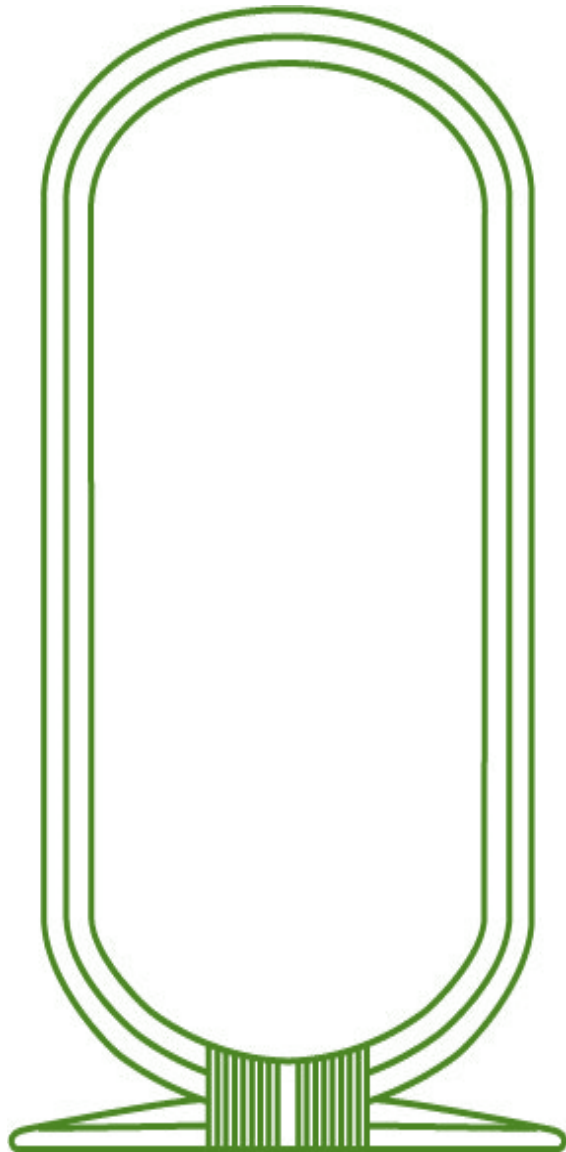




EGYPT
EXPLORATION
SOCIETY
FOUNDED IN 1882



Try writing your name in hieroglyphs

Using the hieroglyphic alphabet below – try to write your own name in the cartouche. Remember, ancient Egyptians could write either left to right or right to left, but always top to bottom. If you cannot find the correct letter for your name, then try to spell it using phonetic sounds instead.

	A		H		O		V
	B		I		P		W
	C		J		Q		X
	D		K		R		Y
	E		L		S		Z
	F		M		T		CH
	G		N		U		SH

What is a cartouche?

A depiction of a tied rope surrounding a royal name in Ancient Egypt is called a cartouche. A straight line indicates the end of the name and helps show the reading direction. The never ending circle symbolises eternal protection for the person named inside.

What are hieroglyphs?

Hieroglyphs are an ancient writing style used by the ancient Egyptians to record their history, achievements, stories, and sacred texts. They are a pictographic form of writing, meaning that they are made up of small pictures representing sounds. The word hieroglyph comes from ancient Greek meaning 'sacred writing'. Many ancient hieroglyphs can be seen today in monuments across Egypt and on artefacts in museums all over the world.







How do we read hieroglyphs?

Each image represents an object or a sound. So a picture of a bee can mean 'bee'. But, if an image of a bee were to be placed together with an image of a leaf, we may find that together they spell 'belief' or 'bee-leaf'. The Egyptians had over 2000 hieroglyphs in their language and used a very complex grammatical system to record their texts. As well as sounds from the English alphabet, the Egyptians also had signs representing sounds that we would use two letter to represent, such as 'ch' and 'sh' shown in the alphabet overleaf. Ancient Egyptian language didn't have many vowel sounds and so we can add the sound 'e' to make reading the words easier. For example, the biliteral sign *mn* might be pronounced as 'men' today, or *nb* as 'neb'. So how might you say *nfr*?


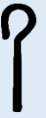



As well as one-consonant sounds like those listed in the alphabet overleaf, the Egyptians also used bilateral and trilateral signs which represented two or three consonant sounds. See if you can build some of these into words using the alphabet overleaf:

Biliteral signs:

	mi		mw		nw
	mn		nb		wn

Trilateral signs:

	ankh		hka		nfr
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The Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1799 and records a decree issued by Ptolemy V over 2000 years ago. The decree is inscribed in three different scripts: ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs (top), ancient Egyptian demotic (middle), and ancient Greek (bottom). In 1822 Jean-François Champollion used the Rosetta Stone to decipher the ancient texts and was the first to read Egyptian hieroglyphs in over 2000 years! Today the Rosetta Stone can be seen at the British Museum, EA24.

