

## Hieroglyphics

- Ancient Egyptian system of writing, each sign is called a hieroglyph
- Developed about 3000 BC (Over 5000 years ago.)
- May have been the first written language.
- For writing on tomb walls, temples and monuments
- Simplified pictures that stand for a word or a sound.
- Only consonants are shown, not the vowels (because of this they are hard to read)
- More than 700 different hieroglyphs
- They can be written vertically (read them top to bottom), or horizontally (read left to right or right to left, depending which way the pictures are facing)
- There was no spacing between words and no punctuation. However names of gods, pharaohs, queens and important people are written inside an oval line called a **cartouche**.

## “Scribes”

- People who were trained to read and write the hieroglyphs were called scribes
- You had to have special training, schools were only open to boys

## Became a lost language...

- The Romans took over Egypt and banned hieroglyphs
- People forgot to write hieroglyphs - and people forgot how to read them
- Until the discovery of the Rosetta stone in 1799...

## Rosetta Stone

- Found at Rosetta, a town in the Nile delta
- On it were three kinds of ancient writing – Greek, hieroglyphics and demotic (a simplified Egyptian alphabet)
- A French archeologist guessed that the same message was written in all 3 texts
- He knew how to read Greek and compared that to the other 2 in order to understand them
- Once he realized that any word within a **cartouche** was a name he was able figure out the hieroglyphs for the names. This led him to solve the meaning of the other hieroglyphs.
- He worked for 14 years on this. It was 23 years after the stone was first discovered that the hieroglyphic writing was deciphered.

## Do you think this is art?