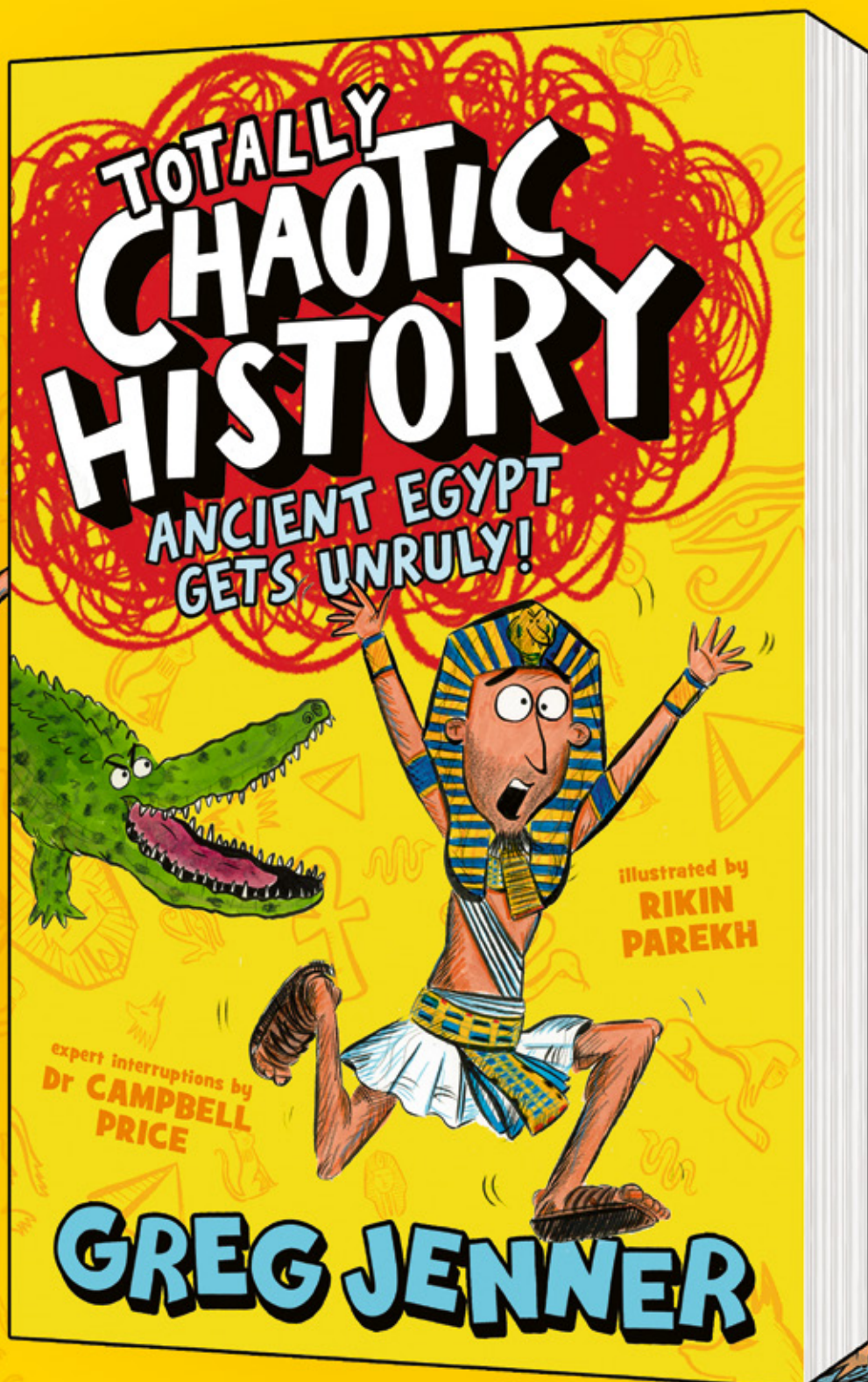


TEACHERS' NOTES



illustrated by
**RIKIN
PAREKH**

expert interruptions by
**Dr CAMPBELL
PRICE**

GREG JENNER

9781406395655 • PB • £7.99 • For ages 7+



**WALKER
BOOKS**

*These notes have been written by the teachers at the **CLPE** to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.*

These teaching notes have been written with children in KS2 in mind, but you will need to differentiate them as appropriate to the needs and experience of your own children.

Before You Start:

- This book is about Egyptology and archaeology and the insights these subjects give us into this ancient culture, so it will be beneficial to gauge pupils' prior knowledge of the subject and their grasp of historical eras and movements, and of the study of historical process. Depending on your setting, pupils may have extensive knowledge and this could be an opportunity to draw on their own interests and experiences. Although the book's coverage is exhaustive, they could be encouraged and supported to carry out further research themselves if topics that pupils are curious about are not addressed.
- Within this book, public historian and broadcaster Greg Jenner, supported by Egyptologist Dr Campbell Price, presents an overview of Ancient Egyptian history and key topics and themes within the era. History holds a fascination for many adults and children alike, and readers may already have an interest and a wealth of knowledge that they might like to share.
- As part of this approach, it would be interesting to unpick with children what they understand by the term 'history' both as an academic subject and as an idea, engaging in particular with such broad questions as:
 - *When do you think history begins – with the Big Bang, with fossil records, with the dinosaurs three hundred million years ago, with the first signs of civilization?*
 - *How long ago does something have to have happened for it be history – a hundred years ago, fifty, ten, last year, last week, yesterday?*
 - *Who makes history – is it just countries and their leaders and other significant individuals? Is it ordinary people, people of both sexes and all ages, backgrounds and ethnic groups?*
- Record the children's reflections and return to them after reading the book, to consider whether any of their thinking has changed as a result.
- Prior to reading, it would also be helpful to familiarise yourself with the geography of Egypt and its neighbours, the course of the Nile and the main cities discussed, to see whether any of your class or community have links to these locations, including having travelled there or read books, heard stories or seen films set in those places. You might like to create a print or digital map of Egypt that you could populate as you read the book, with pupils individually, in pairs or small groups taking the lead.
- It would also be helpful to have a shared Reading Journal in which you can record any notes of discussions, visual organisers, timelines and any new vocabulary that the children encounter during the text.

Reading aloud and key talking points:

- Introduce the book by sharing the front cover and reading aloud the title and author and illustrator names. Invite pupils to share their initial impressions. Take the opportunity to model specific reading strategies and language associated with non-fiction like 'find evidence' or 'retrieve facts' to support their ideas.
 - *What kind of book do you think this is? How do you know? Does it remind you of anything you have read or seen before?*
 - *Do you know the author Greg Jenner? Children may be familiar with Greg from his podcasts **You're Dead to Me** and **Homeschool History** or his work on the massively popular and influential **Horrible Histories**. What expectations about the book does it give you that he is the author? What do you think 'expert interruptions by Dr Campbell Price' might mean?*

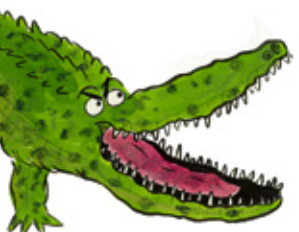


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- Unpick the title ***Totally Chaotic History: Ancient Egypt Gets Unruly!*** What do you understand by the terms 'chaotic' and 'unruly', and what do you think they suggest to you about the view this book might offer us about life in the past? What geographical location and period of time do you think is covered by the term 'Ancient Egypt'?
- Before reading on, encourage the children to consider the book as an artefact and to look more closely at the cover illustration and share their responses with each other. *How do the explosive block-capital title and subtitle against a swirling red cloud make you feel? Who do you think the character at the centre might be, what clues do his dress, his facial expression and body language give you, what does the crocodile snapping at his heels add to your sense of the book about to unfold? Who or what do you think you are looking at and why has this image been chosen for the cover? How do you understand the images in the vivid yellow background, can you identify what they are, and any associations they have for you? What do you think they are intended to indicate?*
- Invite pupils to draw on their prior reading experiences to make predictions about what reading this book might involve. *What do you expect to find inside? What will it look like? How do you think the information will be organized and presented? How do you expect text and image to work together? Why do you think that?* Make accessible a range of non-fiction texts for comparison, including information books, atlases, maps, globes and age-appropriate websites.
- Now read aloud Chapter 1 on pages 7–14, 'Welcome to Ancient Egypt'. You may want to enlarge these pages as you look at them in detail or provide photocopies for the children to text-mark, practising retrieval skills with pupils as well as how to summarize information into a few key points. Begin by reading it aloud and talking together about what pupils found interesting and why. Talk together about unfamiliar vocabulary and add it to the Reading Journal.
- Model how to skim read to get an overall gist, drawing attention to the main clause of each sentence, text-marking it and discussing what subject or theme it conveys, e.g., '... we'll need an expert ...', 'their amazing civilization would last over 3000 years...', 'they felt like MODERN Egyptians...'
- Consider also the tone, and how it makes them feel for Greg to write in an accessible, friendly and humorous way. *How does it make you feel when Greg mentions his love of snacks, the prospect of a 'rollicking, roller coaster race', 'loads to smash through', his warning that 'the reality is a teensy bit more messy'?* The children may feel that this level of formality — the absence of a stereotypically 'academic' voice — makes the book engaging and non-threatening. *What does the additional presence of a 'super clever co-author' add to their engagement or enjoyment of the text, does it make them more likely to trust the accuracy of what is being shared?* You could discuss what some of the attributes of a historian are, such as criticality and sensitivity to the idea that 'previous "facts" have since been proven dodgy'.
- Consider Campbell's 'accuracy alarm' and Greg's chaos meter. *How do you think these devices will steer you as a reader, and make the book easier or more fun or more interesting to read?* In this connection discuss also how Rikin's illustrations support their engagement with, enjoyment and understanding of the text, including the sketches of Greg and Campbell, the footers, the chaos meter and accuracy alarm.
- Revisit the illustration on page 10, and invite the children to answer the question/challenge: 'So you think you know Ancient Egypt?' *What do you think these illustrations represent? What area of learning might they connect with?*
- Revisit the timeline on pages 12–13. You might even photocopy the page and cut it into a jigsaw, inviting the children to work in pairs to read or reread, and summarise what is on their 'piece' before re-constructing the timeline. Discuss and add to the Reading Journal any vocabulary that they need to clarify, e.g., 'dynasty', 'era', 'pharaoh', 'source'. Clarify children's understanding of the abbreviations BCE and CE, and that higher numbers Before the Common Era are longer ago, while higher numbers in the Common Era are more recent. You might link this to any Maths work undertaken on negative numbers. *What do you notice about the different eras of Ancient Egyptian history? What do the names of the eras suggest to you (Greg and Campbell discuss the naming convention on pages 72–73)? Do any of the events in the summaries resonate with you? Are all of the 'pieces' of the jigsaw the same duration?*
- Before reading on, capture the children's responses to Chapter 1 by completing a KWL grid in pairs, tables or as a whole class. *What do you know or think you know about Ancient Egypt? What more would they like to find out? What questions do they have about Ancient Egypt?* The third column can be completed as you read on and when reflecting back after reading the whole book:



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do we know about Ancient Egypt? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do we want to find out about Ancient Egypt? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did we learn about Ancient Egypt?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

- Now go on to read Chapter 2, 'The Nile is the Place to Be' and Chapter 3, 'Narmer Drama!', as a model of how you might engage with the entire text. As well as reading the text, consider how the other features that Greg has introduced – including the overview timeline (under the chapter heading) that runs from 5000 BCE to 30 BCE, the 'scribble in the margins' on page 16, the annotated map on page 17, the Fact File on page 19, Rikin's illustrations throughout – support their understanding of the text. *How does Greg's use of typography, such as BOLD ALL CAPS on pages 15 and 16, help you to hear his voice and his passion?* In Chapter 3, as well as the features above, we have Rikin's detailed illustration and panel of Narmer's Palette (page 25 and 26; you might compare with the original in The Egyptian Museum in Cairo at <https://egyptianmuseumcairo.eg/artefacts/narmer-palette-collection/>) and Campbell's Accuracy Alarm (page 27) *How do these added features, the different voice and viewpoint that Campbell and Rikin offer, help you engage with what Greg is sharing and deepen your understanding of what is being described?*
- The book does not have a Table of Contents, so share the following table with the children and consider what it suggests about what the book will be covering, and whether they recognize any of the places or civilizations. You could provide a fourth column to the right where they speculate about what that chapter might be about. *What do you think the main themes might be? Are there any figures, topics, or locations that you have heard of or are familiar with?*

Chapter	Title	Page
1	Welcome to Ancient Egypt!	7
2	The Nile is the Place to Be	15
3	Narmer Drama!	22
4	Odd Gods	28
5	Pyramid Scheme	35
6	Myth Buster: Pyramid Special!	41
7	Famine, Floods, Fights and Failure!	48
8	Mummy Makers	53
9	Hard Times at Hetep-Senwosret	62
10	Hello, Hyksos! Hello, Horses!	68
11	The (Very Old) New Kingdom	72
12	Hooray for Hatshepsut!	75
13	Let's Get up and Aten!	81
14	Ask Thoth!	87
15	Wham Bam, Ram (and Fam)!	92
16	First Day of Medical School	100
17	There's Been a Murder!	106
18	Newbie Nubians and Naughty Neo-Assyrians	112
19	Miaowing Mummies	119
20	Alexander the Great	124
21	The True-ish Diary of Queen Cleopatra VII	130
22	Rosetta Readers	137
23	Tut's Tomb Treasures	146



- They might identify that alongside familiar Ancient Egyptian topics (pyramids, mummies, deities...) there are what may be the names of rulers or deities or locations. Pupils could decide whether certain chapters speak to them, and that they want to read them first, or whether they prefer to read through the book in order, with the option of being able to reread and move back and forth according to particular eras, locations or aspects of the civilization that interest them (e.g., slavery, changes of dynasty, natural or other disasters, cats...).
- The book provides a variety of different models of referential writing, and it is worth unpicking these with the children, exploring what makes them distinctive, by text-marking and reading aloud to hear the specific voice of the different forms, e.g.,
 - The illustrated panels on Egyptian Gods, pages 30–33;
 - The imagined *Pyramid Building LIVE* outside broadcast on pages 37–39;
 - The instructional ‘Mummy-Making: A How To Guide’ on pages 54–55 (but as Greg suggests on page 53: show sensitivity to squeamish learners);
 - The ‘Historian Head-to-Head’ debate on pages 58–59;
 - The estate agent’s property details on pages 63–65;
 - Pharaoh Amenhotep IV’s newsflash on page 82 and official guidance on worshipping Aten on pages 84–85;
 - The Q&A with Thoth on pages 88–91;
 - Ramesses’ ‘Construction Tips’ on page 95;
 - Medical Guidance on pages 102–104;
 - Murder Investigation on pages 108–110;
 - Cat and animal lovers’ tourism brochures on pages 120–122;
 - Cleopatra VII’s diary entries on pages 131–136;
 - Decoding the Rosetta Stone on page 141
(see the original at <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/egypt/explore-rosetta-stone>);
 - Hieroglyphs for beginners on page 143;
 - Highlights of Tutankhamun’s tomb on pages 148–149.
- In each case, support the children to identify what is distinctive about each style of writing. *How has Greg captured the register, intention and voice of each form? Are there features of these styles you could use in your own writing?*
- After reading, invite the children to explore their overall responses to the text with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls ‘the four basic questions’ (Aidan Chambers, *Tell Me*, Thimble Press, 2012). These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
- Tell me...
 - was there anything you liked about this text?
 - was there anything that you particularly disliked?
 - was there anything that puzzled you?
 - were there any patterns, any connections that you noticed?
- The openness of these questions, unlike the more interrogative ‘Why?’ question, encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the ‘wrong’ answer. As children reply it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘puzzles’, ‘patterns’. This written record helps to map out the children’s view of the text and the important themes and ideas around the book from their perspective and is a way of holding on to ideas for later, or as a set of notes that might be used for sharing their views of the book with others.



- Read the final pages 'Meet the Makers' (pages 158–159). *What further insights into Greg, Campbell and Rikin's professions do these answers give you? Are there questions that you would ask them if you had the opportunity? Is there anything you would like to know about how they work together? What other questions might you have? Could you create and refine a set of questions that remain for the group and send them to the publisher for the three to answer?*

Revisiting the book:

- Having read the whole book you might invite pupils to carry out further research on a theme, dynasty or aspect of the civilization they found most interesting or from which they felt they learned the most powerful lessons. You might then engage the groups or class in debate and discussion around which chapters they felt had the most to teach us. Encourage them to support their arguments by drawing on the facts shared in the book as well as wider evidence that they may have found through wider research. This could lead to them creating a piece of persuasive writing through which to share their viewpoint. In preparation, they could explore real-world models of non-fiction texts, analyzing what makes each of them particularly effective and drawing on this in their own chosen form of writing.
- Reread the opening of Chapter 1 on pages 7–8, and discuss Greg's reasons for writing this book: *What understanding did you gain of the span of Egyptian history and what it might tell us about the people who lived then, and about our lives now? Did it make you wonder about what future historians might say about us 7000 years from now?*

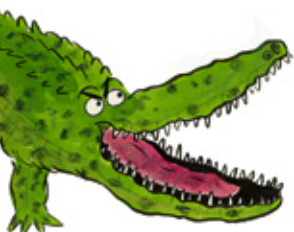
After reading:

- Invite them to consider who else might like to read this book: *would it appeal to a general reader or only those interested in history? What makes you think this? How would you describe the book to someone in another class who hadn't read it? Did Greg manage to offer the opposite of 'a dull account of boring dates and dusty old names'? Did he 'convince you that history is thrilling'?*
- If possible, leave copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time if they want to, by themselves or socially in a group or to take home and re-read for themselves.
- Through modelling, ask the children to describe their favourite part of the book, which might be an era, a historical figure or deity, an artefact... Provide the children with an oral scaffold, for example: *the most memorable part of the book was ... because...; my top moment in the book was ... because...* and in pairs ask them to share their favourite part of the book with one another. Invite them to add these recommendations to the library or wherever the book is displayed to appeal to other readers.
- There is a multitude of writing opportunities related to this book:
 - Use the varied different writing styles, voices and forms featured in the text to describe an aspect of another civilization or the various artefacts that suggest something to us about life back then.
 - Write a letter to the authors and illustrator about the book – perhaps ask what they enjoyed or how they chose what to include.
- Some pupils may have additional archaeological information: give these pupils an opportunity to share their knowledge and discuss why they feel this should be included (if writing to the author and illustrator, add this information in to the letter.)
- Children could go on to create and publish their own books about civilizations of interest to them and the artefacts that reveal what life was like in them, drawing on the non-fiction features that will help their readers navigate information effectively.

Other titles to support exploration of themes from the book:

Books with Similar Settings or Themes:

- *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*, Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen (Walker)
- *Ancient Egypt: Tales of Gods and Pharaohs*, Marcia Williams (Walker Books)



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Further Linked Non-Fiction Texts:

- *A Child's Introduction to Egyptology*, Heather Alexander and Sara Mulvanny (Black Dog and Leventhal)
- *A Really Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson (Puffin)
- *The Secrets of Tutankhamun: Egypt's Boy King and His Incredible Tomb*, Patricia Cleveland-Peck and Isabel Greenberg (Bloomsbury)
- *Meet the Ancient Egyptians*, James Davies (Big Picture Press)
- *Mummies Unwrapped*, Tom Froese (Nosy Crow)
- *The Street Beneath My Feet*, Charlotte Guillian, illustrated by Yuval Zommer (words and pictures)
- *Egypt Magnified*, David Long and Harry Bloom (Wide-Eyed Editions)
- *The Egyptians (Hide-and-Seek History)*, Jonny Marx and Chaaya Prabhat (Caterpillar Books)
- *Maps*, Aleksandra Mizelińska and Daniel Mizelińska (Templar)
- *Treasury of Egyptian Mythology: Classic Stories of Gods, Goddesses, Monsters, and Mortals*, Donna Jo Napoli and Christina Balit (National Geographic Kids)
- *What Is an Archaeologist?* Libby Romero (National Geographic)
- *Ancient Wonders*, Iris Volant and Avalon Nuovo (Flying Eye Books)
- *Ancient Egypt: Gods, Pharaohs and Cats*, Marcia Williams (Walker Books)

Useful websites and multimedia:

- The Egyptian Museum in Cairo: <https://www.egyptianmuseumcairo.com/egyptian-museum-cairo/>
- The Egyptian Museum in California has 3D interactive models of some of the artefacts they house here: <https://egyptianmuseum.org/3D-models>
- The Egypt collection at the British Museum: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/egypt>
- Take a virtual tour of the Ancient Egyptian gallery at the Liverpool National Museum: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/virtual-tours/ancient-egypt-virtual-tour>
- Ancient Egyptian art and artefacts at The Met in New York: <https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/collection-areas/egyptian-art>
- Griffith Institute collection of scanned Egyptologist notebooks: <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-collection>
- The co-author of the book works at the Manchester Museum. You can find out more about it here: <https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/>

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