



# Ancient Egyptian Art

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Lesson Plans

October 1998

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## Image List

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1. Egyptian (New Kingdom 1570-1090 BC)  
**Assortment of Scarabs**  
Faience and various stones  
Gift of Natacha Rambova  
Permanent Collection of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts
  
2. Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 B.C.) (left)  
**Sarcophagus with Face of Hawk**  
Wood and pigment  
Gift of Natacha Rambova  
Museum # 1952.022A-C  
  
Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 B.C.) (center)  
**Sarcophagus with Face of Hawk, Encasing a Ritual Grain Figure**  
Wood and pigment  
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Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 B.C.) (right)  
**Sarcophagus with Male Face, Encasing a Ritual Grain Figure**  
Wood and pigment  
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Museum # 1952.021A-C



# **Ancient Egyptian Art**

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## ***Ancient Egyptian Art***

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The civilization of ancient Egypt is significant in several ways. Together with those of Mesopotamia, India, and China, it was one of the earliest civilizations. It is perhaps the best example of a continuous cultural evolution based on internal stimuli, rather than the complex mix of internal and external factors found, for example, in Mesopotamia. Egyptian influence on other peoples was also significant. Cultural elements, which included its hieroglyphic writing system, were adapted by the ancient kingdoms of the Sudan. Syria-Palestine was strongly affected by Egyptian religion and art while the cults of some Egyptian gods had followers in both Greece and Rome. Together with the Bible these last two cultures are the most important antecedents of the modern western world that owe something to Egypt. The western alphabet is derived from a Phoenician one that was possibly modeled on Egyptian hieroglyphs. Egyptian ideas are found in some parts of the Bible while the sciences and art of Greece were originally influenced by Egypt. Finally, archaeology has made Egypt a subject of great public interest, stimulating many books, novels, movies, and museum exhibitions.

## Egyptian Scarabs



**Assortment of Scarabs** (New Kingdom 1570-1090 BC), faience and various stones, Gift of Natacha Rambova, Permanent Collection of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts

Of all the magical amulets worn by ancient Egyptians, the beetle, or scarab, was the most popular. The Latin name for the beetle most often carved is *Scarabaeus sacer*, which is why the carvings are called 'scarabs.' The ancient Egyptian word for beetle was kheper, which meant "to exist."

The female beetle, after dropping her eggs in the ground, covers them in excrement on which the larvae feed. As the soft dung ball is rolled across the ground, dust and sand attached to it so that it became hardened and was sometimes equal in size to the beetle. In the mind of the Egyptian this was a thought provoking and impressive achievement that imitated the daily appearance of the sun.

This observation prompted the Egyptians to associate the beetle with one of the many aspects of the great sun-god, that of the rising sun, Khepri.

A parallel idea of the god is with the newly born, completely formed beetles, which appeared to come out of the dung ball as self generated creatures springing forth full of life. According to the story of the Creation, Khepri says, "I developed myself from the primeval matter which I made, I developed myself out of the primeval matter." This was viewed as a sign of eternal renewal and reemergence of life, a reminder of the life to come. The Egyptians believed the descent under the earth, in the tomb, was only a prologue to rebirth and the endlessness of life. Life and death were in a continual cycle.

So scarabs were worn to assure continued existence, both in this world and the next. The Egyptians wore them as part of their jewelry and buried their mummies with large scarabs placed on their chests to protect the heart.

Scarabs were carved out of many different stones, including amethyst, turquoise, lapis lazuli, and steatite. Other scarabs were made of clay, baked and glazed. The majority of the small scarabs are pierced as though originally used as beads. They usually were inscribed on the bottom with the name of the owner, some brief wish for well-being, magical mottoes, or figures and animals.



**Assortment of Scarabs** (New Kingdom 1570-1090 BC), faience and various stones, Gift of Natacha Rambova, Permanent Collection of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts

# ***Egyptian Scarab***

## **Lesson Plan**

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**written by Virginia Catherall**

**Goal:**

To teach students about the form and function of Egyptian scarab amulets

**Objectives:**

Learn about scarab amulets in ancient Egypt

Create a scarab out of clay

Inscribe the scarab with personal symbols or meanings

**Appropriate age:** grades 8-12 (lesson can be adjusted for lower grades)

**Materials:**

Images of Egyptian scarabs (or the real thing at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts)

Sculpey® clay -turquoise, jade, lapis lazuli colors (can substitute any form of modeling clay)

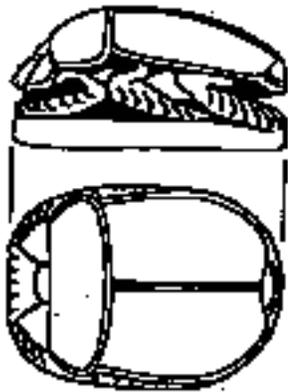
sculpting tools (can substitute paper clips and pins or push pins)

Page of Egyptian hieroglyphs to copy

**Approximate time:** 20 minutes

**Analyze and Discuss:**

Show the students examples of Egyptian Scarabs and discuss the meaning of scarabs.



**Procedure:**

1. Give each student a small amount of Sculpey® clay (about 1"-1 1/2" in diameter). The students can create a large scarab or several small ones. Scarabs can be of any size.

2, Have the students sculpt a scarab - The typical Egyptian scarab amulet is hemispherical in shape (like an egg cut in half) with a flat underside.

3. The students can incise the lines that form the body with sculpting tools or paper clips or pins.

4. The students can then incise hieroglyphs, symbols, or names on the back of the scarab (the flat side). Have them choose symbols or words that have a personal meaning. Sometimes ancient Egyptians just carved designs on the back. (see below)

5. If you are using Sculpey®, bake the scarabs on a non-metallic plate at 275°F (130°C) for 15 minutes per quarter inch of thickness. DO NOT Microwave.



**Evaluation:**

Do the students understand the symbolism of the Egyptian scarab?

Did the students create their own scarab?

Have each student describe what they inscribed on the backs of their scarabs and what symbolism or meaning it has for them.

**Utah Core Curriculum for Egyptian Scarab Lesson Plan grades 8-12**

Art History and Criticism (8-12) STANDARD: 1150 - 03

The students will develop skills for analyzing and evaluating works of art and studying the artists who produced them by using non-technical methods to describe works of art to tell how they were created; by identifying themes, styles, symbols, and techniques used by artists; and by identifying common art terms and major periods of art history. (Critic)

1150-0309

Identify examples of symbolism used in art and describe logical interpretations of their usage.

1150-0312

Describe examples of the five major uses of art:

philosophy or religion

utility

documentation (historical use)

ornamentation or decoration, and

self-expression

1150-0315

Participate in the process of looking at and talking about works of art and the cultures that produced them. This would include discussing the artist and his culture; the tools the artist used; the mood, feeling, or message of the work; the effects of elements and principles of design evident in the work; and the styles or techniques used.

Sculpture (8-12) STANDARD: I 140 - 03

The students will develop skills for analyzing and evaluating works of art and studying the artists who produced them by naming three famous sculptors and identifying their work; by describing the role of repetition, surface enrichment, and balance in good sculpture design; and by discussing basic characteristics of sculpture from various cultures and applications of the sculptor's skills. (Critic)

I 140-0305

Identify characteristics of sculpture from the following cultures: Mediterranean, Oriental, Egyptian, European, American, and African.

Jewelry (8-12) STANDARD: I 120 - 03

The students will develop skills vital to analyzing and evaluating works of art and studying the artists who produced them by discussing the use of repetition, balance, and decoration in jewelry design; and by identifying cultures famous for their fine jewelry. (Critic)

I 120-0305

Identify the important role of jewelry in several specific cultures, i.e., Egyptian, Mayan, African, and English.

Foundations II (9-12) STANDARD: I 190 - 03

The students will develop skills for analyzing and evaluating works of art and studying the artists who produced them by describing how artists create moods or feelings with color and value and by recognizing the works of specific artists and the periods they represent. (Critic)

I 190-0305

Identify an example of Egyptian painting and sculpture. Identify the works of Grunewald, Fragonard, Gericault, Daumier, Henry Moore, Vassarely, Magritte, Courbet, De Kooning, Warhol, Oldenburg, and O'Keefe.

## Egyptian Sarcophagi



Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 B.C.) (left)

**Sarcophagus with Face of Hawk**

Wood and pigment

Gift of Natacha Rambova

Museum # I952.022A-C

Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 B.C.) (center)

**Sarcophagus with Face of Hawk, Encasing a Ritual Grain Figure**

Wood and pigment

Gift of Natacha Rambova

Museum # I952.020A-C

Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 B.C.) (right)

**Sarcophagus with Male Face, Encasing a Ritual Grain Figure**

Wood and pigment

Gift of Natacha Rambova

Museum # I952.021A-C

The most important thing in the tomb was the deceased: the body, appearance (face, image) and their name. Life eternal required that you reunite with these qualities. The Egyptian conception of the afterlife included the belief that your occupation and status achieved in this life would continue in the afterlife, so included in the representations of face and name was the title of the dead or the occupation. The mummy cases (also called cartonnage and sarcophagus) that you see in Museums are usually from the very wealthy or from nobility: Pharaohs and family.

Mummy cases as well as other tomb objects were highly decorated, and with precious materials: silver, gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, etc. The decorations on the mummy case were usually placed in symmetrical bands and showed significant deities and symbols. Some of the symbols that are commonly found on cases are the winged scarab beetles, the phoenix, and lotus flowers, plus many deities: Anubis, Osiris, Isis, etc.

Canopic jars held the mummies organs, the liver, lungs, intestines and stomach. Frequently the four jars were decorated with the heads of Horus' sons on the lids. Often some inscriptions from the Book of the dead was also inscribed on the vessels.

Canopic Jar decoration and contents:

- Im-sety (also Amset) human facing South, held the liver
- Hapy (also Hapi) dog-faced ape facing North, held the lungs
- Duamautef (also Tuamautef) jackal facing East, held the stomach
- Qebhsenuf (also Qbeh-senu-ef) falcon facing West, held the intestines

(there are some differing opinions about which organs were in each jars and other combinations can be found)

# ***Egyptian Sarcophagi***

## **The Mummy's Tomb: An Ideal Hope Chest**

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**written by Ann Parker**

### **Rationale:**

Mummy cases were intended to "speak" visually about the deceased person. Important facts about the person, as well as the belief system (religion) were illustrated on these cases. Rather than make an Egyptian copy, we are going to make a personal case.

### **Materials:**

rectangular boxes (shoe boxes or small gift boxes would work)

Crayola Model Magic, or some other modeling material that is suitable for the box surface

markers

metallic papers

Optional: beads, metallic markers, jewels

### **Activity:**

1. Think about what your personal belief system is, things that are important to you, notable events in your life, and your personal goals. List these items and then think of how you would illustrate them symbolically.

Examples:

Belief: Resurrection

Symbol: butterfly

Goals: Writer

Symbol: pen and book

Event: graduation

Symbol: scroll

2. Create a self portrait. This portrait can be realistic or abstract. This is an ideal portrait, so it doesn't have to look exactly like you. You are going to use this self portrait in a three-dimensional manner so you need to observe your facial features from the side as well as the front. Create this self portrait on the lid of your box using modeling clay, or papier mache.

3. Decorate the lid, and sides of the box with your personal symbols. You can include a personal narrative or important events, on the sides of the box. These events can also be future events that are your goals for yourself.

Include your name on your box.

**Evaluation:**

Let students talk about, or write in a journal entry, the images on their box.

Does the box contain the essential elements: portrait, name and some symbolic representations?

**Extension:**

Besides the Egyptians, many other cultures also mummified their remains (Peru is one example). Study the funerary art work from other ancient cultures. Look and learn about the symbolic representations, the funerary artworks and the belief systems of these cultures.

Create a personal "mission statement" to put inside the box. Write your statement on calligraphic paper and make into a scroll. Seal this into the box for a future date to open and see if your mission statement has come true, or has changed in some way.