

# The Mirror

New Paltz Middle School Newspaper

Issue Number 1

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## Global Issues Climate Change

*by Mehnaz Afrin*

One of the most common global issues is climate change. Climate change is caused by all the pollution and bad acids wandering around the air. Pollution causes the water to rise and makes the temperature go higher. This is especially bad for places that are home to animals that live in the cold! Pollution that causes the water to rise could cause more flooding. If we don't start helping the environment, in a couple of years the earth's oceans can rise and affect the homes of many animals and possibly even human beings and lots of animals could go extinct. You can prevent this from happening by:

- Sorting through your trash and recycling all plastic and paper.
- You can also make your own compost by collecting vegetables and fruit scraps. Then if your parents are planting anything you could add some compost which is good for the environment and your plant.
- Another way you can support the environment is by letting your parents know to turn off the gas in the car while waiting for something in the car.
- Lastly, stop cutting down trees. Trees keep the air clean so when you cut a tree down there would be less trees to keep the air clean.

# Study & Focus Tips

*by Mehnaz Afrin*



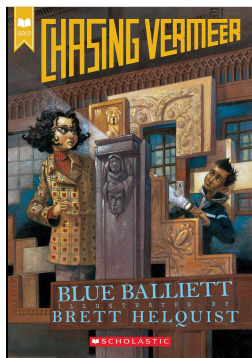
Do you ever struggle with focusing? Do you see yourself procrastinating with your homework and assignments? I am giving out these tips cause I know that for a lot of people it's hard to focus. When I'm struggling to stay focused I use these tips:

1. You can space out your studying by making a special time to study each subject with breaks in the middle because you should not cram up all your work.
2. Practice, practice, practice! Don't procrastinate with your homework and assignments. You should deal with your work as soon as you're able to.
3. Don't just reread books and notes, you have to make them stick in your mind. You have to do worksheets, tests, projects, and stuff like that.
4. You can also test yourself. Do some practice tests. Get a friend to ask you questions and have you answer them.
5. Use pictures to help yourself understand things you don't.
6. You should also always make a plan and stick to it. Make some goals and a list of projects due to stay organized.
7. Mistakes are okay — as long as you learn from them. Save your quizzes and may erase all your answers and then answer them again for practice.
8. And lastly remember to give yourself a break from time to time. Don't push yourself too much.

# Willow's Book Column

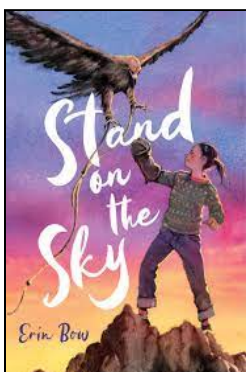
by Willow Swan

## Willow's Book Recommendations

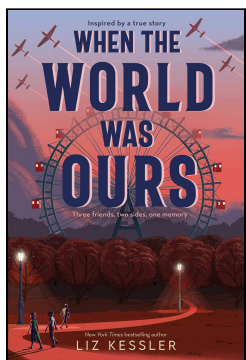


These are some books that I have read that I recommend for readers in our school!

*Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett - An exciting mystery about art - kind of like a DaVinci code for younger readers. It talks about attribution in the art world (attributing a piece to someone that isn't actually by that person) and strange coincidences in everyday life. Lots of puzzles and codes. Anyone who likes a good mystery will enjoy this! The first book in a 4-book series.



*Stand on the Sky* by Erin Bow - A story about a girl in Mongolia who, by chance, ends up as an eagle hunter. It explores the powers of family and friends. Any animal lover will enjoy this. Great, powerful characters. Rough beginning but gets much better.



*When the World was Ours* by Liz Kessler - A story set in late 1930s to early 1940s Europe. It's a triple perspective switching from Leo, Elsa, and Max's points of view. It's historical fiction, and set during the beginning of the Nazi regime. Since it takes place in this time period, it has some tough themes that may be upsetting. I think it is interesting how the author uses 1st person for Leo and Elsa, but 3rd person for Max (you'll see why if you read it).

You can find all of these books on Amazon if you are interested, or ask your local library. Visit [this google form](#) to submit a book suggestion for the school newspaper! That's all for now!

# The NPMS Turkey Trials!!!

*by Sawyer Ivchenko*

For those of you who do not know, the turkey trials are, as the student council puts it, “a minute-to-win-it style set of games”. Multiple teams compete against each other until there is only one left. Teams can have an absolute maximum of 6 players and a minimum of 4.

The games were held in the football fields this year on Friday, November 5th. Every person on the team was required to raise at least \$10, but encouraged to donate more. All of the profits went towards food baskets for New Paltz school students in need. There were prizes for most funds raised, best costumes, and the winning team. Ms. Conrad organized the Turkey Trials this year. Students who signed up could stay and watch even if their team lost partway through the game. Students were excused back to class if they were not being appropriate.

The games started early in the morning, in sub-freezing weather. Ms. Conrad explained the games and how they would work. The games started off with the tic-tac-toe relay race. The games were set up in four teams competing at once, with two winners and two losers. If a team lost twice, they were eliminated. Though the first games were lengthy (2 hours) they quickly sped up.

Sadly, partway through the games the students participating started to get more rowdy. A new rule was made that participants must sit down unless their team was called to compete or you raised your hand and asked a teacher. If you got up without asking a teacher you would be eliminated. Luckily, students quickly calmed down and the games were able to continue.



After the first few games, the time that it took to complete each game diminished. After a few more hours and a whole lot of more teams eliminated, the teams were ready for dodgeball. After many games it was down to two teams, the 6th grade team the Woodchucks, and the 7th grade team the Majestic Muchachos. After much screaming a victor emerged. The Majestic Muchachos had won the dodgeball tournament. But don't fret if you were rooting for the Woodchucks. They still won the most games overall, so they still got a prize. And remember how I talked about it going to a good cause? Well, Ms. Conrad was able to raise nearly \$3,000 for families in need of Thanksgiving dinners.



# Shea's Science Section - Edition # 1

## Axolotls (pronounced ak·suh·laa·tl)

*by Shea Baker*



An axolotl is an adorable yet humble creature some may know, as it was recently introduced to the popular PC and mobile game Minecraft. I'm here to tell you more about these adorable little friends and talk to you about the creature behind the game. Axolotls are salamanders with an incredibly rare trait called neoteny which means they are “forever young”. Metamorphoses can be induced via chemicals, but it is highly, highly, highly recommended that you not do this because you can shorten the Axolotl's life span and remove its well-known regenerative abilities. The axolotls' relationship with people dates back to the Aztecs as they had a coexistence and they were believed to be gods. They were named after Xolotl, the god of fire and lightning, so the Aztecs protected them.

The creatures have regenerative capabilities that allow them to regenerate broken limbs and even crushed spines. In some creatures, such a regenerative ability would make them extremely susceptible to cancer, but strangely not the Axolotl. So, I believe you've learned enough about the Humboldt Axolotl and next time you see one in Minecraft, remember they are gods among salamanders. One last thing before we get out, I do have an axolotl named Leviathan. He is incredibly cute and really nice. He is one of my biggest sources for information on axolotls.

This link will allow you to learn more about axolotls

[▶ Axolotls: The salamanders that snack on each other \(but don't die\) - Luis Zambrano](#)

# Chess and Why I Like It

*by James O'Sullivan*

When I was 8 my dad taught me how to play the game of chess. From then on I have never stopped liking it. I like chess because it is a strategy game with so many moves to choose from. There are even chess clubs that teach you how to play and how to win. If you already know chess, they can help you get better at the game. Our own school has one with Mr. Burns on Thursdays in room 33. Come join and we will teach you how to play and get better at the game. It is so much fun and I should know because I am in the club as well.

When you come to the chess club, you can play against me, James O'sullivan. We can play a game or two. Hopefully you will like the game and then stay in the club. Once you learn about the chess club you can tell your friends about it and hopefully they will join the chess club too. We could do competitions and maybe a tournament.



# Floods are Dangerous

*by James O'Sullivan*

Floods are dangerous! On October 27 there was a flood. It was giant. I wanted to go on a hike across the Wallkill River with my dad and my sister, then we all saw the flood. We went over the bridge to check out the flood. We saw a police officer and my friends Jacob and Allon there. There was a car stuck in the middle of the flood. We kept looking at it for a while then it happened! A different car started to drive through the flood! Luckily the person made it through. Immediately, the officer said "Can I have your licence and registration please?" She was not in the mood to get pulled over - she didn't give it to him. He asked again "Can I have your licence and registration please." Then after a while she finally gave him it, got a big ticket, and then drove off. Everybody that was there went wild, everyone started talking. After a while nothing really happened so I wanted to interview the officer. He had one important message for all of us, "Even though you can see the road when it is flooded the water underneath the road could break, therefore causing your car to sink and maybe even dying. So never drive in deep water with a vehicle." The officer was super nice and invited me, my dad, and my sister to get a tour of the truck he was in. He started to show us the front of the car. He showed us that there is a computer in the car that he can use to see all the emergencies in all of Orange County. He showed us that he can speak to all of the other cops on one radio and the station on the other radio. He invited me to talk into the radio that connects to the station but I didn't have the courage and said no. He showed us the back, but there was nothing interesting there. He showed us the trunk and it wasn't like a normal truck. It had different compartments for each of the different things. They opened up like drawers like a storage system. He had a sledge hammer, something that officers use in movies to knock down doors and he had a bunch of other stuff. Then he offered me and my sister a piece of caution tape. I said no but my sister said yes. Then my dad asked him what his name was and he said "Carmine Fuogo". My dad said thank you and then we walked to our car and drove home. P.S. I really want that piece of caution tape now.

# Willow's Book Column

by Willow Swan

Books Publishers Weekly says are the best middle-grade novels of 2021

I haven't read any of these yet. Time to add to my reading list...again...

*The Beatryce Prophecy* by Kate DiCamillo

*Black Boy Joy* edited by Kwame Mbalia

*Fallout* by Steve Sheinkin

*Gone to the Woods* by Gary Paulsen

*How to Become a Planet* by Nicole Melleby

*The Insiders* by Mark Oshiro

*Katie the Catsitter* by Colleen AF Venable

*The Last Cuentista* by Donna Barba Higuera

*Playing the Cards You're Dealt* by Varian Johnson

*The Raconteur's Commonplace Book* by Kate Milford

*Samira Surfs* by Rukhsanna Guidroz

*Sisters of the Neversea* by Cynthia Leitich Smith

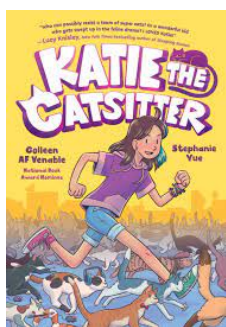
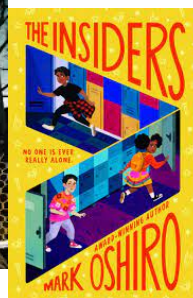
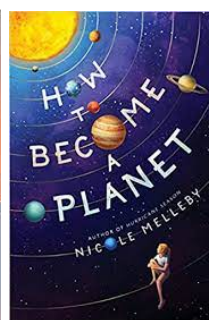
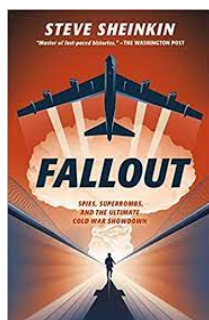
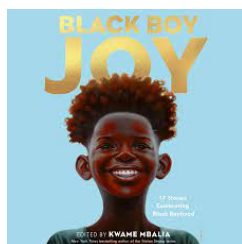
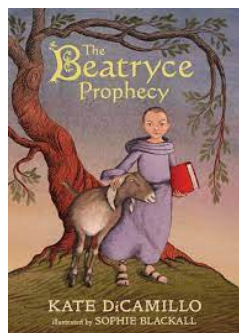
*Starfish* by Lisa Fipps

*Stuntboy, In the Meantime* by Jason Reynolds

*Too Bright to See* by Kyle Lukoff

*Too Small Tola* by Atinuke

Thank you to Publishers Weekly for their opinion!





# All About Regents Biology Class: Interview with Mr. Krebs

*by Lauren Jameson*

I recently interviewed Mr. Krebs about Accelerated Biology Classes. If you would like to know about the accelerated 7th grade physical science class with Mr. Burns, that interview will be coming soon!

## **1. What is a common misconception about regents biology classes?**

There are a couple misconceptions about regents biology classes. One is that, because it is a high school class, some students think that it is already too much for them. The other one is that sometimes there's a lack of seeing that (regents biology classes) take time and hard work.

## **2. Which class is more beneficial to take before Regents Biology? Life Sciences (the non-accelerated 7th grade science class) or Physical Science (the accelerated 7th grade science class)?**

Life sciences is closer to biology and what (regents biology students) would learn, however, it's good to have the background in physical science because it's helpful for high school.

## **3. How will knowledge from a regents biology class be beneficial for students in the future?**

My biggest hope for students is that they learn the skills to think scientifically and analyze information to be able to sift through misinformation, and they have enough of a background of biology to tell when something isn't right.

## **4. What is a common reason that students leave regents biology classes?**

Difficulty is part of it. There is time for students to take biology later in high school, and some students just aren't ready for the class.

## **5. At the end of the year, what do you hope students have gained from your class?**

I think the biggest thing is that there's an enjoyment of science. It is using some of those skills of enjoying science and having skills that they can refer back to in their life.

## **6. How do you hope students perceive your class?**

Challenging but also rewarding. I hope that it's also enjoyable, however, certainly you can't enjoy every topic and every lesson.

## **7. What is your advice for getting an 85 or above on the (biology) regents?**

Certainly there are regents review materials on my website, practice regents, when you're in class, working hard and trying to go the extra step, not just surface level things.

## **8. What is the best method for studying?**

I don't know if there's a best way, it's finding a way that works for you, like active study techniques. As long as you have something to show for studying.

## **9. What is something students should know before joining the class?**

I think there are a couple of things. 1. It is a highschool class so it shows up on a highschool transcript, and 2. You're going to have to put in more time outside of class than a non-accelerated science class.

## **10. What is a trait of a student who would be successful in a regents biology class?**

Someone who is not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them, that goes with asking questions and working hard.

# Delicious Pumpkin Pancake Recipe

by Noah Solano

Adapted from *pancakes and waffles* by Kate Habershon (2002)

Pumpkin pancakes are a delicious fall treat. This recipe is very simple and fun.

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups of all purpose flour
- 2 ½ teaspoons of baking powder
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 5 tablespoons of sugar
- Cinnamon, nutmeg and pumpkin pie spice to taste
- 1 ¼ cup of milk
- 3 eggs
- 4 tablespoons of salted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 cup of pumpkin puree



## Directions

1. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and spices using a wire whisk in a large bowl.
2. Put the eggs in another bowl and beat them with a fork. Add the milk to the bowl and mix well.
3. Put the pumpkin puree in the bowl and stir until everything is orange and smooth.
4. Pour the dry ingredients in with the wet ingredients. When partially combined, slowly pour in the melted butter. Mix until fully combined.
5. Pour a few tablespoons worth of batter onto a griddle. Cook for about one minute until small bubbles start to appear and the underside is golden brown.
6. Flip over and cook until both sides are golden brown. Put it on a large plate.
7. Once you've cooked all of your pancakes, eat with butter, syrup or any other topping!



# Vaping Among Children

*by Zoe Poller*

Vaping among children is a trend that usually follows kids from middle school to high school and can even follow them the rest of their lives. A lot of the times kids start vaping because of peer pressure and no matter how hard peer pressure hits you you should NEVER let yourself cave into it.

Just so some of you can know how dangerous vaping/smoking can be, I'm going to tell you.

- Vaping/smoking causes lung cancer
- Lung cancer can do things like cause tumors
- Lung cancer can start at lungs but can affect any part of your respiratory system
- Not many people survive lung cancer.
- 7 signs you have lung cancer
- Persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Hoarseness
- Bronchitis, Pneumonia, or Emphysema.
- Chest pain
- Bone pain

# Herbivorous Dinosaurs

by Emmett DeGrassi

During the Mesozoic Era, all types of dinosaurs roamed the earth. You might know some, like the mighty Tyrannosaurus Rex or the slow, but humble, Stegosaurus. Dinosaurs had many different diets. There were carnivores (those who ate meat), omnivores (those who ate meat and plants), piscivores (those who ate fish), insectivores (those who ate bugs), and the ones you will read about today, herbivores.

## So, what is an herbivore?

I know you can probably name an herbivore, like a cow or a goat, but a dinosaur herbivore is different. These herbivores had teeth that were more flat in order to grind tough plants. They didn't eat meat and they did not aim to kill, but they would fight each other for dominance or territory; they would also fight for protection. Many herbivorous dinosaurs were almost built with body weapons like spikes so they could protect them, and some were made in a way to fight for a female to mate with. Here are some cool herbivorous dinosaurs that might interest you.

## Argentinosaurus

Argentinosaurus was a dinosaur discovered in Argentina that lived during the late Cretaceous period. It was a member of titanosauria, a group in the sauropod family. Sauropods were very large dinosaurs with long necks so they could reach higher vegetation to eat. You might know of the sauropods Apatosaurus and Brachiosaurus, but there were many other sauropods like Girrafatitan, Mamenchisaurus, and Amargasaurus. Although Argentinosaurus was a sauropod, it was also a titanosaur. Titanosaurs were some of the largest sauropods that ever existed, Argentinosaurus was *the* largest, and it is still the largest dinosaur ever discovered. This veggie-lover weighed from 110,000 to 220,000 pounds and was anywhere from 98 to 130 feet long!



## Pachycephalosaurus

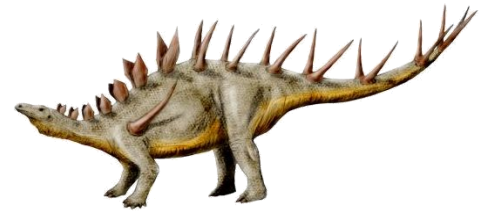
Pachycephalosaurus was a herbivorous dinosaur discovered in Canada and USA. This particular dinosaur lived during the late Cretaceous period. Pachycephalosaurus could reach from 66 to 2,200 pounds. and could reach up to 17.5 feet tall and grow to around 15 feet long. The Pachycephalosaurus had a dome-shaped skull



which it would use to ram. They would fight other male Pachycephalosaurus over a female; the winning male would get the female Pachycephalosaurus to be its mate. Or they would use their skull for territorial reasons. Or, they might do both--fighting for a mate *and* fighting for territorial dominance. Pachycephalosaurus was part of the Pachycephalosauridae family, related to other Pachycephalosauridae like Stygimoloch, Dracorex, Homalocephale, Stegoceras, and many more Pachycephalosaurids.

### **Kentrosaurus**

Kentrosaurus was an herbivorous dinosaur discovered in Tanzania that lived during the late Jurassic period. Kentrosaurus weighed 2,200 to 6,600 pounds. Kentrosaurus could be 15 feet long and reach to over 4 feet tall. Kentrosaurus was part of the Stegosauridae family related to dinosaurs like Stegosaurus, Tuojiangosaurus, Chialingosaurus, Wuerhosaurus, and many more. Kentrosaurus had plates around its body and thagomizers (spikes) on its tail and shoulders to protect itself from predators. Stegosauridae were slower dinosaurs with long and narrow skulls. Most Stegosauridae had brains only around the size of an average dog brain.



### **Herbivorous Dinosaurs**

Although I have discussed three different herbivorous dinosaurs from three different families, there were many I didn't discuss, like Hadrosaurs, Ceratopsians, Ornithomimidae, Ankylosauridae, and others. Out of these groups, you would most likely know what the Ceratopsians are; they included the well known Triceratops and other Ceratopsians like Styracosaurus, Protoceratops, Pentaceratops, Sinoceratops, and Nasutoceratops. Overall, there were all sorts of unique herbivorous dinosaurs that used to roam the Earth. Herbivorous dinosaurs could be very strong and fierce animals when it came to their protection or their territory; even though they didn't eat meat, they were very strong. Not bad for a veggie-saurus!

# Resources for Reading

*by Lauren Jameson*

Reading is a dying hobby amongst middle schoolers. According to Common Sense Media, only 1 in 4 (27%) of tweens and 1 in 5 (19%) of teenagers read daily for enjoyment. For most teenagers, purchasing books is a once-in-a-blue-moon occurrence, so here, I will list ways to attain books for free.

**Libby:** Libby is an ebook and audiobook app / website that offers many different genres. The great thing about Libby is that you can sign up through your library card and it's completely free! The downside to Libby is that there are only so many online copies and you can be put on waiting lists. For popular books, there can be waiting lists that stretch to over 8 months. Libby also has a format that allows you to highlight in 3 different colors and bookmark pages.

**Hoopla:** Hoopla is similar to Libby, except the fact that you sign up with both your library card and your email. Hoopla has no waiting lists and a large diversity of audiobooks and ebooks. The downside to Hoopla is that you can only borrow 8 books per month. Hoopla also has a very primary design.

**Little Free Libraries (LFL):** Little Free Libraries are small book boxes with books that have been donated by community members. You can donate books or pick up new books! To locate a LFL near you, go to [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org)!

**Libraries:** Although they are a dying way to attain books, libraries are still a great way to borrow books. If you don't know where to start, you can either visit your local library in person or, you can visit [books.google.com](http://books.google.com) and see the local libraries that you can borrow from.

Common Sense Media, "Children, Teens and Reading", Common Sense Media, 2014, pp. 5-13,  
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/csm-children-teens-and-reading-2014-1.pdf>

# Ancient Egypt and its People

by Sonia Levy

Ancient Egypt is a region that flourished from 5300 BCE - 30 BCE. It was a time of discovery and great advances in science, philosophy, and architecture that we still marvel at today.

## Geography

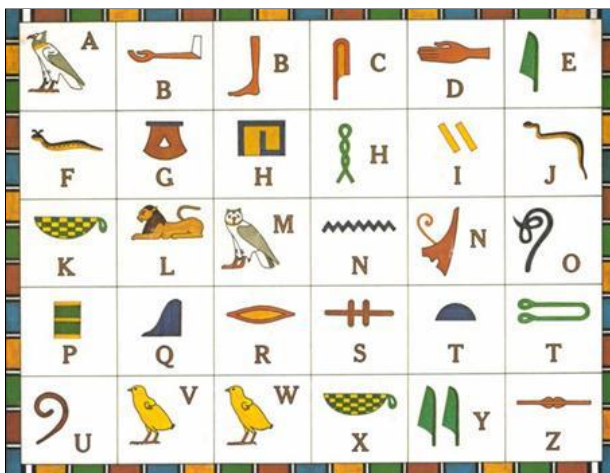
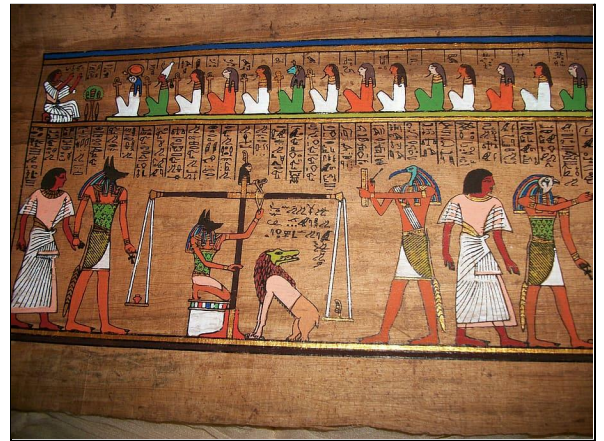
Egypt is in northern Africa. It is located in the Sahara desert. The lifeblood of Egypt is the Nile river. It was so important that if you drowned there you were considered a god.

## Culture

The culture in ancient Egypt revolved around the sun god Ra. There are many other gods, like Hathor, the goddess of motherhood. In Egyptian myth, there is a strong belief in life after death. The Egyptians believed that a person had to pass many tests in order for their soul to live in a glorious afterlife. To navigate the souls through this maze of tests, the soul needed to have two things. A body, and the book of the dead, a guidebook to the treacherous trials that awaited before eternal life. Because the soul couldn't live without its body to return to, the Egyptians became experts in mummification, the preservation of dead bodies.

## Art

The Egyptians expressed their unique culture through beautiful artwork. They used magnificent characters to write poems and tell stories on tomb walls. The picture below shows the final test ancient Egyptians had to take before they could make it into a glorious afterlife. Their hearts had to be weighed on a scale with a feather on the other side. If the heart was lighter than the feather it meant that the spirit had been a good person in life and could live forever. But if they were not a good person then the part lion, part crocodile, part hippopotamus demon, Ammit would devour their heart.



Write in ancient Egyptian!

Did you know that there are two forms of Egyptian writing? There is also a regular writing called demotic. Using the guide below you can learn how to write in hieroglyphics.