



THE BEANEY  
HOUSE OF ART  
& KNOWLEDGE

# Make Your Own Egyptian Mummy

Whilst the museum is temporarily closed we thought it would be interesting to take inspiration from our Ancient Egyptian collection and ask you to take an imaginary journey with us to ancient Egypt!



## Who were the ancient Egyptians?

The ancient Egyptians lived in Egypt, a country in North East Africa, 5000 - 2000 years ago.

They built great cities beside the River Nile and were ruled by powerful pharaohs, (the ancient Egyptian kings and queens).

The ancient Egyptians invented a writing system called hieroglyphs and worshiped over 2,000 gods and goddesses!



The Ancient Egyptian Case, The Beaney

The ancient Egyptians made amazing objects and built incredible structures like the pyramids. Some of the pyramids became tombs where the bodies of pharaohs were kept when they died.

The ancient Egyptians believed in an afterlife and spent a lot of time planning for their death and what came after.



They preserved the bodies of important people by mummifying them...

**This is where you come in!**

(Don't worry, we aren't going to ask you to mummify any of the important people in your home!)

You are going to imagine you are in ancient Egypt and are going to act out the mummification process. So you should let someone know what you are doing and ask permission to use anything you need.

# So, what's a mummy?

A mummy is a dead body that has been preserved through a particular process, either deliberately or environmentally.

## What usually happens to dead bodies?

Like any living thing, unless it's preserved, a dead body eventually decays. This happens because insects, bacteria and other micro-organisms gradually break down the natural material that we are all made up of.



Usually only the skeleton and teeth are left.

## What other kinds of mummy are there?

Mummies have been found all over the world! Sometimes mummies are made by people.

Sometimes they are made accidentally like those found preserved in ice or in waterlogged soils where there is no bacteria to break them down.

## Did the ancient Egyptians only mummify people?

No! The ancient Egyptians mummified all sorts of different creatures. Cats were especially sacred and a huge number of mummified cats have been discovered in Egypt.

# Take a closer look at our Mummified Cat at The Beaney!

Period: 3,000 to about 400 AD

Location: Egypt, Africa

Material: Cat, Linen Cloth

The cat's front legs were laid by its side, and its back legs tucked up against its tummy. Bandages have been removed from the cat's nose and mouth and you can still see its sharp teeth, fur and whiskers.



Many cats were mummified in the Egyptian city of Bubastis and then buried in special cat cemeteries.

Bubastis was the centre of worship of the cat goddess Bastet.

## Who was Bastet?

Bastet was the ancient Egyptian cat goddess. She was believed to be a protector of the home and children. As we are all spending so much time in our homes recently, it's the perfect time to think about her!



So you've learned some things about ancient Egyptian mummies.

## NOW IT'S TIME TO MAKE YOUR OWN MUMMY!



**Find a soft toy or something similar!**

...as long as it's not a real animal!

It doesn't have to be a cat. The ancient Egyptians mummified all sorts of animals from snakes and beetles to hippos and crocodiles!

You'll also need something like bandages!

### You could use...

- Strips of paper or tissue paper
- First Aid bandages
- Socks
- Rags
- Ribbons



**Remember, make sure you tell an adult what you are doing and ask permission to use anything that you are going to need for this activity!**

# EMBALMING

In ancient Egypt the body is left in salt for 40 days, then the organs are taken out including the intestines, lungs, liver and stomach. Each of these organs is preserved in a canopic jar.

## Canopic jars

These jars were made especially to house the preserved organs. Each had the head of a different Egyptian god, one of the sons of Horus. This one from The Beaney depicts Imsety, who would look after the liver.



**But there are two important organs still left in the body! What happened to those?**

**The brain** was pulled out through the nose using a hook! Sound messy? Today we know the brain is hugely important, but the Egyptians didn't value the brain very highly at all. After it was extracted it was simply thrown away!

**The heart** however was thought to be hugely important and it was left inside the body. Before passing on to the afterlife the heart was weighed against a special feather. If your heart was heavier than the feather it meant that you had not lived a good life, you could not pass onto the afterlife and your heart was devoured by the goddess Ammit!



Remove all the organs from your animal! (remember to leave the heart... and that this is just pretend!)

If you're feeling particularly gruesome why not make some organs using play-doh or plasticine and store them in jars!?

# WRAPPING

It's time to start wrapping your mummy! It's harder than you might think so you may need some help with this.

Tuck in your toy's arms, legs, flippers, fins, tails (or anything else it has) and start wrapping the bandages tightly around it.



When you get to the end of a bandage, tuck it tightly into the folds of the other bandages



You might want to finish off the wrappings with a crisscross like The Beaney's Mummified Cat.

Make sure that the bandages are tight and that you can't see any of the toy underneath!



# AMULETS

**Did you know?** The ancient Egyptians often tucked magical amulets carefully between the bandages of mummies. The museum has lots of amulets, some of them depict different gods, like Bes (right)



Many of our amulets are in the form of scarab beetles (below). The scarab was very important to the Ancient Egyptians, they associated the scarab with the sun, rebirth and renewal. This is the reason they are often found with mummies.

## Find some magic amulets!

You might not have any ancient amulets lying around but you could use something else...

- Beads
- Jewelry
- Small toys
- A shell or stone\*

\*In ancient Egypt, certain things found in nature, such as shells, were thought to be imbued with magical power and would be used as amulets too.



**If you have some sort of modelling clay like plasticine or play-doh why not make your own amulets using ours as inspiration!**



Ancient Egyptian amulets are often blue or green because they are made from a material called Faience.

**BLUE** and **GREEN** were associated with life and regeneration.

They also made amulets from precious stones, metals and other materials.

**RED** was associated with protecting against dangerous forces. **GOLD** , **SILVER** and **AMBER** were appreciated for their strength and durability.

## THE MASK (OPTIONAL)

Sometimes when mummifying an animal, like a cat, the ancient Egyptians would finish it by making a mask to cover the mummy's head or they would draw on features over the bandages.

You could make a mask from paper, or even create one from paper mache or some kind of modelling material!



### **Now you need to test your mummification skills!**

Hold your mummy in both hands

Check that you can't see any of the toy underneath the bandages.

Now gently throw it into the air (not too high!)

If your mummy's bandages stay in place and no amulets fall out then...



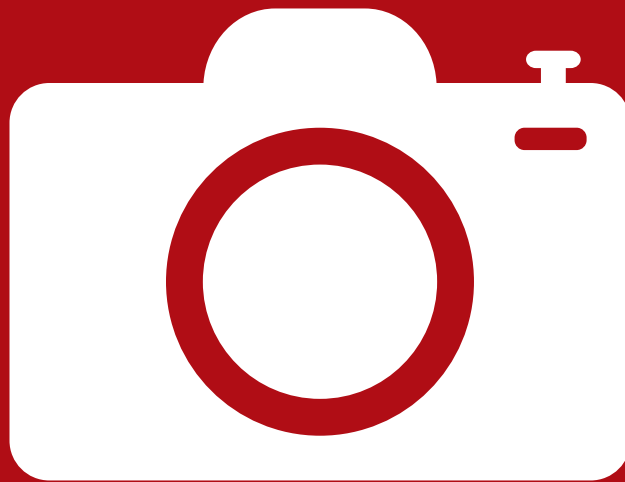
# CONGRATULATIONS!

You're now an expert embalmer!

We are looking forward to welcoming you back to The Beaney when we reopen.

In the meantime, we'd love to see your mummified creations!

Be sure to take a few photos and share them with us.



 @TheBeaney

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If you took part in our Make Your Own Cabinet of Curiosities activity then your mummy would be the perfect thing to add to your cabinet!

We have a very special project planned for when we welcome visitors back to The Beaney, it's called:

## **Museum of You**

#Museumofyou

More information about how you can be involved coming soon!