










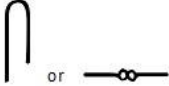

The Egyptian Hieroglyphic Alphabet... A's, B's, And KH's

Although there are hundreds of signs, there is a standard Egyptian hieroglyphic alphabet that we can use. It's composed of 24 unilateral signs that represent the different "sounds" you produce when speaking the ancient Egyptian language.

There are some sounds that we don't have in English, but are present in other languages (such as KH). They are still pronounceable though!

However, keep in mind that the ancient Egyptian language has very few vowels. It's mostly composed of consonants. This alphabet has a similar proportion of vowels to consonants as English - which is an inaccurate representation of hieroglyphics. It's just done this way for our benefit.

Here's a table with these signs, what they stand for, and what their shapes represent:

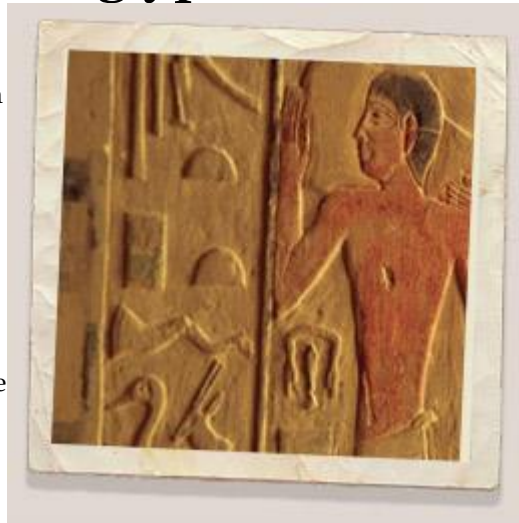
| | | |
|---|----|---------------|
|  | K | Basket |
|  | KH | Placenta |
|  | L | Lion |
|  | M | Owl |
|  | N | Water |
|  | OO | Quail Chick |
|  | P | Stool |
|  | Q | Hill |
|  | R | Mouth |
|  | S | Linen |
|  | T | Loaf of Bread |

What are Hieroglyphics?

The ancient Egyptians created a form of picture-writing using signs known as hieroglyphs beginning around 3100 BC.

Hieroglyph, literally "sacred writing" is the Greek rendering of the Egyptian term *medw-netjer*, meaning "divine words." As writing became more widespread among the Egyptian people, other written scripts developed for use in daily

documents. However, hieroglyphs continued to be used in tombs, temples, and other "sacred documents" for over 3,000 years. Scribes carved and painted hieroglyphs on the walls of tombs and temples, on obelisks, and on sculptures. They were also written with pen and colored ink on sheets of papyrus.

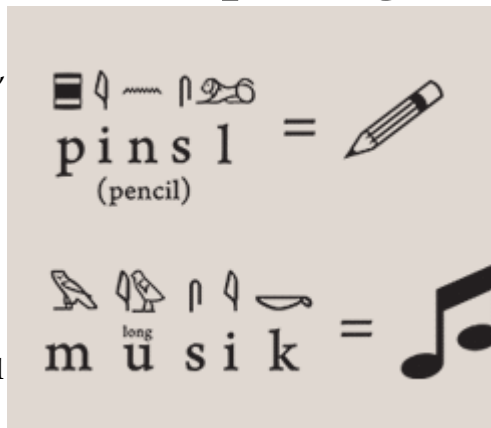


Transliteration and Spelling

To convert to and from hieroglyphics and English, words must be converted to phonetic spelling.

English words often have silent and multiple pronunciations of letters, while hieroglyphics lack vowels. To convert a word to hieroglyphics pay close attention to hard

consonants and strong vowel sounds rather than spelling.



How can we Read Hieroglyphics?

One of the biggest discoveries in the study of ancient Egypt was the unearthing (in 1799) of a tablet near the Egyptian city of Rashid (Rosetta). Now known as the Rosetta Stone, this important slab was inscribed in three distinct languages: Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, Demotic script and Greek. It took scholars 23 years and numerous attempts to solve the puzzle, but once they had worked out that the inscriptions had identical meanings, they immediately understood that the stone gave them the key to deciphering the Egyptian language, the sense of which had been lost for over 1300 years. All they had to do was compare a language that was readable (Greek) to the unknown languages on the stone and the voice of Egyptian culture would come back to life.



What does the Rosetta Stone say?

The inscription praises Ptolemy, King of all of Egypt, and lists his many glorious accomplishments. These include lowering taxes and maintaining security. The council of Egyptian priests, who benefitted from Ptolemy's rule, wrote the stone. In return, they decreed that every temple in Egypt had to erect a statue of the king.