

HOW DO BELIEFS REVEAL VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES?

Take a Historical Perspective

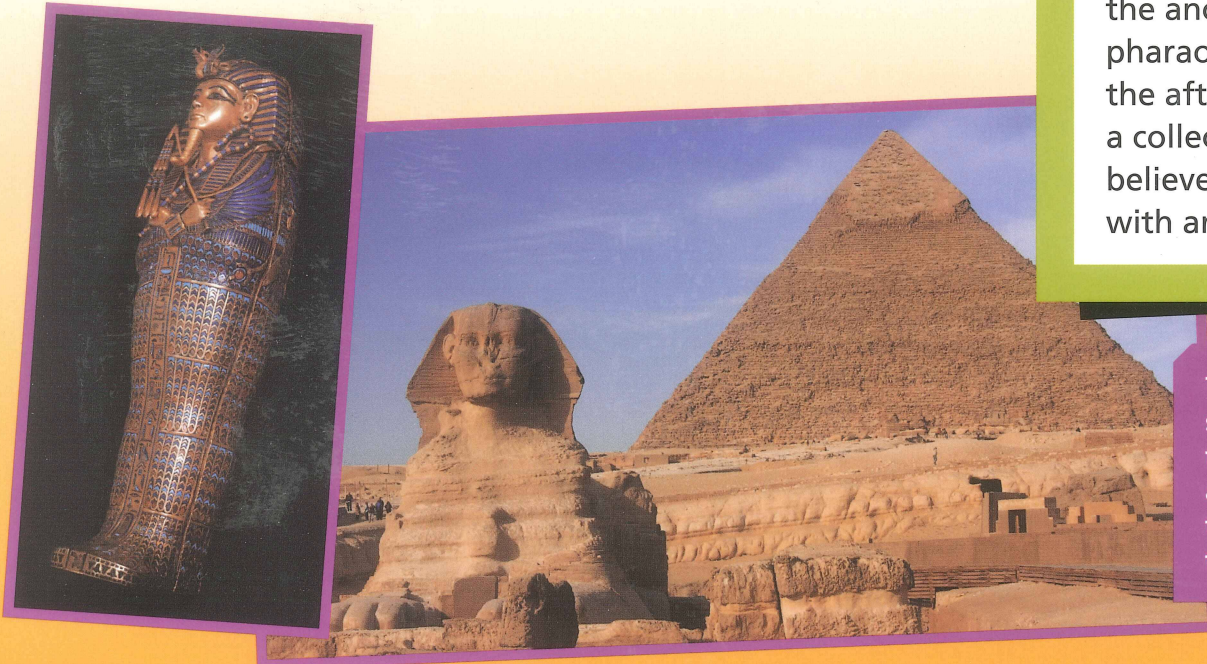
- 1) Identify:** Read the text and examine the photos in the Student Module and on this Activity Card. Then identify the cultural practices, values, and beliefs that were important to the ancient Egyptians and the Haida.
- 2) Compare:** Use a compare-and-contrast chart to identify the similarities and differences in their values and beliefs.
- 3) Assess and Synthesize:** What do the practices, values, and beliefs you identified reveal about the perspective of each society on how the world works? Share your response by creating an image with labels, a graphic story with bubble thinking, an interview, a poster, or a paragraph.

TOMBS FOR DIVINE PHARAOHS

Egyptian pharaohs built the largest stone tombs in history: pyramids. The ancient Egyptians believed that a pharaoh would change into an immortal god within the tomb, so they preserved the dead body to prepare it for life after death.

The body was **mummified** (tightly wrapped in linen bandages to protect against moisture and insects) and then placed in a coffin-like case that was sometimes made of solid gold. Gold was associated with the deities, whose skin was believed to be golden. The case was decorated with symbols that the ancient Egyptians believed would protect the pharaoh. Everything that the pharaoh might need in the afterlife was buried with him or her. Sometimes a collection of spells was included because people believed they would help the pharaoh communicate with and impress the deities.

The pharaoh Khafre ordered the construction of the second-largest pyramid of all time. Beside the pyramid is the Great Sphinx, a huge statue with the body of a lion and the head of a pharaoh. Many historians believe that the sphinx portrays Khafre. The coffin at the far left is that of the pharaoh Tutankhamun.



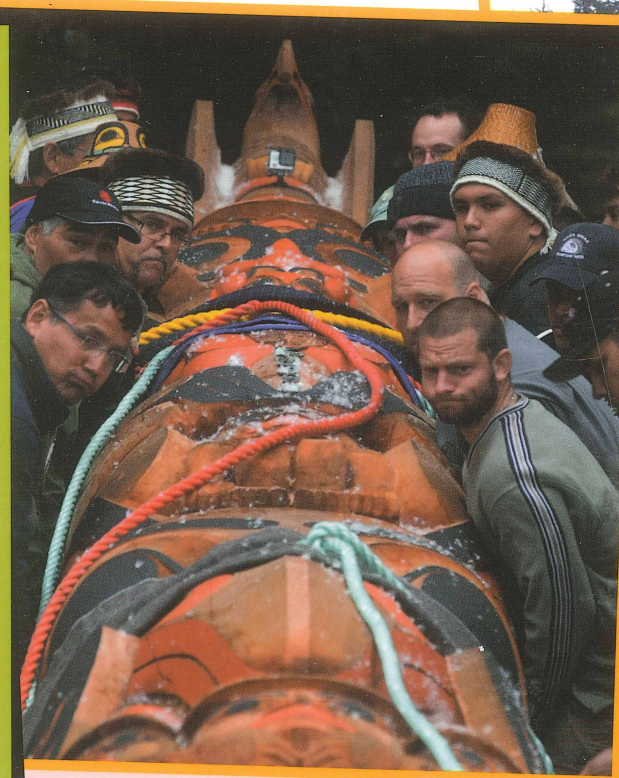
TOTEM POLES AND THE STORIES THEY TELL

The Haida have always used symbols called *crests* to tell the story of who they are and where they come from. The crests are figures associated with the land, sea, sky, and supernatural worlds. The crests become part of a person's identity. They are used to decorate clothing, button blankets, houses, canoes, and totem poles.

The First Peoples of the West Coast build totem poles out of the cedar trees in their environment. A totem pole is often raised during a feast or potlatch. At this event, people share their reasons for creating the totem pole. They also tell the stories represented by the crests on the pole, and they explain the reasons their family claims the crests. The totem pole is set in a place where everyone in a community can see it.

Totem poles are a way to record the history and stories of a community, clan, or family. The sections are a guide for telling the stories. "Reading" a totem pole from the bottom to the top helps people understand their history.

Totem poles are also created to honour an event or a person, or to record the lineage of a chief. Sometimes, memorial poles are raised to honour an important community member who has died. The remains of the deceased person are placed in a grave box, and the pole acts as both a tomb and a headstone.



On August 15, 2013, more than 100 people helped to raise this totem pole in Haida Gwaii. The crests on the red cedar pole tell about the history of the area and mark the 20th anniversary of an agreement between the Canadian government and the Haida. This agreement led to the creation of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site.

