Directions

Read articles titled “Making an ancient Egyptian Mummy” and “A ‘Recipe’ for How to Make a Mummy”. When you are finished, answer the 15 questions seen below and the essay. Remember to express yourself fully and carefully in your answers, using the skills you have learned in Language Arts class this year. Use your own paper to answer.

READING ASSIGNMENT: ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MUMMIFICATION

PART I: SHORT ANSWER:

Use ‘Making an ancient Egyptian Mummy’ to answer questions 1 through 11:

1. Ancient Egyptians believed that after death the body was the home of what?
2. What would the ancient Egyptians fear would happen if the body was destroyed through decomposition?
3. When was the process of mummification developed?
4. Which historian first described Egyptian mummification processes back around the yer 450 BC?
5. According to an ancient Greek source, how many wooden mummification models would be presented to the grieving family?
6. What tool did the embalmers use for removing the brain?
7. What tool was used for making the embalming incision in the side of the body?
8. After removal of the internal organs, how did the embalmers restore the original shape of the person?
9. What substance was used to “pickle” the body?
10. What type of cloth was used to wrap the mummy?
11. What did the embalmers use instead of glue to stick the mummy wrappings together?

Use ‘A Recipe for How to Make a Mummy” to answer questions 12 through 15:
12. What kind of oil was used by the embalmers to make the skin supple?
13. What two modern-day substances is “natron” similar to?
14. How many yards of material would it take to wrap a mummy?
15. How many days should it take to wrap a mummy?

PART II: ESSAY:

Write a well-composed ten-sentence short-constructed-response on the following topic:

Herodotus traveled to ancient Egypt and was an eye-witness to Egyptian embalming practices. What could modern-day historians do to “double-check” Herodotus and confirm that what Herodotus wrote was true?

STANDARDS FOR GRADING THIS READING ASSIGNMENT:

GRADE C:
1. The requirements for a C are the same as for a B except that there are one or two errors or omissions that would prevent the student from getting a B.

GRADE B:
1. The report answers all of the short answer questions in complete sentences.
2. The short answer section shows only minor factual errors.
3. The essay question or questions are of proper length and written in complete sentences.
4. The essay question addresses the topic clearly.
5. Paper is neatly written and carefully proofread with no more than four typos or spelling errors.

GRADE A:
1. The report meets all the requirements for a “B”.
2. The essay question or questions show outstanding effort and analysis as well as an exceptional overall understanding of the topic chosen.
3. The report is carefully proofread with no more than two typos or spelling errors.
4. The report is word-processed.
The ancient Egyptians believed that, after death, the body was the home of the individual's spirit as he or she journeyed through the after-life. If the body was destroyed through decomposition, there was danger that the spirit would also be destroyed. Preserving the body in as close to its life-like condition would assure the preservation of the individual's spiritual essence. "Mummification," the process of preserving the integrity of an individual through embalming the body of the deceased, was the ancient Egyptian answer to the problem.

It is believed that the process of mummification was developed at least 2,500 years before the birth of Christ. The process included four phases: the removal of the internal organs, the use of a salt compound to dry the hollow body, filling the dried body with a stuffing to restore its original shape and finally, tightly wrapping the body with strips of linen. Although expensive, the process of mummification was not restricted to the Egyptian Pharaohs. All of the social classes employed the ritual, with the level of elaborateness of the mummification serving as a symbol of a family's status.

The Greek historian Herodotus described the ancient Egyptian methods of mummification around the year 450 BC. Although over two thousand years have past since Herodotus wrote his observations, his description of the relationship between the ancient embalmers and the grieving relatives of the deceased bears an uncanny resemblance to today's interplay between a funeral director and a grieving family selecting an appropriate coffin or other method of internment.

Three levels of mummification

"The embalmers, when a corpse is brought to them, show the relatives wooden models of dead bodies, as accurate as a painting. They say that the most perfect of these images belongs to a god whose name I consider it sacrilege to mention in this connection. They also show a second, slightly inferior to the first and less expensive, and a third as well, the cheapest of the lot. After the demonstration, they ask the relatives in which style they want the corpse prepared. The latter agree on a price and go off home, but the embalmers stay in their workshops and use the following method for the most expensive style."
Royal Treatment

"First, they remove the brain through the nostrils with a curved iron implement, getting some of it out like this and the rest by pouring in solvents. Then they cut open the side of the corpse with a sharp Ethiopian stone, remove the intestines, and wash out the belly, cleaning it with palm wine and again with pounded aromatics. They fill up the body with pure crushed myrrh, cassia and other herbs (except frankincense) and sow it up again. After this, they pickle the body in natrum, [salt] hiding it away for seventy days, the longest time possible. After the seventy days, they wash the body and wrap it up completely in cut bandages of linen muslin, smearing it with gum which the Egyptians use instead of glue. The relatives then get the body back and make a man-sized wooden image, into which they insert the mummy and then store it away in a burial chamber, standing it upright against the wall."

Deluxe Treatment

"That is the most expensive way. The method for those wanting the middle way, to escape great expense, is as follows. They pack syringes with cedar-oil and fill the stomach of the corpse with the oil, not cutting it open and taking out the intestines, but inserting the oil through the anus and stopping it flowing out. Then they soak the body in spices for the prescribed number of days, on the last of which they remove from the belly the cedar-oil which they put in before. This has such strength that it brings out with it all the dissolved stomach and intestines. The natrum dissolves the flesh and only the skin and bones are left. When this is over, they return the body, their job completed."

Bargain Treatment

"The third method of embalming is the one used by the poorer classes. They just wash out the inside with a solvent, then pickle it for seventy days and return it to the relatives."
A “RECIPE” FOR HOW TO MAKE A MUMMY

From: ANCIENT/CLASSICAL HISTORY About.com
http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/howto/ht_mummy.htm

NO WRAPPING YOUR LITTLE BROTHER IN SHEETS, THIS IS THE REAL STUFF MODIFIED ONLY SLIGHTLY.

Difficulty Level: average Time Required: 55 days

Here’s How:

1. Get four jars to hold the liver, lungs, intestines, and stomach. Keep the heart inside the body and discard the other internal body organs.
2. Poke a rod with a hook on it through the nasal cavity to pull out the brain. Stuff the head with tree resin and sawdust.
3. Soak the body in natron for 40 days. Then put the body on an inclining couch so the liquids and natron fall to the bottom into a pan. Discard.
4. Rub the body with olibanum oil to make the skin supple.
5. Pack the body to make it more lifelike (with spices or sawdust).
6. Use wax to seal any incisions.
7. Tear fine linen into strips 16 yards long and 2-8 inches wide.
8. Wrap the smaller extremities (toes and fingers) first.
9. Next, wrap the limbs, and finally, the torso.
10. Sing appropriate chants over each body part.
11. Secure linen with tree resin.
12. Tuck in an amulet after every few layers.

Tips:

1. You'll need over 1000 yards of fine linen.
2. The wrapping should take 15 days.
3. Natron is a drying solution from the Nile area. It's similar to baking soda and salt.