Ancient Egyptians

Learning Objective:
To be able to make a papyrus picture.

NEXT

Do you know what papyrus is and what it was used for by the ancient Egyptians?

Think, pair, share your ideas.

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The papyrus plant was very useful to the ancient Egyptians. They used the dried reeds to make mats, baskets, sandals, rope, mattresses and many other things; they burnt the roots as fuel; some Egyptians even ate the plant.

However, its most important use was as paper. In fact, we get the word 'paper' from the word 'papyrus'. The ancient Egyptians were the first people to use anything like this to write and draw on.

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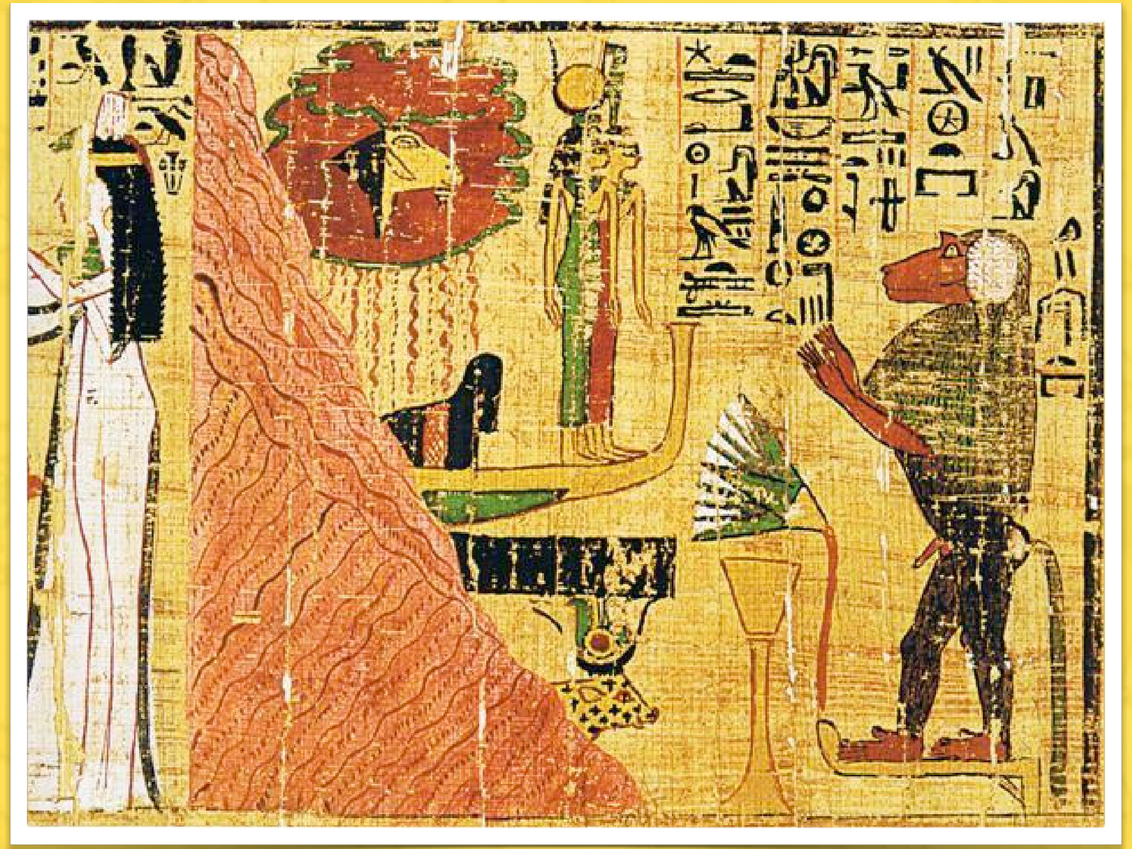
Using papyrus to write on completely changed how people kept important records and information because papyrus was very light and could be carried from place to place easily. Papyrus in this form became the most important use of the plant.



Examples of ancient Egyptian papyri

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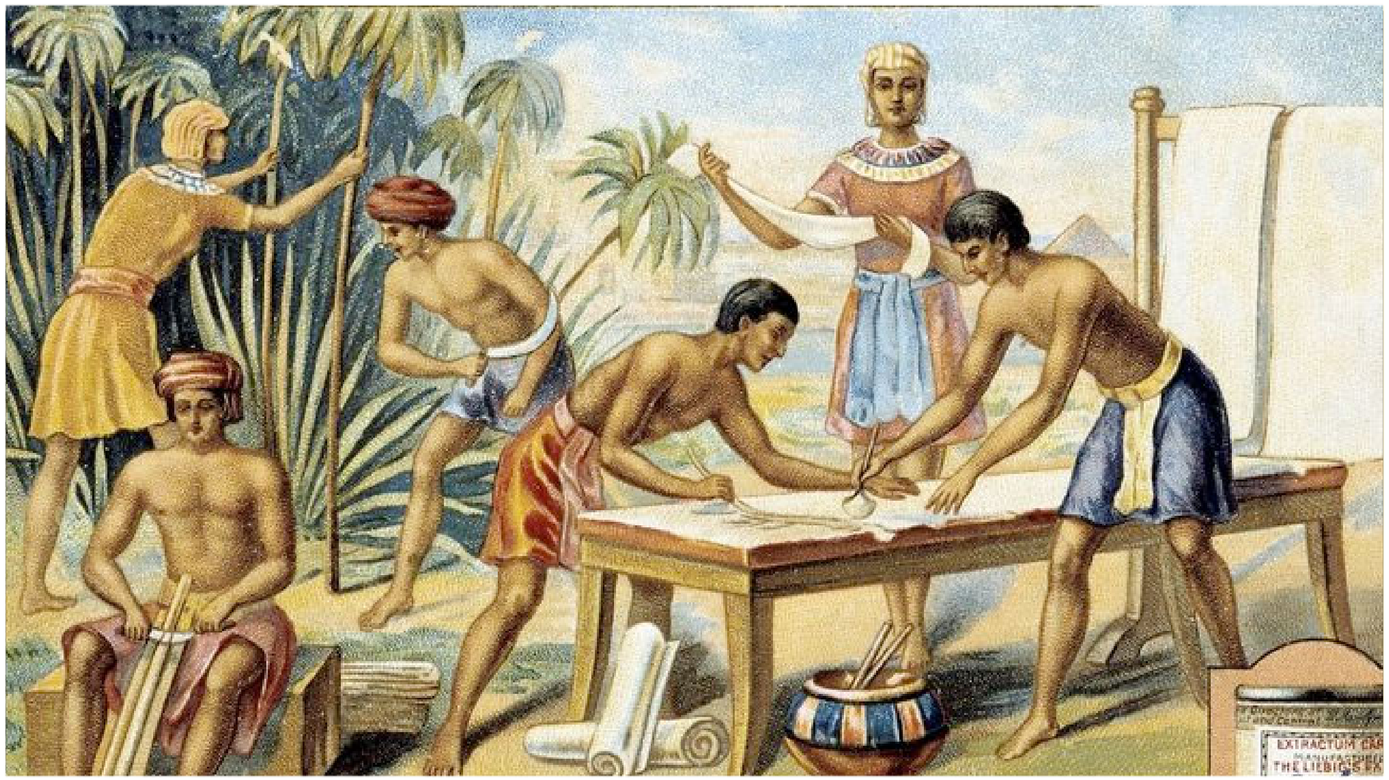
Papyrus was made by splitting the stems of the plant into thin strips and soaking the strips in water. The strips were then placed on top of each other in a criss-cross pattern. The sheet would then be hit with a mallet to bond the fibres together and then left for a few days to dry with heavy weights on the top. Once dry, the sheet was polished with a stone to make it smooth and ready to use.



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How to make papyrus paper

Tear strips of brown parcel paper into strips.

Lay a piece of kitchen towel or greaseproof paper onto the work surface. Mix 50% PVA glue and 50% water in a pot to dip the strips of paper into.

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Dip the strips of paper into the glue mixture and shake off the excess. Lay a layer of strips vertically and then a layer horizontally over the top.

Once you have at least 2 layers of paper, leave the papyrus to dry.

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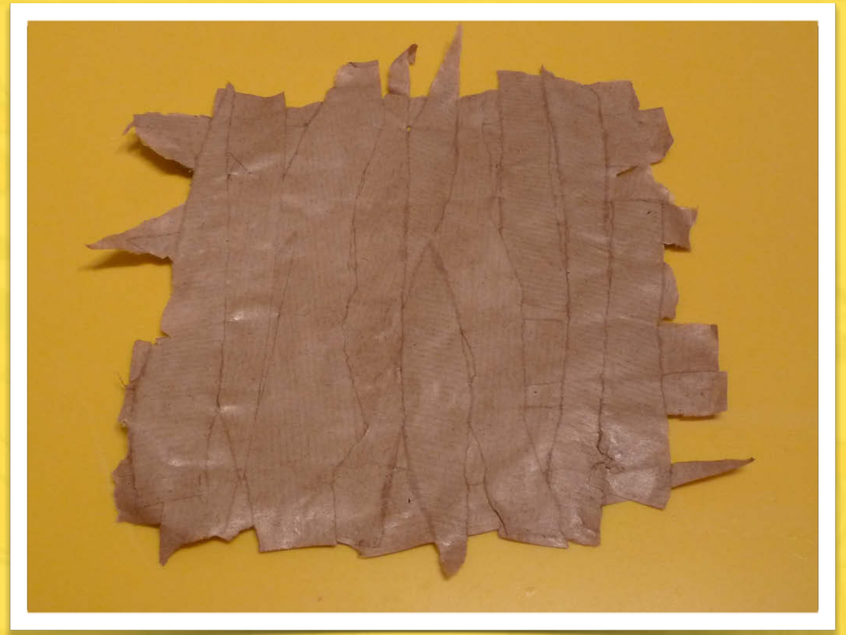

Once the glue has completely dried, tear off the kitchen towel from underneath.

Now you can draw your Egyptian art onto your papyrus! Felt-tips work well but you could paint your picture too.

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What kind of picture do you think you could create on your piece of papyrus?

Think, pair, share your ideas.

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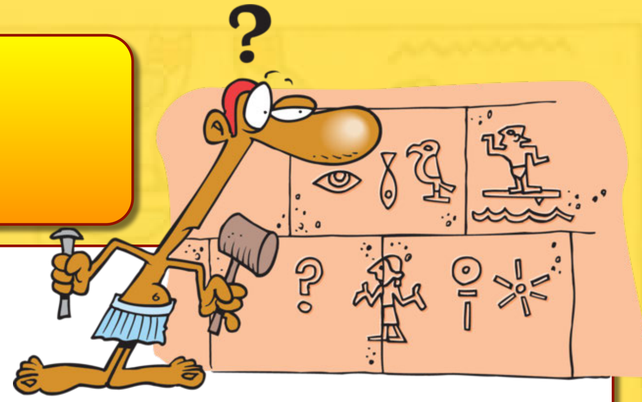
What ideas did you come up with?



Ideas:

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