

Teacher's notes

StarGate

from the screenplay and novelization
by Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich,
adapted by Sheila Black



SUMMARY

Young archaeologist Daniel Jackson has a theory about the Great Pyramid, the huge, four-and-a-half-thousand-year-old monument at Giza. He believes that it was not the ancient Egyptians who built it, but people from outer space. Almost every other serious scientist in the world thinks he's mad - but not all. For many years, Catherine Langford has known about an Egyptian stone with strange words on it that talk about the stars. She asks for Daniel's help in working out the meaning of the stone - but he soon realizes that Catherine has found far more than just a stone. Working with the United States Army, she has discovered the StarGate, a machine ten thousand years old that can transport human beings across space. But the Army want to know where the StarGate leads to, and soon Daniel is travelling with them to a place many light years away - a place which is ruled by the ancient Egyptian god of the sun, Ra, with humans as his slaves.

ABOUT THE FILM 'STARGATE'

Directed by Roland Emmerich, 'StarGate' was a joint United States/French production, and was one of the most popular films in America in the year of its release, 1994. It starred Kurt Russell as US Army colonel Jack O'Neil, James Spader as Dr Daniel Jackson and Jaye Davidson as Ra. Much of it was filmed in the terrible heat of the Arizona desert, which provided the landscape of the planet on which most of the action takes place. The actor Jaye Davidson had given up working in films before he was offered the part of Ra, but became interested in the film when he learned that he would actually be speaking his lines in ancient Egyptian.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

The ancient Egyptian civilization was one of the first in the world, and has fascinated people from its own time down to our time. The beginnings of the Egyptian people were the tribes that lived along the Nile and who began farming the river's banks from about 5000 BC. In about 3200 BC, they created a kingdom which stretched from the mouth of the Nile river to Abu Simbel, nearly 1000 kilometres to

the south. By that time they were already writing histories and describing their lives on papyrus - an early kind of paper. They were good at astronomy and mathematics and highly skilled in medicine. They were also highly organized.

For most of Egypt's history, the authority of the King, or Pharaoh, was unquestioned. He was a god - the son of Ra - upon whom the whole life of Egypt depended, and it was thought that when he died he would achieve everlasting life. Ra, the sun god, was the creator of the world, and according to one tradition was himself the first Pharaoh. But many other gods were important to the Egyptians: almost as important as Ra was Horus, the falcon-headed sky god. They also worshipped Osiris, the god of death; Isis his sister; and Anubis, the dog - or jackal-headed god, who led the dead before Osiris to be judged.

Incredibly, as Dr Daniel Jackson points out in *StarGate*, the Egyptian way of life continued almost unchanged for 3000 years. For much of this time the Egyptians were regarded with great admiration in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern world. They were thought to be great magicians, and certainly they placed great importance on what nowadays we might call 'magic'. For example, they believed that the written word - or the written symbol - had great power. In the tombs of the Pharaohs and other important people they wrote numbers of 'spells' which were intended to give power to the dead to live after death.

However, what most impressed the ancient world, as they still impress us today, were the country's buildings. Egyptians were master builders, and the most spectacular of all their achievements were the pyramids. These were the tombs of the pharaohs. The first was built around 2500 BC. They were not built by slaves, as has often been assumed, but by the Pharaoh's people themselves who were made to work on them every autumn, when the Nile had flooded their fields. The biggest pyramids are at Giza, just outside Cairo, and the largest of all the pyramids is that of the Pharaoh Khufu, or Cheops - built in about 2550 BC. It is also called the Great Pyramid. It is 137 metres high, and made of between five and six million tonnes of stone. The accuracy with which it was built is still today a

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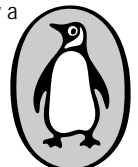
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source of amazement. The sides at the bottom are almost exactly the same length, to within a difference of only a few centimetres, and face almost perfectly north, south, east and west. A recent theory about why the Egyptians used the pyramid shape for burying their kings is that the sides, coming down from a point, represented the rays of the sun - and they believed the dead king walked up the sun's rays to join Ra.

The pharaoh was also said to travel to the stars. In the Great Pyramid there are two passages which lead up through the stone from the King's tomb - one at an exact angle of 31 degrees, the other at 45 degrees. Every 24 hours the star Alpha Draconis - the pole star in Khufu's time - passes over the entrance to the first shaft, and Sirius, the dog star, in the constellation of Orion, passes over the second.

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader, and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopyable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of discussion and pair/groupwork questions, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

- 1 Ask students to look at the cover of the book, which shows a pyramid. Find out what students know about pyramids by putting them into small groups to discuss the following.
 - (a) What were pyramids used for by the Egyptians?
 - (b) What is interesting about the size of the pyramids in Egypt?

Then check their answers as a whole class.

- 2 Tell students that stories about the future are known as 'science fiction'. In groups, students discuss whether they like science fiction books and films. Why/Why not? As a class, students talk about science fiction stories they have read or films they have seen.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Chapters 1-6

- 1 Put students into pairs. They imagine that Catherine Langford tells Daniel Jackson what happened in 1928 (she went to Giza with her father, found the stone ring in the ground, she found and kept the *udjat* eye, the workers were frightened). They role-play the conversation between Catherine and Daniel. Catherine tells the story. Daniel asks as many questions as possible.
- 2 Ask students to work in groups. They discuss 'star signs'. Do they know what their sign is? Do they know what it looks like? Do they believe that people can know someone's future because of star signs?

Chapters 7-11

- 1 Ask students to work in pairs. They are a miner and a friend of the miner. The friend of the miner wasn't working when O'Neil and the other men came. The miner tells the friend what happened and the friend asks as many questions as possible.
- 2 Explain that 'arranged marriages' are marriages where the family of a girl and boy decide that the girl and boy will get married. Ask students to work in groups and to discuss these questions:
 - (a) Would you like to have an arranged marriage? Why/Why not?
 - (b) Do you have arranged marriages in your country?

Chapters 12-16

Put students into groups of three.

Tell them to imagine that O'Neil has to report to Colonel West and Catherine Langford when he returns to Earth. Students role-play the conversation. O'Neil gives details of the following and the other two ask questions:

Ra wanted to send the bomb back to Earth to end the world; Daniel and O'Neil escaped with the help of Skaara; they hid in the bags of stone; O'Neil started the bomb and couldn't stop it; O'Neil killed Anubis; Ra escaped and the star-ship turned into a ball of fire; Daniel stayed with Sha'uri.

Before starting the role-play, tell students to look at these chapters again and make notes about what they will say.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

Ask students to work in pairs. They discuss these questions:

- (a) Has your opinion of science fiction stories changed now you have read this book? (b) Do you think that it is important to believe that a story is possible?

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

Chapters 1-6

archaeologist (n) a person who studies very old things made by people who lived a very long time ago

army (n) the people, guns, etc that fight for a country on land when there is a war

cave (n) a large hole in the side of a mountain or rock

god (n) a 'person or thing' who people believe has power over the world

pyramid (n) a huge stone building which is square at the bottom and pointed at the top

Chapters 7-11

bomb (n) this has 'dynamite' in it, which will make it break into thousands of little pieces and will destroy people and buildings

mask (n) this covers part or all of someone's face

mine (v) to dig stone or metal out of the ground

statue (n) this looks like a person but is made of stone or metal

weapon (n) people use weapons to fight with and hurt other people

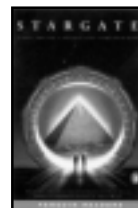
Chapters 12-16

coffin (n) a box to put a dead person into



Student's activities

StarGate



Photocopiable

Students can do these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

Activities before reading the book

- Read the introduction in your book. Then close the book and answer these questions.
In what year...
 - was the film of *StarGate* made?
 - did some archaeologists find a mysterious stone in Egypt?
 - did Daniel Jackson find a way to open the StarGate again?
 - was the pyramid of Pharaoh Khufu built?
- Do you know what life was like in Egypt, thousands of years ago? Are these sentences right or wrong?
 - The Egyptians had writing.
 - They had no pictures.
 - They had thousands of gods.
 - Some Egyptian gods had animal heads.
 - They had ships.
 - They had stone buildings.
 - Most ordinary Egyptians were farmers.

Activities while reading the book

CHAPTERS 1-6

Chapters 1-3

- Close your book. Can you remember all the people in the story? Put the names on the left with the descriptions on the right.

(a) Ra ...	(i) is Daniel Jackson's old teacher.
(b) Catherine Langford ...	(ii) is a world-famous archaeologist who thinks Daniel is ill.
(c) Doctor Ajami ...	(iii) is the old woman who gives Daniel Jackson a job.
(d) Daniel Jackson ...	(iv) is the boy who killed the animal, and also the name of a god.
(e) Dr Rauchenburg ...	(v) is a young archaeologist.
- Answer these questions.
 - In 1928 in Cairo, what does Ed find near the pyramid? Write a description.
 - What does Catherine find? What does she do with it?
 - Sixty years later, Catherine shows Daniel Jackson some photographs. What are they of, do you think?

- Why do the archaeologists at the meeting get angry with Daniel?

Chapters 4-6

- Answer these questions.
 - Kawalsky tells Daniel that the writing on the stone is ten thousand years old. Why does Daniel say this is impossible?
 - The stone ring is now in the Rocky Mountains in the United States. How did it get there? What are they doing with it now?
- What do we know about the 'StarGate'? Here are some notes, but some of the information is wrong. Change it to make it right. Use the pictures on the front of the book and on pages 8 and 11 to help you.

The StarGate is a metal ring, softer than anything on Earth. It is about five metres wide. The Americans are keeping it in a small cave. There are signs around it, and seven stones. There is also another stone, which has some signs on it. These signs give you an 'address' in the sky. When you move the seven stones on the StarGate to the right places for that address, fourteen lines of light shine into the middle of the ring, and a square of light grows from there until the stone ring is full of it. If you go into the square of light, you travel to the sun. At the other end is another StarGate. That StarGate is inside a pyramid which is different from Khufu's pyramid on Earth.

CHAPTERS 7-11

Chapters 7-9

- Can you remember what happens in these chapters? Close your book. Then number the sentences below. What happened first? What happened second? etc.
 - A star-ship lands on the pyramid.
 - O'Neil makes a bomb in the StarGate room.
 - Kasuf's beautiful daughter offers Daniel water.
 - Daniel, O'Neil, his men and the miners leave the valley with an old man in red clothes.
 - Someone with the head of a dog comes out of the StarGate.
 - O'Neil and his men frighten the mastadge.
 - They see thousands of men, women and children mining white stone.

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- (h) The men take some of their boxes outside the pyramid.
- (i) The miners go on their knees when they see Daniel.
- (j) Daniel meets a mastadge.
- (k) The mastadge puts its nose in Daniel's pocket, looking for chocolate.
- (l) Kasuf takes everyone to a city.
- (m) Kasuf shows Daniel a large Eye of Ra in the city square.
- 2 Join these beginnings and ends of sentences using *because*.
- (a) Daniel and the other men can't get back to Earth yet....
- (b) The mastadge runs away...
- (c) O'Neil tells his men not to point their guns at the miners...
- (d) Kasuf hopes the strangers really are gods...
- (e) The radio doesn't work...
- (f) Feretti and Porro don't know that a star-ship has landed...
- (i) of the sand storm.
- (ii) he doesn't want to frighten them.
- (iii) they have stopped work, so they will be in trouble.
- (iv) they can't find a stone with Earth's address.
- (v) they're in the pyramid.
- (vi) O'Neil and his men frighten it.
- 3 What's going to happen next? Guess.
- (a) The people tell Daniel that he is Ra, and he stays on their world as their king.
- (b) The man with the dog's head is from another world. He and other men like him go back through the StarGate to Earth and make Earth people their prisoners.
- (c) The man with the dog's head is a friend. He wants to go to Earth and make everyone happy.
- (d) None of those things. Write down your idea, or work in a group. Try to agree on one idea.

Chapters 10-11

Answer these questions.

- 1 Why do Kasuf and the heads of the city give Sha'uri to Daniel as a wife?
- 2 How does O'Neil find Daniel?
- 3 Who are Sha'uri's people really?
- 4 Why did Ra stop all reading and writing?
- 5 Who were the people who hid the StarGate on Earth under the ground? Where did they hide it?
- 6 Who kills Daniel, O'Neil and all the soldiers?

CHAPTERS 12-16

Chapters 12-13

1 Answer these questions.

- (a) What does Skaara find in the box?
- (b) Why do the Horus aeroplanes bomb the city?
- (c) How is Ra going to make the bomb stronger?
- (d) Why does Ra want Daniel to be alive again?
- (e) What do Sha'uri and Skaara know about Ra?

2 Look back at page 1. What was the 'light as bright as the sun' in the sky?

3 Work with other students. Which of these words describe Ra, Daniel, Sha'uri, Skaara and O'Neil?

selfish	kind	brave
intelligent	boring	clever
dangerous	good-looking	hard
honest	a murderer	nice
too perfect	beautiful	handsome
sensible	sick	serious
funny	a soldier	strong
stupid	surprising	terrible
useless	friendly	young

When you've finished reading the book, look back at this question and see if you think differently.

Chapters 14-16

1 Are these sentences right or wrong?

- (a) O'Neil has kept the bomb a secret.
- (b) Ra keeps all the white stone that the miners bring him in his star-ship.
- (c) Ra, Anubis and the Horus guards really are gods.
- (d) When Ra loses his arm, it doesn't hurt.
- (e) Sha'uri's people are happy that she, Daniel and O'Neil are alive.

2 Explain in your own words the importance of the circle of light. How do Daniel and O'Neil use it for Anubis, Ra and the bomb?

Activities after reading the book

Work in pairs or small groups.

- 1 Look back at question 3 on Chapters 12-13, above. Do you think differently now about any of these people? Does everyone in your group agree?
- 2 Did you enjoy the book? Think of the beginning, the middle and the end. Were these all good?



Stargate SG-1, the television series, picks up where the film left off. Colonel Jack O'Neill and his SG-1 team; Daniel Jackson, Teal'c, and Capt. Samantha Carter, set out to explore the mysteries of the Stargate. Each mission through the gate takes the SG-1 team to new worlds in a seemingly boundless universe. Top Shows. Moments after the stargate has been hoisted up by the workmen at the Giza dig, people notice that there is something underneath it: a group of the Hora guards encased in the stone. In the scene after the stargate has been opened for the first time and the military are checking the pictures of the marking of the gate on the other gate, after James Spader says he is 'positive' he can decipher the symbols, Kurt Russel's character turns and says "it's your call" in the theatrical version. Stargate Command. 287,613 likes · 69 talking about this. The Official Facebook page for all things Stargate! #Stargate25 and #SG1 - the founding TV series that kicked off our decades-long fandom! We want your #StargateSG1 story! 662. 85. 25 years ago today, the original, the first - #Stargate the movie - premiered! We were awe-inspired by the story, loved the Kurt Russell vs. James Spader banter, and were blown away by Jaye Davidson's Ra. The movie went on to become the springboard for our favorite sci-fi TV series.