

# Next-to-Indiana Teacher and the Rosetta Stone



In a tale of adventure about an ~~archaeologist~~ a substitute teacher from ~~Indiana~~ Illinois (yes I know he was named for a dog, not a state 8) ) a secret organization steals the famous Rosetta Stone and holds it hostage until a billion dollar ransom is paid... Okay, not really. In fact this post really doesn't have anything to do with **the [Rosetta Stone](#)** at all. The Rosetta Stone, for those who are not in the know or just plain forgot, is an artifact discovered over 200 years ago which aided in translating ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. From Wikipedia:

*The Rosetta Stone is an Ancient Egyptian artifact which was instrumental in advancing modern understanding of hieroglyphic writing. The stone is a Ptolemaic era stele with carved text made up of three translations of a single passage: two in Egyptian language scripts (hieroglyphic and Demotic) and one in classical Greek. It was created in 196 BC, discovered by the French in 1799 at Rosetta and contributed greatly to the deciphering of the principles of hieroglyph writing in 1822 by the British scientist Thomas Young and the French scholar Jean-François Champollion. Comparative translation of the stone assisted in understanding many previously undecipherable examples of hieroglyphic writing. The text on the stone is a decree from Ptolemy V, describing the repealing of various taxes and instructions to erect statues in temples.*

The [Rosetta Stone](#) I am referring to in the post, on the other hand, is a popular software tool to aid in learning a second (or third, or fourth...) language. Just as Christmas break

started, one of the districts I sub in put up a huge list of days subs would be needed in bilingual and ELL classes six weeks from then. I took three of the days. Starting last week, those days came up and last Thursday, Monday, and Tuesday I found myself with students who knew varying English from little to some. This district actually paid the big bucks to get this software (over \$250 per module, or \$550 for three- truly the Adobe of foreign language software, in that Adobe is infamous for [charging ridiculous prices](#) for its software) for their ELL program.

Thursday I didn't pay too much attention to the 5th and 6th graders as they used the program as I was working with one student while another was on the computer. This week, however, the 7th and 8th grade ELL students all spent an entire period each day (twice a week- I got both days) on this program and I worked with no one as they used Rosetta Stone so, bored, I watched them use it. Some of them were learning numbers, some were on phrases. The way the program works is it will say some words or phrases, four at a time, in English (or whatever language module you may have purchased), and show pictures representing the words or phrases. Then, it will display four pictures and give you one word/phrase. The user has to then find the proper picture representing the word/phrase and click on it. It's not as easy as it sounds as the pictures may look similar. For example, there was a set where people were starting to go up stairs, going up stairs, and just finishing going up the stairs. In addition, there were different people, say a man and a boy, navigating the stairs. The phrases then, of course, were very similar as well. I am sure there is more to the software, but this is what I saw primarily. The numbers were pretty straight forward, but there were some pretty off the wall phrases included. Sure, most of them were straightforward like the stairs example, but then there were some like, "The boy is under the airplane," "The children are standing on the table," and "The woman is sitting on the man." □ . I guess wacky

phrases must help people remember. And by the way, yes, the latter example was quite clean.

Some day I will have to try out this software myself. Maybe the library has it? Surely I could never afford it.