

“Luminous Beings Are We”: Illuminating Ancient Egyptian *Akhu* via *Star Wars*’ Force Ghosts

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Abstract

In this essay, we argue that popular culture and manufactured realities can help students and researchers explore remote, ancient concepts and practices. From a pedagogical perspective, science-fiction universes are often more relatable, accessible, and rounded than our ancient archaeological and textual records. We consider as a case study the *akhu* (ancient Egyptian ‘effective dead’ spirits) in tandem with *Star Wars* Force Ghosts (manifestations of the essence of deceased Force-sensitives), focusing on evidence for *akhu* dating primarily to the New Kingdom. We investigate the processes by which the dead become Force Ghosts and *akhu* respectively and the modes of communication employed by these supernatural entities. Further, we confirm the effectiveness of this comparative exercise via student feedback.

Keywords

Star Wars; science fiction; *akhu*; Force Ghosts; pedagogy; Egyptology.

I see “Star Wars” as [...] taking all of the issues that religion represents and trying to distill them down into a [...] more modern and more easily accessible construct that people can grab onto to accept the fact that there is a greater mystery out there.¹

—George Lucas

In his 2006 study on the usefulness of audio and video popular media in two “American History to 1877” classrooms at Texas Tech University, D. Sandy Hoover notes that students are “increasingly becoming visual learners” and that they respond positively to contemporary video clips used in their classes.² Hoover’s article, however, articulates an all-too-common trepidation and concern about “appropriateness” in teaching, most persistent among untenured or contingent colleagues. Despite his strong data in support of popular media, Hoover wonders, “should I remove the clips from the lecture? Or keep them on the theory that it was really not all that bad to entertain the students while they were learning

1 Lucas, “The Mythology of ‘Star Wars’”.

2 Hoover, “Popular Culture in the Classroom”, 474.

history?”³ Hoover’s uncertainty is fed, presumably, by the pervasive premise that scholarship, education, and entertainment are somehow at odds with each other. As early as 1954, Walt Disney noted that the “theory that a nominal gap exists between what is generally regarded as ‘entertainment’ and what is defined as ‘educational’ represents, we have long held, an old and untenable viewpoint.”⁴ Though outdated and shortsighted, this perspective nevertheless persists in academia.⁵ In their article, Julia Troche and Eve Weston build on previous scholarship arguing in favor of the pedagogical benefits of using humor (a form of entertainment) in the classroom,⁶ suggesting that “humor is not only a legitimate pedagogical tool, but a particularly effective one that helps information retention [and] student motivation.”⁷ Thus, “entertaining” students and anchoring lessons to popular culture—in the case of this discussion, anchoring ancient Egyptian religion to *Star Wars*—can be employed as a useful pedagogical tool.⁸ While any teaching technique can be misused, careful lesson planning and intentional design facilitate the provision of students with essential context. While drawing modern-historical comparisons can be problematic, when deftly navigated by educators, this framework provides a structure for meaningful, historical comparisons to be made.

3 Hoover “Popular Culture in the Classroom”, 468.

4 Disney, “Educational Values”, 82. As early as 1954, Disney conceived of a union between education and visual media as entertainment; see Disney, “Educational Values”, 82–84. The term “edutainment” was coined in 1973 by Robert Heyman in regard to his National Geographic documentaries; see Rey-López, Fernández-Vilas, and Díaz-Redondo, “A Model for Personalized Learning”, 457.

5 For various pedagogical reasons: because edutainment is product-centered and passive (for example, Resnick) or because it has harmful effects (for example, Okan). See Resnick, “Edutainment?”, 1–4; Okan, “Edutainment: is learning at risk?”. There are also socio-cultural reasons that are often unspoken, informal, or show up only as snide comments in peer reviews or teaching observations, creating a culture in which scholars (especially early career scholars) lack confidence that their institutions, colleagues, and/or fields will see the use of popular media as “valid” rather than “youthful” or “not academic”. This is, unfortunately, largely anecdotal and difficult to quantify, and as such these discussions continue to live in footnotes such as these. Notable exceptions include Peacock et al. “University faculty perceptions”.

6 This is not merely anecdotal. Goel and Dolan’s neuroscience research can be used to draw a connection between dopamine activation and motivation and memory; see Goel and Dolan, “The functional anatomy of humor”, 237–238. This is situated within the context of knowledge retention and education in Banas, Dunbar, Rodriquez and Liu, “A Review of Humor in Educational Settings”.

7 Troche and Weston, “Virtual Reality Storytelling”.

8 In our dataset, the term “popular” reflects that over 80% of our students, in an informal class survey, expressed that they are familiar with the *Star Wars Universe* via the *Original Trilogy*, *Clone Wars*, or *Rebels*.

Engagement with ancient Egypt through a popular medium is effective due to students' and educators' familiarity with basic ancient Egyptian concept recognition. Indeed, Stephanie Moser notes "the reception of ancient Egypt [...] is not passive or derivative (from scholarly traditions), but has played a driving role in the creation of knowledge about Egyptian antiquity".⁹ The distinctive iconography of ancient Egypt can be considered an "easily grasped 'shorthand'" which contributes to Egypt's continued and ubiquitous nature in popular culture.¹⁰ In turn, participants experience "a lasting and powerful cognitive effect" by means of a familiarity with ancient Egyptian motifs and other visual cues.¹¹ A valid critique, however, of using popular culture in educational settings is the inaccuracy of such references. Moser addresses this criticism, noting that "it is the *engagement* with original sources and not the sources *per se* that plays the key part in generating knowledge about the ancient world".¹² The importance of active participation with popular culture source material is echoed in Derek Sweet's analysis of the reception of Jedi religion, in which he affirms that "when an individual encounters an active myth, she recognizes herself and her culture; she sees herself as an active participant in the narrative".¹³ By activating students' personal connections to popular culture and creating opportunities for introspection, educators can enhance their learning objectives.

With this in mind, the appropriate use of popular media in history classrooms demands forethought and intentional design. Nonetheless, the benefits to student learning, retention of information, and enjoyment make this effort a worthy investment.¹⁴ We argue, additionally, that popular culture and real or imagined realities (for example, Augmented Reality or the imagined *Star Wars Universe*) can help students to explore remote, ancient concepts and practices in ways that are both more engaging and produce more creative thinking than lectures lacking such media. *Star Wars*, then, can be used as a tool or lens through which we can explore ideas historically situated in ancient Egypt, such as the supernatural concept of the *akh* (ꜥḫ). Whereas the *akh* (pl. *akhw*) is entirely unknown to most audiences, *Star Wars* is well-known around the world, making it more relatable and a familiar knowledge source onto which we can scaffold new information. Indeed, studies have shown that students learn information

9 Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds", 1264.

10 Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds", 1297.

11 Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds", 1297.

12 Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds", 1269. Emphasis is Moser's.

13 Sweet, "Mythologizing Mortis", 61.

14 Hoover, "Popular Culture in the Classroom".

easier when what they are learning (the "new") is related to something they are already familiar with (that is, "familiar stimuli").¹⁵ It would presumably be more effective for students to learn about the ancient Egyptian *akh* if it is framed in a way that connects to something with which they are already familiar—in this case, Force Ghosts.¹⁶ This study shows how *Star Wars*—specifically, the concept of Force Ghosts—can be successfully mobilized as a useful pedagogical lens for the instruction of ancient Egyptian religion—in this case, the concept of the *akh*.

The comparison between *Star Wars* and ancient Egypt is by no means tenuous. It is well-attested that George Lucas relied heavily on global mythology and linguistics in the creation of his character names and concepts.¹⁷ In an interview with Bill Moyers, Lucas himself makes his intentions explicit: "when I did *Star Wars* I consciously set about to recreate myths and [...] the classic mythological motifs. And I wanted to use those motifs to deal with issues that existed today".¹⁸ The *Star Wars Universe* (hereafter, *SWU*) calls upon ancient Egyptian imagery.¹⁹ For example, in the television series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, Egyptian motifs abound in reference to characters with nefarious motivations: from the *Sith pyramid* and *holocron*, to the *nemes* headdress and kilt worn by the sinister *Moogans*.²⁰ As the *SWU* is vast and ever-expanding, and debates continue as to what is considered canon, our sample set is limited in this study to a small selection of films and two animated television series: the *Original Trilogy* films—*Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977), *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (1983)—and two animated *Star Wars* series: *The Clone*

15 Reder, Liu, Keinath and Popov, "Building knowledge requires bricks, not sand".

16 Though not the primary goal of this case study, we assert, additionally, that enjoyable "familiar stimuli" could also provide the scholarly opportunity to discover new avenues of research. Inquiry and critical analysis inspired by the vehicle of Sci Fi (Science Fiction) fandom can breathe new life into historical investigations while improving access to educational opportunities.

17 For an in-depth analysis of the multi-lingual derivation of *Star Wars* character names see: Allen, "A Rebel by Any Other Name".

18 Lucas, "The Mythology of 'Star Wars'".

19 Generally speaking, Egyptian imagery is used consistently across the *SWU* in similar ways. There does not seem to be any differentiation, that we can so far observe, between how Egyptian imagery is used in different media.

20 The Sith, the enemies of the Jedi, often use strong visual cuing such as the colors black and red to signify their character. For the aggressively-styled black, stepped, red-topped Sith pyramid, see Filoni, "Twilight of the Apprentice". For the pyramidal Sith holocron, see Zwyer, "Steps into Shadow: Part I". The Egyptianizing Moogans who poisoned children for profit appear in Volpe, "Corruption".

Wars (2008–2020) and *Rebels* (2014–2018)²¹. In terms of Egyptological material, we focus primarily on epigraphic and literary evidence for the concept of the *akh*, notably funerary texts from the Old through New Kingdoms (Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, Book of the Dead, and tomb inscriptions, such as Appeals to the Living) and the corpus known as Letters to the Dead, which are defined by their letter format, and (as their name indicates) are correspondences written by the living to the dead, who are either their ancestors or local, revered dead. There is, of course, more evidence we could draw upon for a fuller picture of the *akh*, but this allows for a contained account of the *akh* that presents a focused teaching opportunity without having to introduce students to too many different corpora.²²

Defining the Concepts of Force Ghost and Akh

A Force Ghost, also known as a Force Spirit, is the auditory or visual manifestation of the identity of a powerful Force-wielder who appears after death to other Force-sensitives in the *SWU*. The Force is an energy field, [succinctly defined by Jedi Master Obi-Wan \(Ben\) Kenobi in *Episode IV: A New Hope*](#), as that which “gives a Jedi his power. It’s an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together”.²³ Obi-Wan Kenobi is first introduced in *Episode IV: A New Hope* as a mentor to the main character, Luke Skywalker (see [Appendix 1](#) for a list of *Star Wars* characters pertinent to this study). Through his transition from boyhood to manhood, Luke learns of the Jedi Order and his family’s important connection to it. Jedi are members of an ancient order of so-called “warrior-monks” who wield the Force. In *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* it is further explained that the Living Force is present in all living beings and when someone dies, they pass into the Cosmic Force.²⁴ It is therein that particular individuals can learn to become Force Ghosts. Specifically, such an individual, prior to death, must be resigned to mortal sacrifice for a higher purpose and have dedicated their lives to the rigorous training necessary to exist after the

²¹ We selected this data set because of the ubiquitous nature of pop culture references to the *Original Trilogy* that span generations, the appeal of animation and shorter running times to younger audiences, pertinent mythology and appearances of Force Ghosts, the evolution of *Star Wars* mythological concepts over time, and the authors’ personal preferences/knowledge.

²² For more on the *akh* and relevant bibliography, see [Troche, *Death, Power, and Apotheosis in Ancient Egypt*](#), in particular Chapter 2, “Akhu – the Effective Dead”, 33–47.

²³ Lucas, *Star Wars—Episode IV* [00:34:40–00:34:50].

²⁴ Keller, “Voices”.

Living Force leaves their bodies. As they join the Cosmic Force, they are able to retain individuality.²⁵ Despite their ability to influence the lives of the living, Force Ghosts cannot corporeally intervene in mortal affairs (that is, they are not tangible), but rather they provide counsel and protection.²⁶

Similar in many ways to Force Ghosts, the ancient Egyptian *akh* were spiritual aspects of the dead who could impact the lives of the living but were not corporeal in form. In the ancient Egyptian worldview, there were numerous supernatural aspects possessed by an individual during life and in death: notably, the *ba*, *ka*, and *akh*.²⁷ While the *ba* and *ka* existed in life and death, the *akh* was a supernatural aspect that existed only in death. Written with the hieroglyph of the plumed ibis (Gardiner hieroglyph notation G25²⁸) and meaning "effective one",²⁹ the *akh* (*3h*) was the social agent of the deceased who interacted with the living either to cause harm or provide aid.³⁰ Despite their posthumous existence, the living would continue to engage with the *akh* through varied means, including writing letters to them. The Letters to the Dead, which are extant from the Old Kingdom through Late Period (c. 2700–332 BCE), specifically invoke the effective supernatural aspect of the dead—that is the *akh*.³¹ The *akh* are often described as being either *iqr* "excellent/useful" (*jqr*) or *aper* "equipped" (*'pr*). In terms of usefulness, this adjective (*iqr*) describes utility of the dead, as *akh*, for the living. The term *aper* specifically refers to the dead's possession of religious knowledge and the mortuary equipment necessary to navigate the Hereafter, and as such is more often found in funerary literature.³²

While there are many similarities between the ancient Egyptian *akh* and Force Ghosts, they are not equivalent concepts, and their differences are equally informative in instruction. As the goal of this study is simply to show how

²⁵ Keller, "Voices".

²⁶ There are no instances in our data set of the *Original Trilogy*, *The Clone Wars*, and *Rebels* in which Force Ghosts physically impact their environment, with the exception of when Yoda (and some objects) experience a levitation episode precipitated by the long-distance emanation of the Force by Qui-Gon in Keller, "Voices".

²⁷ For a discussion of the various aspects of humans in life and death, see Troche, *Death, Power, and Apotheosis*, 26–32.

²⁸ The hieroglyph numbering system is based on Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*. For a more recent grammar and discussion of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and Middle Egyptian grammar, however, see Allen, *Middle Egyptian*. For relevant bibliographic references regarding the translation of *akh*, see Troche, *Death, Power, and Apotheosis*, 33–47.

²⁹ Following Friedman, "The Root Meaning of *3h*".

³⁰ Harrington, *Living with the Dead*.

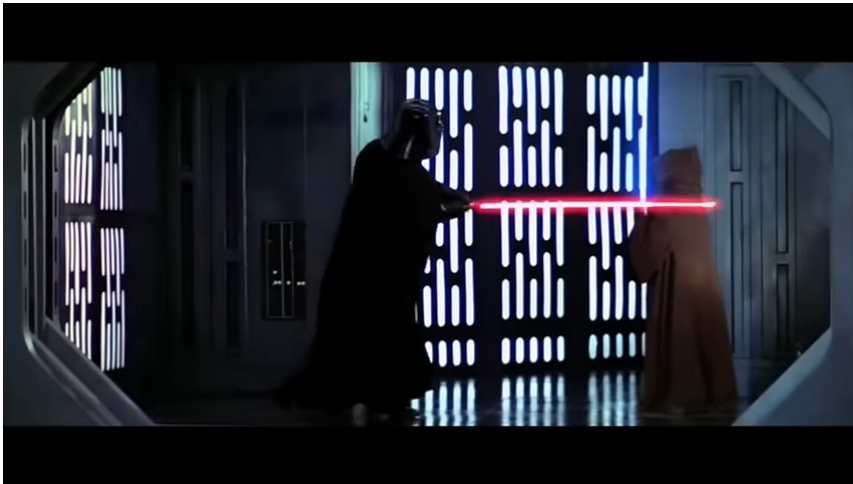
³¹ Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*; Troche, "Letters to the Dead".

³² Troche, *Death, Power, and Apotheosis*, 43–44.

popular media, in this case *Star Wars*, can be mobilized as effective pedagogical tools, we will not address every similarity and difference but rather highlight three areas we believe can create compelling, comparative conversations among modern learners: the process of becoming an *akh* or Force Ghost; the relationship between Force Ghosts, *akhu*, and place; and how the *akhu* and Force Ghosts were accessed or experienced by the living.

Becoming a Force Ghost & Becoming an Akh

In both ancient Egypt and the *SWU*, not everyone becomes an *akh* or Force Ghost simply by dying. One must *become* these entities. In *Episode IV: A New Hope*, Obi-Wan Kenobi becomes a Force Ghost upon his death at the hands of Darth Vader. Since Obi-Wan is the first Jedi to whom the audience is introduced in the *Star Wars* franchise, his death and the unexpected disappearance of his corpse sets the framework through which subsequent Jedi deaths are measured.



Video 1: Obi-Wan's Death [HD]. Source: youtube.com, @thelostyak2690. [URL: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/Nuhc80TGug>]

It is clear from his words with Darth Vader at the beginning of their duel—"If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can ever imagine"—that Obi-Wan knew his death was imminent and that, by engaging in the fight, he

had accepted this outcome.³³ Like Obi-Wan, Master Yoda’s body vanishes upon his death (resulting from his advanced age rather than violent injury) in *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*. The audience later learns in *The Clone Wars* that the first Jedi to become a Force Ghost was Qui-Gon Jinn, a character not introduced until twenty-two years after *Episode IV: A New Hope* in 1999’s *Episode I: A Phantom Menace*. The audience witnesses Qui-Gon Jinn’s death in his duel with Darth Maul. Unlike Obi-Wan and Yoda, and against audience expectations, Qui-Gon’s body does not vanish after death. As the *Star Wars* saga unfolds, it becomes clear that not all Jedi become Force Ghosts at death. In the sixth season of *The Clone Wars*, a multi-episode arc emerges in which Jedi Master Yoda is contacted by a manifestation of the deceased Qui-Gon Jinn.³⁴ While Qui-Gon is not fully a Force Ghost in the general understanding of the concept, Qui-Gon is able to use the Cosmic Force to communicate auditorily and telekinetically with Yoda.



Video 2: The Clone Wars - Yoda talks to Qui-gon Jinn on Dagobah. Source: youtube.com, @fulcrumfanedits5423. [URL: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/e7ra7GebAKs>]

The method by which a Jedi Knight can become a Force Ghost is then revealed to Yoda by mysterious entities on an unnamed planet.³⁵ Yoda must pass a series of trials focused on conquering elements both internal and external after which

³³ Lucas, *Star Wars—Episode IV* [01:30:53–1:30:58].

³⁴ This arc unfolds in the following *The Clone Wars*, season 6, three-episode sequence: Keller, “Voices”; Dunlevy, “Destiny”; Lee, “Sacrifice”.

³⁵ See Lee, “Sacrifice”.

the priestesses would allow him to receive the training necessary to retain his individuality and exert his will after death.

Similarly, not all ancient Egyptian dead received *akh* status in death. It had to be achieved and earned. Jíří Janák describes the *akh* as “the transfigured, efficacious, glorious, or blessed dead”.³⁶ He further explains “this posthumous status was not reached automatically. Human beings had to be admitted and become transfigured or elevated into this new state. The dead became blessed or effective *akh* only after mummification and proper burial rites were performed on them and after they had passed through obstacles of death and the trials of the underworld”.³⁷ Not unlike Yoda in *The Clone Wars*, whose transfiguration into a Force Ghost was determined by a set of trials, the *akh* exist as a result of passing through “obstacles of death” and “trials of the underworld”. These obstacles are visualized in the Book of the Dead, Spell 125 in which the heart of the deceased is weighed against a feather of the goddess Ma’at, who represents justice, truth, and order.³⁸ This is a visual representation of the trials that the dead must overcome before they are able to become “effective spirits”, or *akh*. While the description of Book of the Dead Spell 125 may initially feel confusing and remote to students, by teaching this process alongside the trials of Yoda and the balance inherent in the Force, these ancient concepts become more relatable.

Place

In the *SWU*, where a Force Ghost can appear is less dependent on place and more a facet of the strength of personal connection between the Force Ghost and a Force-sensitive person, explored further below. Although personal connection is the primary tether for Force Ghosts, specific planets or locations are also said to have strong Force energy including: [Dagobah](#), where Yoda is found to be living in *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*; [Mortis](#), a *Clone Wars* planet through which the entire Force of the universe flows; and an [unnamed Force Planet](#) where the [five priestesses](#) who hold the secrets of retaining one’s identity after death can be found.³⁹ Dagobah, in particular, holds a position of prominence in the *SWU*.

³⁶ Janák, “Akh”, 1.

³⁷ Janák, “Akh”, 2.

³⁸ See, for example, “Papyrus (EA 10470,3)”.

³⁹ For the importance of Dagobah and Yoda’s selection of that planet to reside on, see [Kershner, *Star Wars—Episode V*](#). On the importance of Mortis, see the third season, three-episode arc in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*: [Lee, “Overlords”](#); [Kalin, “Altar of Mortis”](#); [Lee,](#)

From its appearance in *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, the swamp planet of Dagobah has been connected to Master Yoda. As noted by Michael Gormley, a planet "strong in the Force" reflects the idea that a planet that flows with the Force must be teeming with Indigenous natural life.⁴⁰ Conversely, the needs of sentient beings to clear, build, shape, and destroy under the banner of "civilization" detach a planet from its connection with the Force. Yoda sought refuge on Dagobah for myriad reasons, including the strength of the planet with the Force and the ability of Dagobah's "integrative biome" to constantly cycle nutrients between the living and the dead to shield him from the attention of the Sith.⁴¹

While the tomb may have been the primary locus for engagement with the ancient Egyptian dead, and perhaps more specifically the *akhw*, the *akhw* could affect the living regardless of place. As with Force Ghosts, it seems as though the personal connections between the living and the *akhw* was the most important variable. However, one's ability to communicate was made more potent if performed in a liminal space, such as the tomb, which connected the realms of the living and the supernatural (where the dead also resided). For example, the tomb as a focal point is apparent in the "Letter to the Dead from Hersaisset to His Parents", better known as the Brooklyn Papyrus,⁴² which reads:

ḥr-s3-jst (s3) tnḥm (s3) nḥt-t3-mw.t [...?] 'š sw r3=f (n) t3 ḥ.t tnḥm
Hersaisset, son of Tenhem, son of Nakhttamut [...?], recite it before
him at the tomb of Tenhem⁴³

This Letter to the Dead makes apparent that the petitioner is the son, Hersaisset, of his parents who are invoked upon the letter: Tenhem (his father) and Nakhttamut

"Ghosts of Mortis". See also Sweet, "Mythologizing Mortis". The Five Priestesses on an unnamed Force Planet appear in Keller, "Voices".

⁴⁰ Gormley, "The Living Force", 38.

⁴¹ Gormley, "The Living Force", 38.

⁴² We recognize the problems associated with identifying ancient artifacts by the modern museum associations which prioritizes their position as "owned objects" within Western, colonial narratives over their original, historical contexts. That being said, it is difficult to disrupt this on a small scale if the purpose of writing is to clearly convey a message about which we speak. The best way to communicate currently about these Letters is to refer to them by their published names, which often invoke their contemporary location in museums. In the hopes of bringing attention to this, we have elected to identify the letters by the names of their petitioners where possible, and to include their contemporary titles for clarity.

⁴³ On this Late Period Letter to the Dead known as the Brooklyn Papyrus (p.Brooklyn 37.1799 E), see Troche "Letters to the Dead", 6; Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 82; Jasnow and Vittmann, "An abnormal hieratic letter to the dead", 27.

(his mother). This line also makes clear the utterance of the letter at the tomb was the primary locus for its use. The Letters highlight how place—specifically the tomb—could add potency to the speech act.

For both Force Ghosts and *akhu* place could be significant in amplifying the communication between the living and these supernatural entities. Yet, personal connections, be they kinship or some other relationship, seemed to be more important than the place of invocation.

Access: who and how?

In the *SWU*, Force Ghosts appear most often unbidden to Force-sensitive individuals. Force-sensitives are people who are attuned to the Force; typically, those identified as Force-sensitives in the *SWU* are affiliated with the Jedi Order. As Force Ghosts are entities unified with the Cosmic Force, they are not only privy to information ordinary mortals do not have, but they have their own missions and agendas to pursue. Thus, the Force Ghosts possess agency in the *SWU*.⁴⁴ They can be called upon, but *sometimes these pleas generate no response*.⁴⁵ Force Ghosts can manifest visually or auditorily, with only Obi-Wan in the *Original Trilogy* being both seen and heard. In the latter case, the recipient is invariably Luke Skywalker.⁴⁶ Jedi Master Yoda has auditory communication with Obi-Wan's Force Ghost in *The Empire Strikes Back*, and Yoda's Force Ghost is visible alongside those of Obi-Wan and Anakin Skywalker at the end of *Return of the Jedi*, where they are seen by Luke (though none speak). Significantly, those who are not Force-sensitive appear oblivious to Force Ghosts. For instance, at the end of the

44 Force Ghosts are constrained by some unspecified restrictions. When Luke decides to leave Master Yoda and his training on Dagobah to attempt to save his friends from Darth Vader, both Yoda (alive) and Obi-Wan (as a Force Ghost) try to convince him otherwise: "If you choose to fight Vader, you will do it alone. I cannot interfere"; Kershner, *Star Wars—Episode V* [01:24:30–01:25:35].

45 After previously being warned of Obi-Wan's non-interference with the course of action Luke chose to pursue, Luke, in mortal peril, calls aloud to Obi-Wan for aid after his fight with Darth Vader on Bespin. Obi-Wan does not respond; Kershner, *Star Wars—Episode V* [01:53:18–01:53:23].

46 In *Star Wars—Episode IV*, Obi-Wan's only influence on Luke after his death is in the form of a voice in Luke's head; at this point, the viewers have no frame of reference for the visual and audible senses of experiencing a Force Ghost which will appear in *Episode V* and beyond. In most instances, the Force Ghost is heard before a visual apparition is seen.

Return of the Jedi, when a raucous victory celebration is erupting on Endor, *only* Luke seems aware of the presence of the three Force Ghosts.⁴⁷



Video 3: Original Ewok Celebration Ending Scene - Star Wars, Episode VI: Return of the Jedi. Source: youtube.com, @JLovrak. [URL: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/WBrLHMCTDAA>]

This begs the question of whether one must be Force-sensitive to access Force Ghosts.

Intriguing evidence for the ability of non-Force-sensitives to receive input from Force Ghosts occurs in Season 4 of *Rebels*; the character of Kanan Jarrus (*né* Caleb Dume) provides additional clues into the nature of Force Ghosts and the ability of non-Force sensitives to encounter them. He lacked the formal training to become a Force Ghost after his death; however, because he embodied the true spirit of the Jedi, had knowledge of his imminent death in enemy combat, knew he was sacrificing himself for a noble cause, and accepted his fate, he was nevertheless able to transcend into a Force Ghost. In a touching post-mortem

⁴⁷ There are several versions of the end scene of *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* due to George Lucas's constant tinkering with his canon. In the original release, the Force Ghost of Darth Vader appears as he did at the time of death: an older man. In a subsequent re-release, the image of actor Sebastian Shaw was replaced by Hayden Christensen, who appeared in *Episodes II: Attack of the Clones* and *III: Revenge of the Sith* as a young Anakin.

scene, he appears in the form of a Force Ghost to his beloved, Twi'lek Resistance Leader Hera Syndulla.



Video 4: [Kanan's Force Ghost] Star Wars Rebels Season 4 Episode 12 [HD]. Source: youtube.com, @Master-lm7vx. [URL: http://www.youtube.com/embed/eFwBtOz_9ow]

She is not Force-sensitive and cannot hear or see him, but as he places his luminous hand on her shoulder, she puts her hand in the same place, suggesting non-Force-sensitives may be able to access some aspect of the Force Ghosts' influence.⁴⁸

While Force Ghosts could appear visually or communicate aurally to Force-sensitives, there is no evidence of which we are aware to suggest that the ancient Egyptian *akh* could be heard by the living. The *akh* could certainly communicate, however, and appear to the living to influence their lives in both positive and negative ways, for example causing illness or helping with inheritance or health issues. Five Letters to the Dead (out of the two dozen or so that are extant) make explicit that the form of the dead being invoked is specifically the effective spirit—the *akh*—of the deceased.⁴⁹ In the “Letter to the Dead from a Widower to his wife Ankhiry” (also known as the Leiden Papyrus, dating to the Second Intermediate

⁴⁸ Filoni and Ng, “Wolves and a Door” [00:12:05–00:12:31].

⁴⁹ The *akh* is explicitly invoked in a total of five Letters to the Dead, including the so-called Leiden Papyrus (p.Leiden 371), Berlin Papyrus (p.Berlin 10.482), Hu Bowl (Petrie Museum UC 16244), Chicago Jar Stand (Chicago OI Museum E 13945), and “Wente’s Misplaced Stela”, now Michael C. Carlos Museum stela 2014.033.001; relevant bibliography can be found in Troche, “Letters to the Dead”.

Period or New Kingdom), the Widower writes to his wife Ankhiry, who died three years earlier according to the text, and he addresses the letter as being written: *n ȝh.t jqr(.t) 'nh-jrj*, "to the excellent, female-*akh*, (named) Ankhiry".⁵⁰ It is also common for letter writers to possess a close relationship to the *akh*, that is the deceased recipient (usually a parent, sibling, or spouse), which could make the petition more meaningful; however, kinship was not a requirement for invocation.

The inscriptions written from the interred *akh* to the living on tomb façades and stelae, known as "Appeals to the Living", further cement the *akh*'s agency, and literally gives voice to their desires and threats: "Concerning anyone who will enter this tomb being [impure]—I shall seize [his neck] like a bird's—I am an *ȝh jqr 'pr* (an effective and knowledgeable *akh*)".⁵¹ Not all "Appeals" were threats, though, as many promised protection or aid in return for nourishment: "Oh, Living Ones who are upon Earth [...] may they say '1,000 bread and beer' for the owner of this tomb. Then I will watch over them in the necropolis. I am an *ȝh jqr 'pr*".⁵² In this way, it seems as though anyone could access the *akhu*, as the *akhu* called upon all those who are living upon Earth, making their audience all-encompassing. This contrasts the Force Ghosts, perceived almost exclusively by Force-sensitives. Further distinct, while the *akhu*'s desires could be read, they were not heard. The *akhu* could be seen, however, in the liminal state of dreaming.

Another way in which the ancient Egyptians accessed the *akhu* was through dreams, specifically a practice known as "incubation". Two Letters to the Dead make explicit this practice.⁵³ The liminal state of sleeping and dreaming is not unlike the meditation ("deprivation") Yoda uses to access the force in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, season 6, episode 11: "Voices".⁵⁴ The "Letter to the Dead from Merirtyfy to Nebetiotef" reads:

⁵⁰ Troche, "Letters to the Dead", 4–5; Gardiner and Sethe, *Egyptian Letters to the Dead*, 8–9.

⁵¹ From the Tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gabrawi; translation from *Urk. I*: 142, 15–145, 2. See also Troche, *Death, Power, and Apotheosis*, 41.

⁵² From the Tomb of Harkhuf at Qubbet el-Hawa; translation from *Urk. I*: 122, 9–13. See also Troche, *Death, Power, and Apotheosis*, 40.

⁵³ Specifically, the so-called "Papyrus to Meru" (MFA 38.2121) and the "Letter to the Dead from Merirtyfy to Nebetiotef" (also known as "Wente's Misplaced Stela", that is, one upon the back of a stela now in the Michael C. Carlos Museum, 2014.033.001). See Troche, "Letters to the Dead" for full bibliography and descriptions.

⁵⁴ Keller, "Voices" [00:09:49–00:10:31].

dr smr.t n.t ḥt=j jḥ ʒḥ.t n(=j) ḥft-ḥr=j mʒ=j ḥʒ.t ḥr=j m rs.wt

“Remove the infirmity of my body. Please become akh before me,
that I might see you fighting on my behalf in a dream”.

In all of these cases, the personal relationship (be it kinship, professional, or regional ties) between the living and the *akh* seems integral to their ability to communicate with one another. Indeed, in speaking about related corpora (the so-called ʒḥ jqr n R^c stelae and anthropoid busts), Troche notes “while some of the stelae dedications do, indeed, attest kinship relationships between dedicator and dedicatee(s), this ancestral relationship need not be the primary, defining attribute of the stelae (or busts) as has been typical in the discussions of these corpora”.⁵⁵ In general, then, invocations of the effective dead were perhaps stronger if made by someone with a familial relationship to the *akh*, but this kinship was not required; more important, it seems, was the perceived effectiveness of the dead and the petitioner’s closeness to them (be it familial or some other tie).

There are notably similarities and differences in accessing Force Ghosts and *akh*. Force Ghosts are primarily accessed by Force-sensitives, whereas the *akh* could be accessed by anyone. For both Force Ghosts and *akh*, a close relationship between petitioner and the petitioned amplified the request. Force Ghosts could be seen or heard, while the desires of *akh* were static, inscribed upon tomb walls, and dynamic–communicated directly through dreams, or indirectly through illness. While communication between the living and these supernatural entities could occur anywhere and through varied means, a meditative dream state facilitated the interchange.

In addition to being relatable teaching tools, these comparisons are also useful for scholars in that they require us to approach the material from different angles and ask more diverse questions. For example, the existence of Force-sensitives in the *SWU* with no obvious equivalent in ancient Egypt does raise the question of whether certain ancient Egyptians were perhaps perceived as more “in tune” with the supernatural realm, and that this quality may explain why certain dead became objects of popular devotion and invocation in ancient Egypt. So much oral culture and auditory experiences from antiquity are inaccessible to modern researchers. If the Force Ghosts could appear not only as apparitions (similar to the *akh* in dreams), but also as auditory experiences, it could be fruitful

⁵⁵ Troche, “The Living Dead at Deir el-Medina”, 472. On ʒḥ jqr n R^c stelae see Demarée, *The ʒḥ ikr n R^c-stelae*.

to consider auditory evidence of accessing the *akh* and the ancient Egyptian Hereafter as an additional sensory mode.⁵⁶

Conclusion & Class Integration

Speaking about *Star Wars* and its revitalization of the traditional cowboy narrative, Robert V. Bullough, Jr., and Stefinee Pinnegar highlight how "an old story became new [...] stories of learning to teach, representing different but similar scenes, situations, themes, and points of view, become fresh when told through new eyes. We still recognize the story, but we engage it differently".⁵⁷ Lucas also expounded on the importance of utilizing themes and events in his universe for education and introspection:

I've discovered kids don't like lectures at all. But it is really the way we live our lives. And what we do with our lives and [...] the way we conduct ourselves. And once in a while they listen to the lectures. So when I make the films, I'm very aware of the fact that I'm teaching on a much larger scale than I would just as a parent or somebody walking through life. Because I have this megaphone. Anybody in the media has a very large megaphone that they can reach a lot of different people, and so whatever they say, whatever they do, however they conduct themselves, whatever they produce has an influence and is teaching somebody something. And I try to be aware of what it is I'm saying.⁵⁸

Indeed, in the classroom, or other learning environment, *Star Wars* can help make the *akh* more accessible by bringing ancient Egypt into our contemporary popular culture and Sci Fi landscapes. As Moser writes, "the reception of the past can be characterized as an active and selective engagement with the subject of the past, reflecting the concerns of those audiences who consume it".⁵⁹ To help facilitate a translation of our approach suited to classroom use, we have included

56 For a recent volume exploring the nature of the senses in the ancient Near East, see Schellenberg and Krüger, *Sounding Sensory Profiles*.

57 Bullough, Jr., and Pinnegar, "Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self-Study Research", 19.

58 Lucas, "The Mythology of 'Star Wars'".

59 Moser, "Reconstructing Ancient Worlds", 1265.

a sample lesson plan for a world history or social science classroom, U.S. Grades 6–12 (students approximately 11–18 years old) based on the learning outcomes outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Inquiry Design Model (see [Appendix 2](#)).⁶⁰ Though the model here is Missouri-based, it can easily be adapted to fit other state, international designs, and a wide range of grades.⁶¹

Integrating popular culture into our classrooms can add humor and fun to the learning experience, therein heightening students' retention of information and investment in the course material and can impact overall enjoyment—all of which have positive pedagogical implications. An after-lesson evaluation given to Professor Stacy Davidson's Continuing Education course "History of Ancient Egypt" revealed that students enjoyed the juxtaposition of an ancient Egyptian concept with a more familiar Sci Fi reference.⁶² Student comments to the question: "Do you feel using popular culture references helped you understand something about ancient Egypt or think about a topic in a different way?" yielded the following positive responses:

It provided a[n] analogy that was supported by a qualified valid authority in the form of a professor/academic resource.

It gave me a familiar point of reference and way of understanding the concepts of the Akh. It also helps the information to "stick" when there's that kind of reference.

⁶⁰ Inquiry Design Model as developed by Kathy Swan, John Lee, and S.G. Grant as part of the C3 Social Studies Standards Inquiry Arc under the auspices of the National Council for the Social Studies in 2013; see, for example, [Swan, Lee, and Grant, "The New York State Toolkit"](#); [Grant, Lee, and Swan, "Inquiry Design Model—At a Glance"](#).

⁶¹ A Missouri model was used due to our residence in the state of Missouri. We chose to create an adaptive lesson plan (that is, adaptable for a wide range of student ages/grades) to make the lesson as useful as possible for the widest range of educators. Julia Troche primarily teaches world history and ancient history classes at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. Stacy Davidson teaches non-credit Continuing Education courses and for-credit History courses for Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS. Both of our student bodies are diverse in terms of academic preparation. This lesson may be appropriate for some classes but not others; each educator should assess their own students' preparedness for such an activity.

⁶² This evaluation was conducted in the format of a Google Poll distributed by Professor Davidson to her non-credit "History of Ancient Egypt" course, and the results were tallied on 18 February 2022. This course ran via Zoom through Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS, from 19 January to 9 March 2022 and included seventeen students over the age of 18. Of this cohort, nine students participated in the survey.

I think using popular references helps link the past to something that we find relevant which helps us better understand it.

It let me bring the whole context of something that resonates with me (The Force) to something that seems so "other," and helped me understand it better.

I am a Star Wars fan, so the comparison worked well for me.

When you are shown relevance to something in your experiences, the ancient can become more understandable.⁶³

Ultimately, the goal of education is not to impart specific skills and information to students passively but to impact student experiences positively, encouraging their application of knowledge to enhance other areas of their lives in creative ways. Also heartening are concrete examples of how an educational approach can be shown to have such effects. One student from Professor Davidson's class survey commented that this activity "got me talking to my family members who are well versed in Star Wars [...] they found it interesting".⁶⁴ In this case, not only did the student benefit from the exercise, but was inspired to share what they had learned with others and continue the conversation outside the traditional classroom setting. Furthermore, this approach also benefits researchers, as it broadens our perspectives and encourages us to ask new questions of our material and scrutinize different angles of investigation, such as the sensory abilities of the *akhw*. This is more crucial now than ever. In response to the 2020 "History, The Past, and Public Culture" American Historical Association and Fairleigh Dickinson University survey of 1,816 adults in the United States, the two largest categories regarding where people find historical information included nonfiction and fiction film and TV: 69% participants responded that they learned about history by watching a documentary film or TV show and 66% revealed that they learned from a fictional film or TV show.⁶⁵ If educators and scholars continue

⁶³ Responses collected via Google Poll by Professor Davidson and analyzed on 18 February 2022. Out of nine respondents, seven answered "yes", one "no", and one "I don't know". The "no" vote explained that the activity did not help them because they already knew what the *akh* was. Further sampling of different age groups, class subjects, and activity lengths using our lesson plan is warranted.

⁶⁴ Response collected via Google Poll by Professor Davidson and analyzed on 18 February 2022.

⁶⁵ Burkholder and Schaffer, *History, the Past, and Public Culture*, 18.

to ignore rapidly shifting educational conditions, the divide between scholarly or “legitimate” modes of education and the reality of how best to engage with students about the material will inevitably widen. What is clear from the AHA/Fairleigh Dickinson University survey is that it is crucial to pedagogical success not to ignore innovative approaches but rather to tap into the many ways our students are telling us that they want to learn.

Appendix 1. *Star Wars* Characters Referenced in This Data Set

Appendix 1. *Star Wars* Characters Referenced in This Data Set

Name (In order of appearance in the SWU)	Appearance	Relevant Biographical Data
Luke Skywalker	<i>Original Trilogy</i>	Jedi trainee
Obi-Wan (Ben) Kenobi	<i>Original Trilogy</i>	Jedi Master
Darth Vader/Anakin Skywalker	<i>Original Trilogy</i>	principal antagonist
Yoda	<i>Original Trilogy</i>	Jedi Master, mentor
Qui-Gon Jinn	<i>The Clone Wars</i>	Jedi, first known Force Ghost
Kanan Jarrus/Caleb Dume	<i>Rebels</i>	Jedi trainee
Hera Syndulla	<i>Rebels</i>	Twi'lek rebel leader (not Force-sensitive)

Appendix 2. Sample Lesson Plan

1. Subject(s): World History (also: Religion; Ancient History; Social Studies)
2. Grade Levels & Associated Standards

Grade 6-8:

- Key Concept #5 “People, Groups, and Cultures” Theme 2C, “Describe how the world view of social groups and institutions influenced culture and defined the position of the individual within various societies”.⁶⁶
- Key Concept #5 “People, Groups, and Cultures” Theme 2D, “Analyze scientific, technological, intellectual, and artistic advancements to determine the legacy of the ancient civilizations”.⁶⁷

Grade 9-12:

- Key Concept #1 “History: Continuity and Change” Theme 2B, “Compare the dominant characteristics, contributions of, and interactions among major civilizations of Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Middle East in ancient and medieval times”.⁶⁸

University/College

- Missouri State General Education Goal 8 “Students will be able to understand various institutions (e.g., cultural, political, economic, religious, and educational) and their historical backgrounds, as well as principles of human behavior and social interaction”.
- Missouri State General Education Goal 9 “Students will cultivate their intellect, imagination, and creativity as they develop an understanding of how social, cultural, linguistic, artistic, religious, philosophical, and historical contexts have shaped the thoughts and actions of people worldwide”.

Educators should use this lesson plan as a guide, modifying it as necessary to their grade-group.

3. The Big Picture

This will differ based on individual educators’ unit plans, however, in general, this lesson plan is well situated within a larger discus-

66 Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, “6-12 Social Studies Grade Level Expectations”, 34.

67 Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, “6-12 Social Studies Grade Level Expectations”, 35.

68 Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, “6-12 Social Studies Grade Level Expectations”, 8.

sion of the place of the individual in ancient societies, the intellectual advancements of ancient civilizations, and the contributions of ancient Africa. This plan should be preempted by an introduction to ancient civilizations, including Egypt. Following this lesson, a discussion on the role of geography in ancient Egyptian mortuary culture and worldview and governance could follow. For example, a discussion about the West bank of the Nile being the “land of the dead” wherein tombs—such as the Old Kingdom pyramids of Giza and nearby *mastaba* elite tombs—were primarily located, but also how this contributed to a worldview in which the gods created the natural phenomena of the world and the social institutions such as kingship (as in the Ennead/Heliopolitan creation myth), exemplified by the gods Horus and his father Osiris.

4. Behavioral Objectives & Compelling Question(s)

How did the ancient Egyptians conceive of their dead? What were the (perceived) roles of the dead in the lives of the living? How, where, and why did the living interact with their dead? What social, religious, and/or political implications might these roles have had in ancient Egyptian history?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define the *akh*, the ancient Egyptian supernatural entity that was the active agent of the dead within the realm of the living, and describe it by its closest Western, English parallel—that of a “ghost”.
2. Discuss who became *akh*, or an effective spirit, in ancient Egypt.
3. Discuss where most engagement with the *akh*, the effective dead, occurred (i.e., the tomb).
4. Discuss who were able to invoke the *akh*, the effective dead, and describe the processes by which they were called upon, such as dreams/incubation and via Letters to the Dead.
5. Summarize ancient Egyptian mortuary culture and its real-world social and political implications in ancient Egyptian history.

6. Present on the broad, continued cultural significance of the dead in human history, by considering the role of the dead in their own lives, or on various historical moments.
5. Anticipatory Set Up
 - 5a. Previous Work:

Depending on the grade, cost threshold, and accessibility (both in terms of student abilities but also access to the necessary technology), students may be encouraged to watch some of the *Star Wars* TV show episodes before coming to class, as homework—specifically: *Star Wars: Clone Wars*, Season 6 Episodes 11, 12, and 13. If this is not possible, an episode or clips can be shown in class (per fair use).
 - 5b. Set up:

As students enter the classroom, the projector shows a QR code that takes students to a Google Forms survey (this can be modified to a print survey or to another online software program). This brief, five question "Introductory Survey" will be used to get a sense of what knowledge students already possess. The survey questions [can be found here](#) and are shared below (see section 10). The brevity of this survey also allows educators to quickly review the responses and pivot their instruction as needed. An opening prompt is also written upon the board where it can be seen with the projector on—students are instructed to take the survey and begin thinking about the prompt in preparation for a discussion.
 - 5c. Instructional Input:

Depending on the grade, the images and texts included in either Troche and Davidson's preceding article ("Luminous Beings are We': Illuminating Ancient Egyptian *Akhu* via *Star Wars*' Force Ghosts") or Troche's "Letters to the Dead" article may be printed out or posted to a class website for review. Troche's article "Letters to the Dead" in the UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology is available for free online (<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6bh8w50t>).
 - 5d. Technology:

A computer, projector, and PowerPoint set up is ideal, but this can be easily modified if one of the items is not available.
6. Procedure (presuming a 50- or 75-minute lesson session)
 - 00:00-00:10 Class arrives and completes Introductory Survey

00:10-00:30 Discuss opening prompt: “When, and in what ways, do we encounter the dead?” (this can be specific to our cultural moment or broadly, throughout history).

- Depending on class dynamics, you can ask students to write down 1-2 points in their notebooks and then share this with neighboring students before bringing the class together to share. If you are able, you can skip this and jump straight into a class-wide discussion.
- This fulfills Learning Objective #6.

00:30-00:45 Lecture/Powerpoint, Learning Objectives #1-5.

[You can access and use [our sample PPT here](#).]

[for a 50-minute lesson]

00:45-00:50 Exit Survey [You can [find our survey here](#), and below in Section 10.]

[for a 75-minute lesson]

00:45-00:60 Split the class into three groups: Group 1 “Becoming”, Group 2 “Place”, and Group 3 “Access”.

Students would ideally move into these groups, or be assigned a breakout room on Zoom/similar if being taught remotely. Alternatively, the reading can be posted to a program similar to Perusall and students can comment on the reading in real time from their desks/home Hand out a copy of the preceding article, “‘Luminous Beings are We’: Illuminating Ancient Egyptian *Akhu* via *Star Wars*’ Force Ghosts”. Have each group focus on one of the three sections (entitled “Becoming”, “Place”, and “Access”).

- a. Guiding Question: According to Troche and Davidson, what are the main characteristics of the Force Ghosts and *akhu* in your assigned section?
- b. Supporting Question: What do the *akhu*, effective dead, tell us about ancient Egyptian religion, worldview, politics, and/or society?
- c. Formative Performance Task: Students will read the assigned section and answer the guiding and supporting questions on their own in their notebook. They will then begin to share their thoughts within each group.

00:60-00:70 Each group should come up with 2-3 bullet points answering each of the two questions and write this on the white board/post this to the course website/wiki. Additionally, each group should create a small, rough drawing on the whiteboard or in their notebooks, inspired by the reading. If students complete the reading/discussion/bullet points faster than other students, this drawing can occupy them until everyone is ready.

Students should be prepared to present their visuals at the beginning of next class or activity. This ensures students recall what they learned from this class and build upon it in the next class or activity.

d. Featured Source: preceding article, "'Luminous Beings are We': Illuminating Ancient Egyptian *Akhu* via *Star Wars*' Force Ghosts" and Troche's "Letters to the Dead".

e. Activity aids in Learning Objectives #2-5.

00:70-00:75 Exit Survey [You can [find our survey here](#), and below in Section 10.]

7. Modeling

How do we ensure students know what task they should be working on? How might we ensure that the lesson can work for students of varying background knowledge, different learning styles, and varying speeds of comprehension, reading, etc.?

This lesson will be taught with guidelines on the projector when the educator is not lecturing, so students know what task is at hand and the order in which tasks must be completed.

Time is built in so that students who quickly pick up on directions are kept engaged, while those who need further instruction and guidance can be given attention. Group work allows for the educator to walk among students and assist as needed, while other students are engaged in the activity at hand. Students will receive instruction via lecture, will be asked to pair and share, will discuss primary and secondary sources, and will be asked to visually represent what they learned today as part of their exit survey—therefore, activities for varying learning styles are combined.

8. Comprehension Check

A four-question exit survey—provided by a QR code, printed, or projected—provides quick assessment of student learning and comprehension.

9. Closure

Students will complete the exit survey before leaving the class. If time runs out, this can also be assigned as homework. Students will be instructed to present their visuals at the beginning of the next class or activity. This ensures that students recall what they learned from this lesson and build upon it in the next class or activity.

10. Surveys

a. Introductory Survey

- i. In which class section are you enrolled/Who is your teacher?
Editorial Note: This question can be modified based on the educator's number of classes, or if the survey is being used by multiple educators teaching the same course.
- ii. Are you familiar with the ancient Egyptian concept of the *akh*?
 1. Yes
 2. No
- iii. If you answered "yes", could you try to give a brief definition/description of "akh" in your own words? [If you answered "no", leave this blank and move on to Question #3.]
Editorial Note: This question is to confirm that those who answered "yes" do in fact know what the akh is, as many confuse this with the concept of "life" which is "ankh".
- iv. Are you familiar with the *Star Wars Original Trilogy* (*Episode IV: A New Hope*, *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*) and/or the *Star Wars* animated series *The Clone Wars* or *Rebels*?
 1. Yes (I may not be familiar with all the series and movies, but I am familiar with one or some.)
 2. No (I am not familiar with any of the original films nor either of the two animated series.)
- v. If you answered "yes" to Question #3 above, could you try to give a brief definition/description of what "The Force" is in your own words?
Editorial Note: This question, like #3 above, is to confirm that those who answered "yes" are in fact familiar with this concept.

b. Exit Survey

1. Which best describes the ancient Egyptian *akh*?
 - a. A god
 - b. Similar to a "ghost"
 - c. An ancient Egyptian ruler
 - d. Similar to a funerary priest
2. Did all ancient Egyptians become an *akh* upon death?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Where did the living engage with the *akh*?

- a. The living could not engage the *akh* directly
 - b. The tomb was the ONLY place the living could call upon an *akh*
 - c. Primarily the tomb, but anywhere was possible
 - d. Mainly at the local temples
4. How did most people interact with the *akh*?
- a. They didn't! Only priests could call upon the *akh* through specific rituals.
 - b. The *akh* could act on their own, but the living could engage them through letters and dreams, also known as incubation.
 - c. The *akh* were powerful and sometimes dangerous entities that acted on their own. They were not called upon by the living.
 - d. The dead, as *akh*, could only be called upon by their direct ancestors at their tombs.

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