



Egyptian Sarcophagus

Developed with Lori Snable
Grades 6-8



Mayco®

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Learn about the Egyptian culture
- Learn why the Ancient Egyptians mummified their dead
- Understand what hieroglyphic symbols mean
- Create their own sarcophagus in clay
- Use line, shape, color, pattern, balance, and symmetry in hand-building this project

INTRODUCTION

In Ancient Egypt, a **sarcophagus** was an ornately carved container decorated with **hieroglyphics** and low reliefs holding an Egyptian **mummy** inside. The sarcophagi for the Pharaohs were shaped in a human form and featured an intricately carved portrait of the head of the **Pharaoh** it was intended for. The materials used to make a sarcophagus ranged from stone, wood, and metal, and the most elaborate were made of solid gold. Images and symbols inscribed on a sarcophagus depict important events in the life of the entombed.

In this lesson, students will design and create a sarcophagus made of clay, embellish it by inscribing it with historical Egyptian coffin symbols, and decorate it with a variety of glazes. Students can design the lid to resemble an Ancient Egyptian sarcophagus or create a contemporary version using their own **cartouche**. A mummy may also be formed and enclosed inside. In addition, students will explore mummification and burial customs, including the importance of preserving the body and the Egyptian belief in the **afterlife**.

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1 Roll out a 2½-lb. to 3-lb. **slab** of clay to ¼" thickness.

STEP 2 Using the 10" template at right, cut two sarcophagus shapes out of the clay and set aside. One will be the bottom of the sarcophagus and the other will be the lid.

STEP 3 Gather the remaining clay into a ball and roll it out again so it is ¼" thick x 24" long. Then cut out a 1½" x 24" strip of clay. This piece will be long enough to completely wrap around the entire sarcophagus and form the walls.

STEP 4 **Score, slip,** and attach the wall piece to the inside edge of one of the sarcophagus shapes. This will become the bottom, or container, of your sarcophagus. Slowly build the walls along the perimeter of the sarcophagus shape, keeping the wall piece upright to prevent it from collapsing. Smooth and seal along the edges with a moist sponge where the two pieces have been scored and slip has been applied. Let the container dry and become leather hard before adding details and inscribing the outside surfaces of the walls.

STEP 5 Cut out a ¼" x 15" strip of clay. To create the lid of your sarcophagus, score, slip, and attach this strip onto the second sarcophagus shape a ½" from the edge. This will form a lip along the inside of the lid, which will secure it when it is placed on the bottom of the sarcophagus and make it easy to lift off. Smooth and seal along the edges with a moist sponge where the two pieces join.

Check that the lid and container form a secure fit.



STEP 6 Design the lid and the outside walls to resemble an Ancient Egyptian sarcophagus. Use symbols and hieroglyphics or create a detailed design with your own cartouche. Embellish and inscribe with a clay tool or add extra pieces of leftover clay for a **low relief** effect.

STEP 7 When you are done with the construction of your sarcophagus, check again that the lid fits easily on the container.

You can also create a simple mummy to fit inside of your sarcophagus, or claim that it was raided by a **tomb** robber if you don't. Let the sarcophagus dry until it is ready for **bisque firing** in a kiln.

STEP 8 After the bisque firing, **glaze** your sarcophagus in the colors you like. Return project to the kiln for the final glaze firing.

To achieve a brilliant gold metallic color, paint a gold acrylic paint over areas not glazed after the glaze firing is completed.

LET DRY AND ADMIRE YOUR CREATION

TEMPLATE

Use this template to
complete Step 2.
Sized at 100%.





9728721(B)



Mayco® Stroke & Coat® Kit 1



Mayco® Stroke & Coat® Kit 3



MATERIALS LIST

- Mayco® Stroke & Coat® Kit 1 – Classic, set of 12, pints — 9718087
- Mayco® Stroke & Coat® Kit 3 – Brights, set of 12, pints — 9719292
- Mayco® Stroke & Coat® Accents, 1.25 oz., black — 9728721(B)
- Mayco® 18-Gauge Decorating Applicator — 9715007
- Sargent Art® Metallic Acrylic, 8 oz.
Antique Gold — 9721966(A)
Aztec Gold — 9721966(B)
Silver — 9721966(F)
- AMACO® No. 25 White Art Clay, 25-lb. carton, moist (approx. 3 lbs. per student is needed) — 0800241
- Royal Brush® Potter's Select™ Sculpt Tool Bonus Pack — 9724784
- Clay Slabmaking Kit — 9725632
- Royal Brush® Clear Choice™ Ceramic Combo Brush Set — 9742734
- Sarcophagus Template, 10" (included in lesson plan)



9715007



9724784

VOCABULARY/GLOSSARY

- **afterlife** – life after death
- **mummy** – a dead body that has been preserved
- **sarcophagus** – a stone or wooden container in which the mummy was placed
- **hieroglyphic** – Egyptian picture language meaning “sacred language” picture used for writing
- **cartouche** – an oval frame around inscribed Egyptian hieroglyphics used to indicate a royal name
- **Pharaoh** – an Ancient Egyptian ruler
- **tomb** – a room used for burial
- **low relief** – design elements that are slightly raised from the surface
- **score** – scratching the surface of the clay with a tool where it will be joined to another piece of clay
- **slip** – a mixture of clay and water with the consistency of mustard that acts like glue
- **bisque** – an unglazed, fired piece of clay
- **fire** – the process of heating pottery at a very high temperature inside a kiln
- **slab** – a flat, even piece of clay used for hand-building a ceramic project
- **glaze** – paint used for clay projects that is fired to become a glass-like coating
- **kiln** – special oven in which clay projects are heated to become pottery



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