



★ **The Rosetta Stone** Archaeologists and historians study how people lived thousands of years ago. To do this they have to understand the languages people spoke and wrote. We're going to find out more about the Rosetta Stone, an important discovery that helped archaeologists to understand an ancient language.



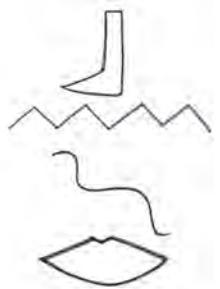
The discovery of the Stone. In the year 1799, some French soldiers found the Rosetta Stone in a town called Rosetta (or Rashid) in Egypt. They knew it was very important and sent it to an Egyptian university so that historians and archaeologists could study it. Now the Rosetta Stone is in the British Museum in London.



What is the Rosetta Stone and why is it important?

The Rosetta Stone is 3,000 years old. It is a big, black stone with old writing on it and it's important because the writing is in two languages: ancient Egyptian and ancient Greek. When the stone

was found, archaeologists and historians understood ancient Greek, but they did not understand the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. With the Rosetta Stone, they could try to understand the meaning of the hieroglyphs, by looking at the ancient Greek. They worked for 20 years before they understood the meaning of all the hieroglyphs!



What are hieroglyphs?

Hieroglyphics is a way of writing that uses pictures or 'hieroglyphs' of people, objects and animals. In ancient Egypt 'scribes' or writers used 700 hieroglyphs. The hieroglyphs in the picture mean: foot, water, snake and mouth.



What do we know about the ancient Egyptians?

These are the Pyramids. Most people know that the ancient Egyptians built the pyramids a long time ago, but many people don't know that the ancient Egyptians were really clever. They knew a lot about Maths, Science, medicine, the sun and the stars and they were very good at making boats. They used their boats on the River Nile, the longest river in the world. The ancient Egyptians had very rich kings called Pharaohs. A famous Pharaoh was Tutankhamen.



What is the writing on the Rosetta Stone about?

The writing on the Rosetta Stone tells a story about a young Pharaoh called Ptolemy. It describes a special festival held for his 13th birthday and tells how he protected Egypt during his time as Pharaoh. But this story is not the most interesting thing about the

stone for archaeologists. What's really important is that it helped them to understand the secret language of the Egyptians. Now they can understand everything that the ancient Egyptians wrote and learn many interesting things about their world.

1 Read again and answer.

- 1 When was the Rosetta Stone found?
- 2 How old is the Rosetta Stone?
- 3 What languages were used on the Rosetta Stone?
- 4 What was an ancient Egyptian writer called?
- 5 What was the word for an ancient Egyptian king?
- 6 Can you think of any other ancient languages? Do they use pictures or letters?

2 Correct the sentences.

- 1 Archaeologists and historians worked for twenty days before they understood the meaning of the hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone.
- 2 Hieroglyphs are pictures of buildings, people and pyramids.
- 3 The ancient Egyptians didn't know anything about Science.
- 4 The writing on the Rosetta Stone tells how Ptolemy protected Greece.
- 5 The Rosetta Stone helped archaeologists and historians to speak to ancient Egyptians.

3 Design some hieroglyphs to create your own language. Write a few sentences in your new language to show your friends. What is your language called?