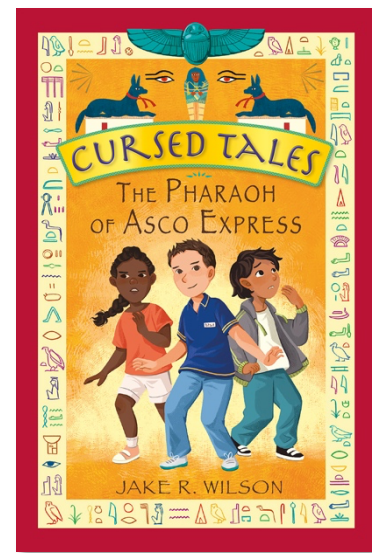


Teaching Notes: CURSED TALES: THE PHARAOH OF ASCO EXPRESS

Written by Jake R. Wilson
Illustrated by Sian James
Published by New Frontier Publishing



SYNOPSIS

Whatever happens, no matter what, DO NOT step into Asco Express because you might just end up leaving with more than you bargained for ...

When eleven-year-old Wesley stops by at a mysterious local shop to buy a drink, he does not realise the trouble he is getting himself into. CURSED by the fiendish Pharaoh AKAHTEN IX, Wesley and his friends, Marishana and Aiden, must solve the evil spell quickly or be trapped for all ETERNITY!

Cursed Tales is a brand-new series bringing ancient scares to life. Readers BEWARE – this story will leave you wrapped up and wanting your mummy!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jake R. Wilson was born in Kent but soon moved to the sunshine coast of Eastbourne where he currently works as an archaeologist. Leading excavations across the south east of England, Jake enjoys all things historical but tries to make room for other hobbies, such as painting, playing trading card games and watching scary movies. The origins of the *Cursed Tales* are still shrouded in mystery and Jake continues to dig for their clues all across the country.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sian has been drawing ever since she could pick up a pen. An early medieval archaeologist by training, she brings her love for the human past, cultures and folklore to her art. Her paintings are done mostly digitally, however, she still finds that she likes to sketch concepts on paper first before turning to the computer. When she's not drawing or painting, she loves reading fantasy novels, volunteering in museums and drinking tea. She lives in Oxford with her husband and two affectionate cats, Miso and Mochi.



HISTORIES AND MYSTERIES

MYSTERY

The Pharaoh of Asco Express is a great mystery story with twists and turns in every direction. Discuss the mystery genre with the class.

- What is a mystery?
- What are the elements of a good mystery? There's lots to discuss here and maybe you can draw a mind map on the board.

Key elements are:

- **A strong hook** – the mystery should intrigue the reader and prompt them to try and put together the clues to solve the mystery. We, as the reader, really want to know more about the shop, Asco Express, for example.
- **A crime** – this event prompts the investigation and is central to the plot. Here poor Wesley is put under a curse and it's going to take all his strength and friends' help to unravel the spell!
- **An investigator** – this is usually the main character of the story, who is determined to solve the crime. In this book, it's Wesley and his friends. They have to solve the mystery that's happened to them!
- **A villain** – the perpetrator of the crime, the investigator is usually trying to figure out their identity and their motives. We know who this is. How evil is this pharaoh?!
- **Clues** – a good mystery should have clues peppered throughout the story. An attentive reader might even unravel the mystery before the investigator!
- **A twist** – often in mystery stories, the clues can be misleading and take the investigator down the wrong path. A new clue can put a whole new slant on an investigation. We can feel Wesley's frustration when he's nearly found a clue but then comes to a dead end/stumbling block.
- **A conclusion** – the conclusion should satisfy the reader and unveil the truth. What's the conclusion in this story?



HISTORIES AND MYSTERIES

HISTORY

Lovers of all things ancient will LOVE this story as it encompasses so much about ancient Egypt. The term 'ancient Egypt' covers quite a broad spectrum, but the date span is roughly 3000 BC/BCE to 330 AD/CE. Around 3000 BC, the first hieroglyphics emerged – though 'ancient' Egypt predates their use – and from 330 AD onwards, the Roman Empire (Egypt being part of it) is divided into Western/Latin and Eastern/Byzantine, which heralds the beginning of the Middle Ages.

That's quite a large time span and covers the times Egypt was invaded by Persia, Greece and the Romans!

In *The Pharaoh of Asco Express*, we meet the evil Pharaoh Akahten. Why don't you find out about all the different ancient Egyptian rulers (called pharaohs).

FAMOUS PHARAOHS

The king (or queen) was not only the most powerful and important person in Egypt, they were thought to be a god. The name pharaoh comes from 'per-ao' meaning 'great house'.

Meet some of the pharaohs of ancient Egypt:

Hatshepsut

This woman ruled Egypt for about 20 years. She wore the pharaoh's crown and often sported a royal ceremonial beard!

Akhenaten and Nefertiti

During his reign, Akhenaten banished all other gods and worshipped only one – the sun god, Aten. Together with Queen Nefertiti, Akhenaten closed down lots of temples.

Khafre (Chephren)

This pharaoh built the second pyramid at Giza. The Great Sphinx is thought to be a portrait of Khafre.

Ramses II

In the 13th century BC, Ramses II ruled over Egypt for 67 years. He built more monuments than any other pharaoh. He had over 100 children!

Tutankhamun

Tutankhamun is perhaps the most famous pharaoh. He took over from his father, Akhenaten, and Nefertiti in 1336 BC, aged only 9. He died nine years later, aged only 18. His tomb was discovered in 1922 by archaeologist Howard Carter. In 1968, Tutankhamun's mummy was X-rayed by scientists and they found that Tutankhamun's skull had been damaged. There are several theories suggesting the reason for his death, but the most popular is that he died from a blow to the back of his head!

Find out more about each pharaoh. Imagine you were a pharaoh. What would your name be and what would your headdress look like?

Find out what Tutankhamun's death mask looked like. It has a decoration of a snake on it – for spitting fire at the king's enemies!



Not for the squeamish!

WRAP LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

We meet a few mummies in *The Pharaoh of Asco Express*. The ancient Egyptians used to mummify the bodies of their dead people and animals. They wanted to live forever and believed that if a dead person's body was 'mummified' it could continue on its journey to the afterlife.



Do you want to know more about mummification? Here's your step-by-step guide to this ancient Egyptian art.

1. First of all, use iron hooks to pull out the brain through the nostrils.
2. Make a cut in the side of the body with a ritual knife. Pull out all the organs.
3. Put them into four canopic jars – one for the liver, one for the intestines, one for the lungs and one for the stomach.
4. Rinse out the body with palm wine. Then cover it with special salt called natron to stop it from rotting and to dry it out. Leave for 40 days.
5. Rub a mixture of cedar oil, wax, salt and gum into the body to stop it from cracking.
6. Tightly pack the body with sand (sawdust will do).
7. Wrap your body in linen bandages. You'll need hundreds of metres of linen. Don't forget to wrap each toe and finger separately.
8. As you wrap, place some jewellery belonging to the dead person amongst the bandages. Don't forget to pray and hope they'll get to the afterlife.

The word 'mummy' comes from the word 'mummiya'. 'Mummiya' was the Arabic word for bitumen that was used to preserve bodies.





SECRET CODES

Egyptian picture-writing is called hieroglyphics. There were no vowels in the ancient Egyptian alphabet. There were 24 hieroglyphs, each standing for different sounds. Hieroglyphics could be read from left to right, right to left or top to bottom!

The Rosetta stone was carved in 196 BC. It showed three types of writing: hieroglyphics, demotic and ancient Greek. This stone was found in 1799 by one of Napoleon's soldiers in a town called Rosetta and you can see it in the British Museum. Scholars worked out what the hieroglyphic symbols meant because they knew the ancient Greek language so could match up the symbols.

Why don't you have a go at making up your own picture writing?

To find out more, go to: www.ancientegypt.co.uk/writing/home.html



WORDSEARCH ACTIVITY

Find all the words below in the *Cursed Tales: The Pharaoh of Asco Express* wordsearch.

THE PHARAOH OF ASCO EXPRESS

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

AIDEN
 ANCIENEGYPT
 ANKH
 ANUBIS
 ASCOEXPRESS

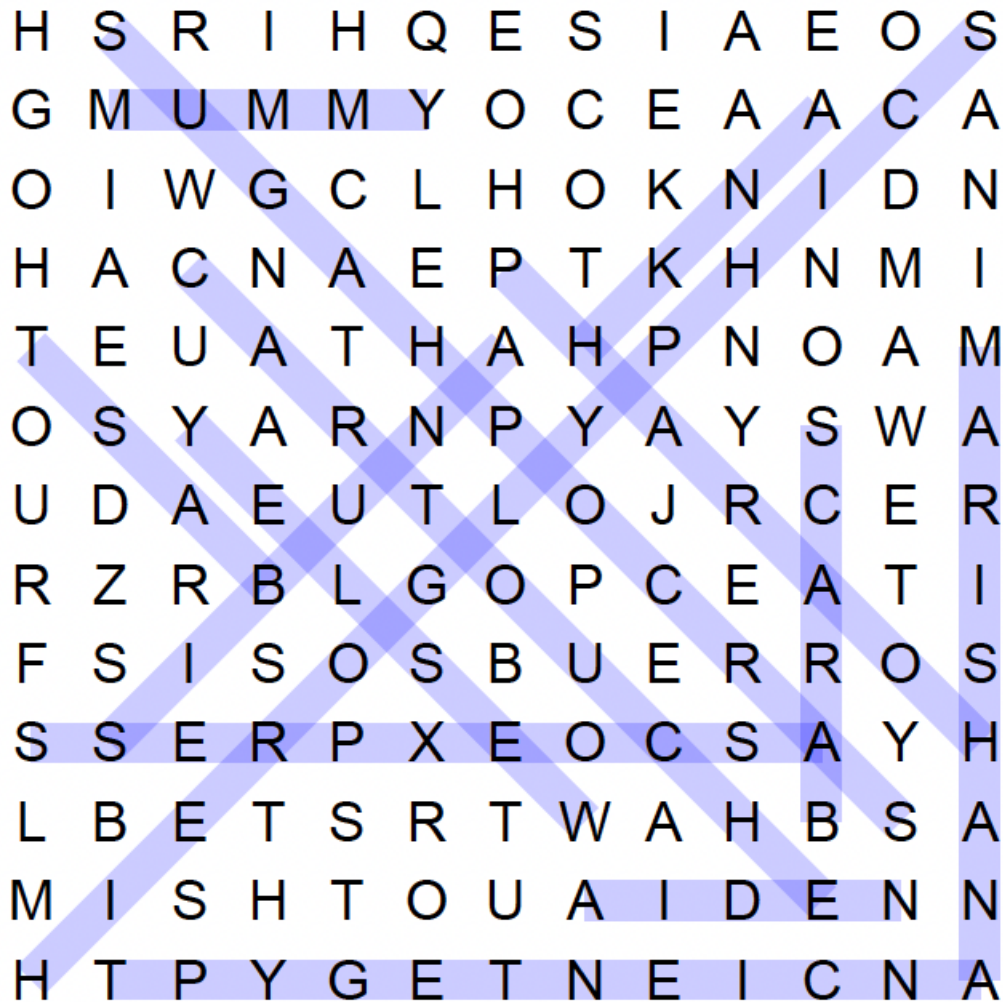
BAST
 CARTOUCHE
 HIEROGLYPHICS
 MARISHANA
 MUMMY

PHARAOH
 SARCOPHAGUS
 SCARAB
 WESLEY



WORDSEARCH SOLUTION

THE PHARAOH OF ASCO EXPRESS



AIDEN
ANCIEN
TEGYPT
ANKH
ANUBIS
ASCOEXPRESS

BAST
CARTOUCHE
HIEROGLYPHICS
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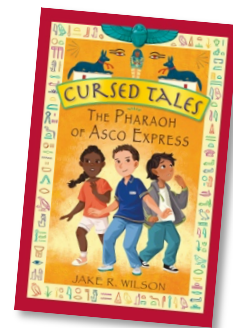
PHARAOH
SARCOPHAGUS
SCARAB
WESLEY



FUN
ACTIVITY!

DESIGN A COVER

Why don't you have a go at designing your own cover for the book. You could use elements from the book's cover or completely use your own ideas.



FUN
ACTIVITY!

SHOP TILL YOU DROP

Why don't you have a go creating your own spooky shopping list. Imagine going into Asco Express (well, you might not want to!) and buying some ghoulish goods. Let's hope you don't bump or crash into anything!

