



Sting of the Scorpion by Carole Wilkinson

**Series: Book 3,
Ramose**

**Teacher Notes
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Readership: Mid to upper
primary, Lower secondary
Class Study
Serial Read
Independent Reading

Genre: Historical fiction, Ancient
Egypt, adventure

Rationale

These teacher notes have been written to send students back to the text and other sources, actively engage in learning and provide a creative learning experience.

How to use

Learning activities suggested in one subject area may be applicable to another subject area.

Some of the activities have suggested page numbers and answers as time-savers for teachers.

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About Ramose: Sting of the Scorpion

In this exciting historical adventure Ramose is trying to reclaim his position as heir to the throne of Egypt. He travels with his companions, Hapu and Karoya through the desert where Ramose is stung by a scorpion and they are lost in a sandstorm. They are helped by 'barbarian' nomads and the Oracle of the Oasis, who gives Ramose some cryptic words of wisdom.

In the city of Abydos, Ramose is arrested for impersonating a scribe but he is taken to Thebes by his old tutor, Keneben. Ramose meets his father the Pharaoh after his year away. A death and coronation follow.

Themes

Ancient Egypt

Water

Desert

People

Friends

Teaching Applications

SOSE/HSIE

Ancient Egypt

Map There is a map at the start of the book which shows places featured in the book such as the River Nile, Thebes and Abydos. Create an overlay map of modern Egypt using transparent plastic or tracing paper.

Cities Read the descriptions of the temple, pages 60-68; Thebes, page 82; and the palace, pages 88-92. Either compare and contrast these with other ancient urban sites, or with modern or existing cities and sites in Egypt.

Coronation Ceremony Read Chapter Nine 'The Bee in the Lotus', and Chapter Ten 'Friends and Enemies', about the new pharaoh's coronation. Represent this as a storyboard, slideshow, diorama or re-enactment.

Wood Wood was precious in Ancient Egypt, page 41. Why? Research what types of trees grew there and were used for timber.

Senet Board Game This game was played by Ancient Egyptians. It is briefly described in the glossary on page 145. Find out more, if possible, then design your own interpretation of the game. It is played by two players 'each with seven pieces and was played on a rectangular board divided into thirty squares'. Make the game based on this description and, as the rules are still unknown, invent them.

People

Ancient Egyptians Readers of the Ramose series have been gaining an insight into Ancient Egypt. More is revealed in *Ramose: Sting of the Scorpion*. After (or during) a reading of the book, list some of these discoveries. (Hints for teachers: everyone had a job and place to be, page 2; strangers weren't liked, page 61; suspicion of nomads/barbarians, page 64; the death of the pharaoh was important, pages 79,114; ceremonial roles, pages 116,117).

Desert Nomads Read about the nomads on page 4, in Chapter Two 'Sand and Mirrors', and Chapter Three 'Gateway to Nowhere'. Information is included on their camp, page 18; lifestyle, page 22; travelling, pages 22,32; signposts in the desert, page 32, and food. The Egyptians were suspicious of them, page 64. Create a Nomad Profile based on this information.

Further research

A Word From the Author Read pages 138, 139 where the author, Carole Wilkinson, writes about Egyptologists and the Rosetta Stone. Research more about the Rosetta Stone or other aspects of Ancient Egypt. There are some related internet sites listed at the end of the book.

Science

Water

Water is an important aspect of this book. The river provides water for irrigation canals, fertility and life. Lack of water is a major issue. Much of the story is set in the desert, where death comes quickly without water.

Lack of water is also a major current issue. Discover recent findings on lack of water and its impact. How are you affected by lack of water? What is likely to happen in the near and far future with an increasing lack of water? What can be done to help this situation? Findings and solutions can be written by individuals, small groups or as a whole class.

See also Creative Arts: Animation/Craft - Water

Desert Environment

A large part of *Ramose: Sting of the Scorpion* takes place in the Egyptian desert. The desert there is not all the same and different desert environments are described on pages 16 and 25. A sandstorm is also described on pages 28-31. People adapt and survive to live in the desert, page 4, and deserts are inhabited by living creatures. Those in the book include scorpions, camels and goats.

The desert is not always hot. It can become very cold at night, page 20.

As a class, research more about the Egyptian desert. Then, as individuals or in pairs, research another desert, such as one in Australia or elsewhere in the world. Include different environments within the desert, temperatures, flora and fauna and human habitation. Present findings as a PowerPoint presentation, or poster, with pictures and writing.

Desert Eye-Spy The companions play a form of Eye-Spy on pages 26 and 27. As a culmination to class research on deserts, play Eye-Spy as a class or in groups, based on things seen in the desert.

See also Creative Arts: Craft – Desert Sand

English

Reading and Writing

Three Companions Ramose and his two companions form a group of three. Three companions is a traditional group from literature. Find other examples (the three witches in *Macbeth*, Harry Potter, Ron and Hermione, the 'three' Wise Men, *Ice Age*, Three Little Pigs, *Bambi* - Bambi, Thumper (the rabbit) and Flower (the skunk), Donald Duck's nephews - Huey, Dewey and Louie) and/or analyse the companions' roles. For example, in *Ramose* there are two boys and one girl. Ramose is the maturing leader, even though he needs looking after. Hapu is the storyteller. Karoya is the loyal, sensible worker. See 'Mirage and Oasis' below.

Mirage and Oasis The mirage and the oasis are archetypes (symbols) of stories set in the desert. After reading Chapters Two, Three and Four - 'Sand and Mirrors', 'Gateway to Nowhere' and 'Oracle of the Oasis' - and the glossary (Mirage), write a short story set in a real or fictitious desert. Create your own three characters and devise a reason for their presence in the desert, transport (or lack of), description of the mirage, and topography, food, animals and people (if any) of the oasis. See 'Imagery' below.

Imagery Some imagery (picture writing) is used by the author, such as the description of walking on the sand: 'their feet made a hollow, booming sound as

if they were walking across the stretched skin of a drum', page 22 (simile) and the dunes: 'Huge dunes stretched in every direction like a sheet of crumpled papyrus', page 31 (simile). A simile is when something is described as being like something else. Write similes about other parts of the desert, such as the heat, the oasis, a mirage. See 'Mirage and Oasis' above.

Story Map Ramose's journey begins in the desert and goes to cities. Create a story map to locate the incidents pictorially.

Rites of Passage Ramose learns about his country, people and friends, as well as himself, during his travels and experiences, pages 115, 121, and 134. Write about Ramose's new appreciation of people who are different as an episode in a sequel.

Oracle's Riddles The Oracle warns and advises Ramose, page 54, with three cryptic riddles: 'The blue lotus can hide a bee in its petals.' 'A perfect jewel will stay buried in the earth, yet the maid at the millstone holds it out in her hand.' 'Trust the crocodile and bow down before the frog.' Predict how they may be fulfilled before reading the end of the story. Enrichment: write other cryptic riddles.

Health

First Aid and Alternative Medicine Ramose is treated for his scorpion bites with lotus leaves, a heavy stone and bandage, and milk with powdered lotus, page 19. Discover how a scorpion bite would be treated today. Also discover other ancient or alternative remedies for other illnesses or accidents. Include Australian indigenous peoples' medicine.

Creative Arts

Animation or craft

Ramose imagines water in different forms on pages 34 and 35:

1. large terracotta jars of water
2. pools
3. ponds
4. the Nile
5. jars and jars of water pouring water for bathing

6. lotus pool in the palace gardens

7. irrigation canals. In small groups, research then represent one each of these images using animation or construction materials such as types of paper, cardboard and clay.

Craft

Desert Sand At the beginning of Chapter Three 'Gateway to Nowhere', the sand is described: 'The sand gradually started to rise and fall. Then it piled up into dunes. The dunes grew bigger and bigger until they were towering above them on either side. The colour of the sand changed too, from yellow to pink to pale purple. "I didn't realise that sand could be so many different shapes and colours"' (pages 25, 26). Represent part or all of this description as a wet sand sculpture. Alternatively, use coloured pebbles or other materials. A further alternative is a pointillism (dot) picture.

About the author



Carole Wilkinson is an award-winning author of books for children. She has a longstanding fascination with dragons and is interested in the history of everything. Carole is a meticulous researcher who finds it difficult to stop researching and begin writing. She once searched for weeks to find out whether there were daffodils in Han Dynasty China. Carole is married, has a daughter, and lives in inner-city Melbourne.