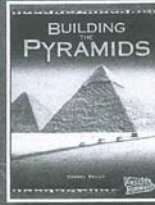


Building the Pyramids



Before Reading

Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of this text is to explain how and why the pyramids were built. The text links with the *Social Studies* theme *Our World*.

Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- chapter titles and page numbers
- subheadings
- photographs and captions
- illustrations
- glossary and index.

Ask "What type of book is this?" (Factual). How do you know? What type of factual book is this? (Explanation).

Visual Literacy

Look at the front cover and describe what you see. Where do they think this text is set? How does this photograph relate to the content of the text?

Browse the first few pages of the text and discuss the effect of the border and background colours. How do these relate to the subject matter?

Background Knowledge

Ask students to share what they know about pyramids. What would you like to know about the pyramids? What words do you predict would be in a book about the pyramids? Locate Egypt and the River Nile on a map.

Phonological Awareness

Make sure students are able to break words into syllables. Say and clap a high frequency or vocabulary word omitting one syllable: py / ra / ____ . Students say the missing syllable: / mid / .

built: 1 syllable; cham / bers: 2 syllables;
pass / a / ges: 3 syllables;
mach / in / er / y: 4 syllables.

Draw a box on the board. Divide the box into two sections. Students locate a 2-syllable word in the list and write it in the box, writing one syllable in each section. What other words could have fitted into this syllable box? Repeat with 3- and 4-syllable words from the word lists.

Vocabulary

ancient, architects, artists, bodies, chambers, construction, Egyptians, engineers, gangs, heaven, labourers, limestone, masons, mummies, Nile, passages, pharaohs, preserved, pyramids, sprinkle, tombs

High Frequency Words

allowed, base, beautiful, brought, built, designed, dragged, easily, increased, level, special, straight, thought, tones, weighed

Ask students to write a word from the list matching a specific criterion (e.g. write a word that belongs to the word family of 'beauty' (beautiful); write a word that is the opposite of decreased (increased)).

Look at each word. What part of the word may be a problem for students to remember? Students shut their eyes, visualise or spell the word in their head, then write the word from memory.

During Reading

Vocabulary in Context

Make sure students understand the meaning of the words. Write words on cards. Students use the words to write sentences that they think may appear in the text. After reading, compare students' predictions with the text.

Write 'brought'. What is the present tense of this verb? (i.e. bring). Make sure students understand that the word 'brang' does not exist. What other word is often confused with brought? (i.e. bought). Make sure students understand the connection between brought - bring; and bought - buy.

Checking for Meaning

Literal:

Why did the Egyptians build the pyramids? (As tombs for the pharaohs)

When were the pyramids built? (More than 4000 years ago)

What people were involved in building the pyramids? (Engineers, architects, masons, artists and labourers)

In what way are the pyramids different from each other? (Height, angles, different construction inside)

Recall the steps involved in building the pyramids. (Site chosen, design done, stone dug from the ground, cut and moved to site, base built, then levels built until they reached a peak at the top)

Inferential:

Why were the pyramids a safe place to put the mummies? Why are the pyramids described as wonders of construction?

Make sure students understand the difference between literal and inferential information.

Response:

What amazes you the most about the pyramids?

How would technology be used if the pyramids were built today?

What would you still like to know about the pyramids?

Grammatical Patterns

Make sure students understand the following components of an explanation:

- Identifying statement about what is to be explained: *The great pyramids of Egypt were built more than 4000 years ago as tombs for the kings, or pharaohs, of the time.* (p.4)
- Series of events known as the explanation sequence: workers needed to build the pyramids (pp.8-9), designing the pyramids (pp.10-11), cutting the stone (pp.12-13)
- Use of general nouns: *bodies* (p.4), *buildings* (p.6), *life* (p.21)
- Use of action verbs: *died* (p.4), *building* (p.10), *designed* (p.12)
- Use of noun groups to build information: *the great pyramids* (p.4), *the largest buildings in the world* (p.6), *a white stone* (p.20)
- Use of adverbial phrases to explain when events occurred: *When each level was finished* (p.17), *As the pyramid was being built* (p.18)
- Use of connectives to link ideas between sentences: *However* (p.16), *Then* (p.22), *Finally* (p.23)

Fluency / Punctuation Patterns

In this text, complex sentences explain cause and effect and sequence events: *After the stones for the pyramid were cut, workers moved them to the pyramid site.* (p.14) *However, because it was too hard for the labourers to lift the heavy stones higher, ramps were built so that the stones could be dragged up to the next level.* (p.16) Demonstrate reading these sentences, pausing at the comma. Have students echo your reading.

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- Use of commas to separate nouns in a list: *engineers, architects, masons and artists* (p.8)
- Use of capital letters for proper nouns: *Egyptians* (p.5), *Pharaoh Khufu* (p.7)
- Use of commas to separate time phrases and connectives: *Even today*, (p.6), *However*, (p.16), *Finally*, (p.23)
- Use of commas to separate independent and dependent phrases in complex sentences: *As well as being tombs for pharaohs, the pyramids were also wonders of construction.* (p.6)

Critical Literacy

How well did the text explain why and how the pyramids were built? Why are time words and phrases important when writing explanations? What would happen if a key action or event were left out?

Linking Visual and Written

Explore the use of illustrations in this text. Why have they been used instead of photographs?

Discuss the effect of using illustrations in factual texts. What would the illustrator need to know to be able to draw these illustrations accurately?

After Reading

Identify the structure and components of an explanation. Ask students specific questions that require them to explain the sequence of events that led to the construction of the pyramids. (e.g. What were the first steps in the building of the pyramids?)

Activities

Students will:

- make and justify opinions about statements in the text
- locate and write words breaking them into syllables
- locate and write base words with suffixes added in a word find
- write answers to questions to explain how the pyramids were built.

Comprehension (meaning) Vocabulary (structure) Phonics (visual) Writing (structure)

