

The Rosetta Stone and Its Secrets

Discovery of the Rosetta Stone

Can you imagine discovering a stone that would unlock the secrets to a language from nearly two thousand years earlier? That's exactly what happened when a soldier named Pierre Francois Bouchard discovered the Rosetta Stone. It was named after the town it was found in, Rosetta, in Egypt, in 1799. He found the grey stone on an old wall of a building being torn down and noticed there was ancient writing on it. The stone was sent to Alexandria, Egypt, and several casts and copies were made of it. Today it is housed in the British Museum in London where thousands of people visit every day.



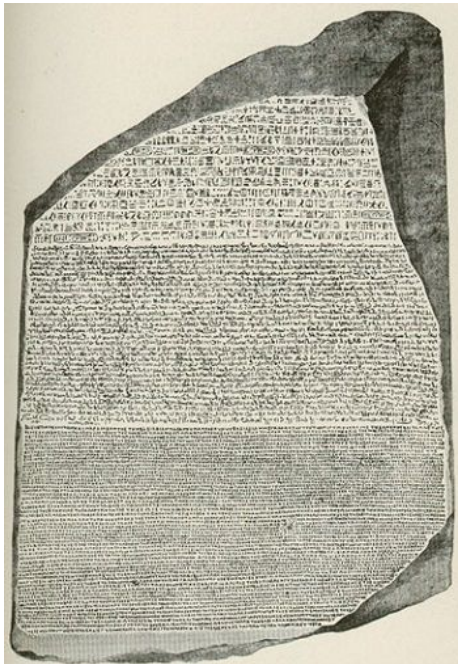
Enlarged copy of the Rosetta Stone

What Is Written On It?

The Rosetta Stone is an incomplete grey stone stele that is almost four feet long, two and a half feet wide, and about one foot thick, and it is inscribed with ancient writing. It is special because

of the three texts it contains. The same thing is written in three different versions: hieroglyphics, demotic, and Greek.

Hieroglyphics was the script Egyptian priests and religious leaders used to write, which used pictures for words. **Demotic** was the language of the people of Egypt, and Greek was the language used by Egyptian rulers at that time. All three languages tell the same story, which allowed everyone in Egypt at the time to be able to read it, and which makes it unique still today.



The Rosetta Stone was written around 196 BCE and was an official order to honor the Egyptian pharaoh **King Ptolemy V**. It tells that the king brought great prosperity to Egypt, rebuilt many old temples, and defeated Egypt's enemies. It instructs those who read it that a gold statue of King Ptolemy V is to be set up in all the temples and celebrated.

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