Draw Your Own Cartouche: Personalized Hieroglyphics

Ancient Egypt is a fascinating topic for kids and adults alike, particularly hieroglyphs, the writing system used by the ancient Egyptians. Has your child ever wondered what her name would look like written in hieroglyphs? Bring history to life by helping her create her own cartouche like the Egyptians did thousands of years ago. The Egyptians used cartouches, or oval enclosures, to outline the names of pharaohs and queens and set them apart from other hieroglyphs.

What You Need:

- Pencil
- Paper
- Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- Computer with Internet connection for accessing the hieroglyph reference sheet

What You Do:

1. Have your child start her cartouche by sketching out a large oval on a plain sheet of paper. Sometimes, the Egyptians made the border look like rope which some kids might like better than just a plain oval.
2. Using the hieroglyph reference sheet, encourage her to copy the appropriate hieroglyphs into the cartouche to represent her name. Have her draw the hieroglyphs in pencil first, then go over them with pen.
3. Once she has drawn all the hieroglyphs, have her color the cartouche.
4. Hang her cartouche on her bedroom door, on the refrigerator, or the family bulletin board.

You can also make cartouche Christmas ornaments! Instead of paper, consider using foam core or cardboard for a sturdier cartouche. Make a hole in the top of the cartouche and string a ribbon through, then hang. Add glitter, sequins, and other finishing touches to make the ornaments more festive.

Did You Know?

No one knew how to read hieroglyphs until the Rosetta Stone was translated by Jean Francois Champollion in the early nineteenth century. A cartouche with the name “Ramses” helped him decipher the hieroglyphs!

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