rediscovered” Anubis when hieroglyphs were deciphered in 1822.

Champollion’s breakthrough using the Rosetta Stone opened Egypt’s texts to direct reading, launching Egyptology and clarifying the god’s roles in funerary ritual. It transformed scattered classical references into a coherent picture.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/rosetta-stone-hieroglyphs-champollion-decipherment-egypt-180980834/>

7) Tutankhamun’s tomb made Anubis a modern icon.

Howard Carter’s team photographed a striking black jackal shrine of Anubis inside the tomb, a piece that became one of the dig’s most circulated images. It spotlighted Anubis’s protective role at the threshold of royal treasure.

<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-anubis-jackal-shrine-333806>

8) You can meet Anubis in museums today, from Cairo to London.

The famous jackal shrine from Tutankhamun’s burial is held in Cairo, while the British Museum displays ancient copper-alloy figures of Anubis that bring the jackal-god face to face with visitors. Seeing the originals keeps his story in public view.

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA64541

9) There is an active modern revival of Egyptian religion that includes Anubis.

Modern pagans and Kemetic practitioners still venerate Anubis in ritual, seeing him as a guardian of the dead and a guide for souls even today.

<https://vocal.media/fyi/egyptian-gods-worship-is-still-in-practice-nowadays>

Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Review

1. When did Anubis first appear in Egyptian writing?
2. What did Egyptians believe Anubis taught them to do with their dead?
3. What city was dedicated to Anubis and what does its name mean?

Discussion

4. Why do you think jackals became associated with Anubis?
5. How did Anubis's role change once Osiris became lord of the dead?
6. Compare Anubis's role with Hermes or the angel of death.

Data Analysis

Look at the description of Tutankhamun's Anubis shrine. Why do you think archaeologists photographed and displayed it so widely? Write 3–4 sentences with evidence from the 9 Fun Facts.

Reflection

Do you think being dedicated solely to guiding souls to the afterlife made Anubis more significant to Egyptians than similar figures in other cultures? Why or why not?