

# Think Sphinx

In the Egyptian Art Galleries

## What is a sphinx?

The typical ancient Egyptian sphinx is a creature with a lion's body and a human head. Usually sphinxes depict the king (pharaoh). A lion body could also be combined with the heads of other animals—for example the head of a ram or a falcon—to represent a god.

## Why were sphinxes made?

Most sphinx statues were guardians of temples. Usually they were shown lying on their bellies, but with legs firmly planted on the ground, ready to pounce. There are also depictions of the king as a sphinx fighting or trampling enemies. This demonstrated his ability to protect the country.

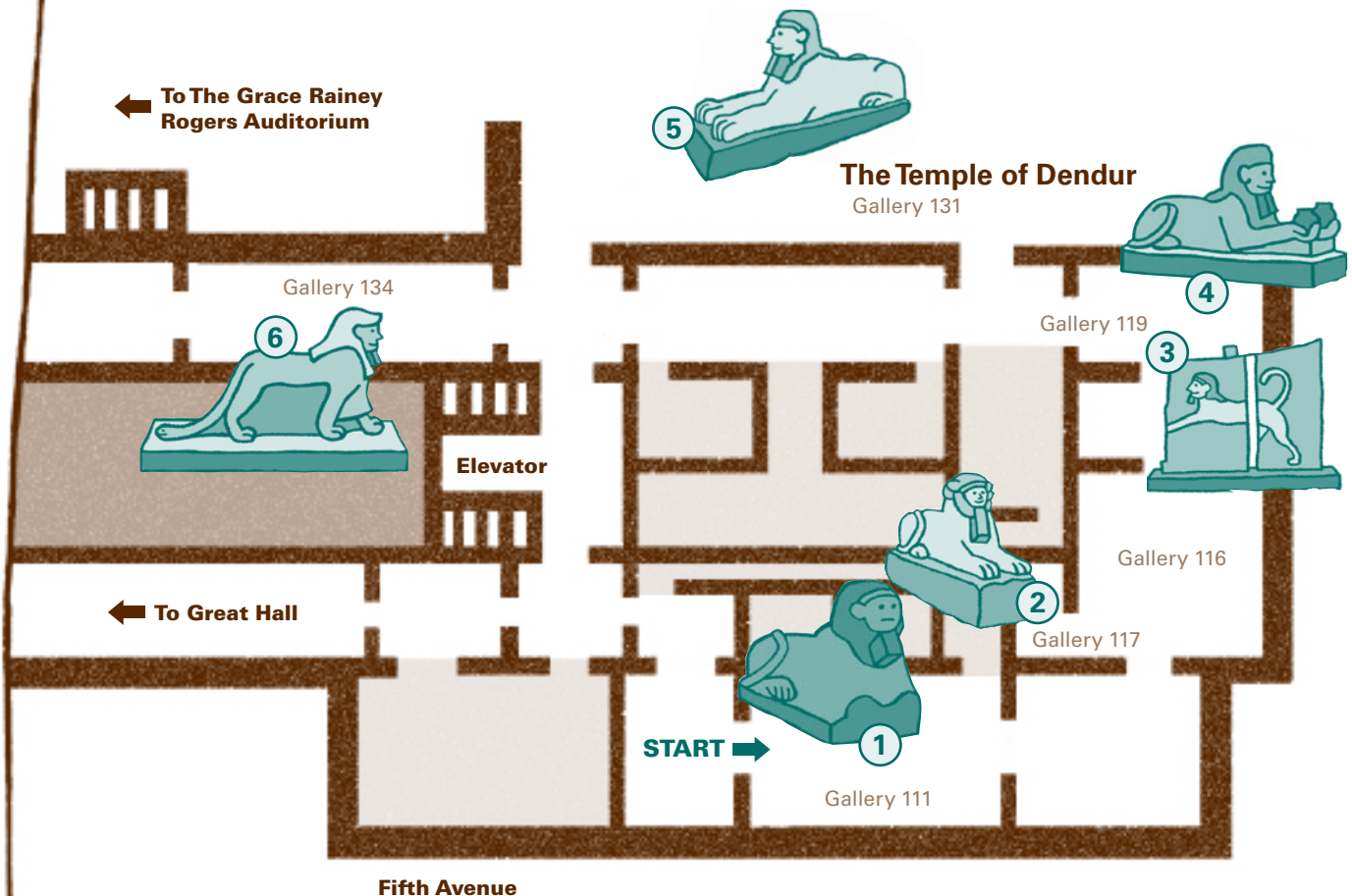
## Where are they found?

Sphinx statues are frequently found around temple sites. Often a pair of sphinxes stood on either side of a temple entrance. We also know that hundreds of sphinxes could be lined up along processional paths leading from one temple to another.

**Let's go into the galleries  
and think about sphinxes!**

# Search for Sphinxes

Use this map of the Egyptian galleries to locate each sphinx. All of them have a lion's body and a human head. **Tip:** There are many sphinxes in these galleries. Look carefully to make sure you've found the right one!



**1 Sphinx of Pharaoh Senwosret III**

Dynasty 12 (ca. 1878–1840 B.C.)  
Gift of Edward S. Harkness,  
1917 (17.9.2)

**2 Small Sphinx of the Female Pharaoh Hatshepsut**

Dynasty 18, Joint Reign of  
Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III  
(ca. 1473–1458 B.C.)  
Rogers Fund, 1931 (31.3.94)

**3 Chair Panel of Pharaoh Thutmose IV**

Dynasty 18, Reign of Tuthmosis IV  
(ca. 1400–1390 B.C.)  
Theodore M. Davis Collection,  
Bequest of Theodore M. Davis,  
1915 (30.8.45a–c)

**4 Sphinx of Pharaoh Amenhotep III Holding Offerings**

Dynasty 18, Reign of Amenhotep III  
(ca. 1390–1352 B.C.)  
Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace-  
Gift, 1972 (1972.125)

**5 Sphinx of the Female Pharaoh Hatshepsut**

Dynasty 18, Joint Reign of  
Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III  
(ca. 1473–1458 B.C.)  
Rogers Fund, 1931 (31.3.166)

**6 The Protective God Tutu as a Small Sphinx**

Ptolemaic Period (332–30 B.C.)  
Theodore M. Davis Collection,  
Bequest of Theodore M. Davis,  
1915 (30.8.71)

When you find a sphinx, look at it closely so you can answer the questions about it in the chart. You will find the answer choices in the list below. Write the letter of the answer in the chart. Some answers can be used more than once.

**Position**

- A. Lying down
- B. Standing
- C. Fighting

**Ears**

- D. Human
- E. Lion

**Head Covering**

- F. Royal head cloth (tied at back)
- G. Three-part wig (not tied at back)
- H. Lion's mane

**End of Legs  
(front and back)**

- I. Lion's paws
- J. Human hands
- K. Nothing—missing paws/hands

**Tail**

- L. Lion (round end)
- M. Bull (long, rectangular end)
- N. Ends in serpent's head

**Material**

- O. Red granite (pink stone)
- P. Gneiss (black and white stone)
- Q. Blue faience
- R. Limestone (cream stone)
- S. Cedar wood

# 5

	1	2	3	4	5	6
In what position is this sphinx?	A					
What kind of ears does it have?						
What covers its head?						
What are at the ends of its front legs?						
What are at the ends of its back legs?						
What kind of tail does it have?						
What material is it made of?						

**Bonus question:** Only one of the sphinxes wears bracelets. If you have time, return to Start and find that sphinx. Write its number here: \_\_\_\_\_

