# Stage 2 Ancient Studies

# Developing an inquiry question to target the assessment design criteria

Egyptian Burial rites

This is a topic heading, not an inquiry focus. Students who shape their inquiry in this manner are at risk of hitting very few of the assessment design criteria.

What were the Egyptian burial practices of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom?

This is a recount question.

* While students might do quite well on KU1, they may miss KU2 and 3 completely, though a student might seize the opportunity to look at the fact that not all levels of society made mummies.
* RA1 could be limited to a simple Google search that will provide the student with material on burial practices but RA2, which would look at much deeper concepts around why the Egyptians believed what they did and whether those beliefs were influential within all aspects of Egyptian society or only some, or how the same core belief was expressed within separate classes within the society, in or how long those beliefs were influential within the society, again may well be missed.
* In terms of Application the student may show evidence in A1, but could struggle to put forward an argument in A2. A3 will be affected by the quality of the research undertaken for A1.

Why were burial practices so important to the Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom period and how did they shape the society?

* This question still contains the student’s initial starting interest in burial practices, however it directs their research and focus to the principles underlying the burial practices and then onto how that idea/concept/practice influenced the society.
* Immediately KU2 is in play, RA2 and A2.
* To answer this question, the students will have to go wider than Google search pg 1 which then allows them to engage with higher level evidence for RA1, and by engaging with primary source material such as buildings, paintings, artefacts and as well as sound secondary sources KU3 and A3 will be targeted.
* This question brings RA2 and A2 into play. As soon as a how or a why question is asked the student is analysing and has a chance to develop an argument. The research required will ask more of the students than finding what burial practices were but towards why they were held and how those beliefs influenced the people and practices of Egyptian life. The student could open the argument to look at how belief in the afterlife shaped some of the following practices such as art, architecture, politics and religion. It would be important NOT to focus on too many aspects as the student has a 2000 word total. Depth is ultimately more important that breadth.
* The richness of the argument the student then develops feeds the depth and breadth of the research, hopefully bringing into play more primary source material in looking at statuary, temples, pyramids, tombs, the Book of the Dead which then addresses KU3, RA1 and A1 and 3.
* The question allows the student to analyse, evaluate, reflect, draw conclusions and evidence some deep higher level thinking that we would look to find in the higher levels of KU1,2 and 3, RA2 and A2.

Discuss how religious belief about the afterlife came to hold such power in Ancient Egypt’s Middle Kingdom.

This is essentially the same question as the previous one. Discuss means to explain a topic or the concepts in play, to give details through supporting evidence and to offer varying points of view. So this Inquiry focus could see a student, through their introduction, outline what the prevailing religious belief were, and how they had come to inform not only religious practice but selected other practices (such as artistic, social, architectural. They could explain how Egyptian society was diverse and that varying classes of Egyptian society implemented belief differently.

Questions such as this can be very powerful with students with developed analytical skills as it allows them great scope. Students whose analysis is not sophisticated could find themselves struggling for direction.

If a student wanted to look for a connected study, questions such as those below could be used. They are concept driven.

* The Egyptians made every effort to preserve the bodies of their dead while the Greeks disposed of their dead as quickly as possible. Account for the variance in practice.
* The Egyptians were driven by their beliefs in the afterlife to preserve their dead. What aspects of this ancient Egyptian quest can be found in modern cryogenics?