ANCIENT EGYPT - THE SOUND SIGNS

Name _____

HIEROGLYPHICS ALPHABET

Egyptians did not have an alphabet like ours, but some of their picture signs each stood for one sound. This chart lines up 24 signs with our 26 letters so you can write English words in hieroglyphs. Under each sign: the letter it stands in for, what the picture shows, and the sound we give it.

THE SIGNS



A
vulture
says "a"



B
foot
says "b"



C, K
basket
says "k"



D
hand
says "d"



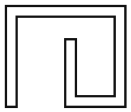
E, I
reed
says "i"



F, V
horned viper
says "f"



G
jar stand
says "g"



H
shelter
says "h"



J
cobra
says "dj"



L
lion
says "l"



M
owl
says "m"



N
water
says "n"



O
lasso
says "o"



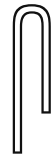
P
stool
says "p"



Q
hill slope
says "q"



R
mouth
says "r"



S
folded cloth
says "s"

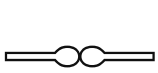
T
bread loaf
says "t"



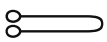
U, W
quail chick
says "w"



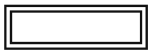
Y
two reeds
says "y"



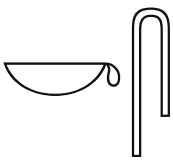
Z
door bolt
says "z"



CH
tether rope
says "tch"



SH
pool
says "sh"



X
basket + cloth
says "ks"

No vowels
Scribes wrote the consonants and left most vowels out, so a reader filled them in. In this chart the vulture, reed, lasso and quail chick stand in for A, E/I, O and U.

Which way to read
Hieroglyphs ran left to right, right to left, or down in columns. People and animals face the start of the line: read toward their faces.

Names in a cartouche
A king's or queen's name was written inside an oval loop of rope called a cartouche, with a bar at the end. Try yours.