

Ancient Egypt Handling Box



National
Museums
Scotland

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Teacher Notes

Welcome to the National Museum of Scotland.

This box contains handling objects and resources designed to support learning about ancient Egypt. It contains **33** real and replica objects relating to the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland.

The objects are grouped into four themes:

1. **Life**
2. **Mummification**
3. **Afterlife**
4. **Egyptology**

This Teachers Resource Pack for the ancient Egypt handling collection is also available to download from our website:
www.nms.ac.uk/schools/visit-our-museums/national-museum-of-scotland/self-led-handling-boxes/



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Introduction

The ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland comprises around 6,000 items, including many unique and internationally significant objects, such as royal statuary, reliefs, mummified people and animals, coffins, papyri, furniture, jewellery and textiles.

Ancient Egypt was one of the earliest and longest-lived civilisations, spanning almost 4000 years of history. The River Nile and the surrounding desert shaped ancient Egyptian culture and how they saw the world. Egypt's success derived from its natural resources, such as fertile agriculture from the annual flood, stone for building monuments, and precious gold. The Egyptian empire grew to stretch from Nubia in the south to Syria in the north, but over time its power waned and for almost a third of its history it was ruled by some of its various former territories. Even in ancient times though, Egypt's awe-inspiring monuments, including pyramids and temples, drew tourists from throughout the ancient Mediterranean.

Our ancient Egyptian collections were begun in 1819, and many of the objects derive from archaeological excavations by Alexander Henry Rhind (Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries Scotland, the Egypt Exploration Society, British School of Archaeology in Egypt, and Oxford and Liverpool Universities). The museum also has the only intact ancient Egyptian royal burial group outside of Egypt.

The ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland are represented in this informative and interactive learning resource. Use the handling objects to create an exciting and educational experience for your group and discover all the wonders of ancient Egypt.



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Handling Box layout

Top layer



Bottom layer



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Ancient Egypt Handling Box Inventory

Life 7 Objects

1	Wooden sandals
2	Mirror
3	Palette and Pens
4	Papyrus
5	Toy Mouse
6	Clay Vessel
7	Mallet

Afterlife 8 Objects

1	Necklace
2	Osiris Figure
3	Shabti Figure
4	Faience Tile
5	Clay Tile
6	Stela
7	Clay Vessel
8	Fragment of bread

Mummification 9 Objects

1	Canopic Jar and Lid
2	Mummification Tool
3	Aroma Unit: Bee's Wax
4	Aroma Unit: Frankincense
5	Amulet
6	3D Printed Amulet
7	Eye of Horus
8	Scarab
9	Scarab Mould

Egyptology 9 Objects

1	Archaeologist's toolkit	Leather Tool Roll
		Trowel
		Steel Ruler
		Hand Tape
		Brushes x2
		Plastic tools x4
		Photo Scale
		Find Bags x6
2		Faience Beads
3		Scarab Beetle
4	Broken Objects	Shabti
5		Hapy Amulet
6		Beads
7	Mystery Objects	Necklace
8		Lotus bead
9		Sekhmet Statue

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Good Handling Guide

Our handling resources are available for groups to use, to help widen access to the collections of National Museums Scotland. They allow groups to handle and use a variety of real and replica objects, to learn from and enjoy. It is vital for each group to help keep the objects in good condition so we can continue to offer high quality resources. Many of the objects are thousands of years old, extremely fragile, and irreplaceable due to their age; therefore we have put together these guidelines for working with the objects to help you understand the appropriate way to handle

them. Our replica objects are also fragile and have been carefully created to ensure they are as similar to ancient objects as possible, therefore we ask you to take care with these. Inappropriate handling or moving may result in damage. These objects are here for you, and future groups to enjoy.

Please read the following points carefully, and ensure you discuss this with your group prior to each handling session and activity. Each handling session and activity should be planned ahead to ensure the handling guidelines are observed.

- No food or drink should be consumed near the objects.
- All pupils are asked to wash their hands before and after each handling session. This is to protect the pupils and the objects.
- All sealed boxes must be kept sealed and not opened. This is due to the fragility of the objects.
- Always hold objects over a table, and use both hands.
- Don't touch objects, or point at them, with pencils, pens or other sharp objects.
- Check the objects at the start and the end of each session.
- Please report any missing or broken items.
- Handle one object at a time, using both hands, even if the objects are small.
- Always set objects down away from the edge of a table.
- Always lower an object gently to avoid chipping the bottom or corners.
- Ceramics and glass are easily broken so extra care should be taken when moving pieces.



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Object Information Cards

Each object has an *Object Information Card* which will provide information on the item, topics for discussion, and information on related objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland. **Real, ancient objects are in highlighted bold.**

The objects are grouped into the following four themes:

Life

- Wooden sandals
- Mirror
- Palette and Pens
- Papyrus
- Toy Mouse
- Clay Vessel
- Mallet

Afterlife

- **Necklace**
- **Osiris Figure**
- Information Card – *The Osiris Myth*
- **Shabti**
- Stela
- **Clay Vessel**
- **Fragment of bread**

Mummification

- **Canopic Jar and Lid**
- Mummification Tool
- **Amulet**
- Information Card – *Mummified Woman*
- 3D Printed Amulet
- **Eye of Horus**
- Scarab and Scarab Mould

Egyptology

- Archaeologist's toolkit
- Information Card – *Alexander Henry Rhind*
- Faience Beads
- **3 Broken Objects**
- **3 Mystery Objects**
- Scarab Beetle

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Wooden sandals *replicas*



- Sandals were made from a variety of materials such as wood, soft leather, papyrus, palm fibre and reeds.
- Wooden sandals were sometimes made for placing in a tomb for the afterlife. Wood may have been viewed as longer-lasting and more suitable for eternity, but the wooden sole was hard and would not have been practical for everyday life. Like many funerary objects, they would have been magically-activated and made useable in the afterlife.
- Most Egyptians went barefoot, but the wealthy wore sandals made of papyrus reeds or leather.



Look at the shape and style of the sandals. Do they look like shoes we wear today?



Feel the surface of the sandals. Do you think they would have been comfortable to wear?



Do you think that the materials used and the style of the sandals are well suited to the climate of ancient Egypt?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Sandals of wood, with leather straps coated with white plaster: Ancient Egyptian, Sedment (Sidmant el-Gabal), Egypt, First Intermediate Period, c. 2160–2025 BC



Statuette (tomb-model) in painted wood depicting a man squatting cutting out a pair of sandals from leather: Ancient Egyptian, from Beni Hasan, Middle Kingdom, c. 2050–1850 BC



Sandal made of basket work from papyrus reeds: Ancient Egyptian, Sedment, Egypt, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, c.1550–1295 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Mirror *replica*



- Ancient Egyptians used mirrors just like we do today.
- Mirrors were made of bronze, which is a mixture of copper and tin. They were polished to shine so you could see your reflection.
- Mirrors would be used when applying kohl as eyeliner using small sticks.
- Both men and women wore makeup in ancient Egyptian times. This was a way to look nice and show they were wealthy. Eye makeup may have also helped protect their eyes from the sun and infection.
- The handle is in the shape of a papyrus plant. Papyrus was a symbol of life and also linked to Hathor, the goddess of beauty.



What shape and size is the mirror? Is it easy to see your reflection?



Lift the mirror and feel its weight. Do you think it would be easy to use?



What are the similarities and differences to mirrors we use today?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Circular, domed mirror of copper with a tinned surface. Mirror-case in turned brown wood: Ancient Egyptian, Hawara, excavated by Petrie, Roman Period, 2nd century AD



Bronze mirror with a flat plate and handle in the form of a standing woman: Ancient Egyptian, possibly New Kingdom 1550–1069 BC



Mirror in bronze with traces of gilding. Consists of a rounded plate fitted into a handle in the form of a papyrus stalk: Ancient Egyptian, 18th Dynasty c.1550–1292 BC.



Kohl tube made of wood with five internal cylindrical compartments: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1069 BC



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Palette *replica*



- Ancient Egyptian scribes used palettes and pens.
- Palettes were made of local wood. Pens were made from reeds, which grow in the river Nile.
- Wealthy scribes who were closer to the king would have palettes made from more expensive materials such as ivory.
- The palette held dry cakes of ink, one red and one black. The reed pens would be dipped in water and then onto the ink cakes.
- The reed pens would be stored in a narrow space down the centre of the palette.
- These tools were used to write a variety of documents such as accounts, poetry, stories, criminal disputes and personal letters.
- Only around one in a hundred ancient Egyptians could read and write.
- Written documents have helped Egyptologists to learn about life in ancient Egypt.
- A scribe was an important profession in ancient Egypt.



The hieroglyphs decorating the palette translate as the name of King Ramesses II.



Why do you think scribes were important in ancient Egypt? What clues are there in the scribe's equipment?

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Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Rectangular scribal palette in ivory with two wells to hold red and black pigments and a central cavity for holding pens, inscribed with the prenomen of King Amenhotep I and offering formulae for the scribe Thutmose: Ancient Egyptian, 18th Dynasty, c. 1550–1292 BC



Scribe's palette of wood, painted with hieroglyphs on the underside: Ancient Egyptian, Sedment (Sidmant el-Gabal), Egypt, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, c. 1550–1292 BC



Statuette in painted wood of a scribe squatting with a writing board before him, fragment from a larger tomb-model: Ancient Egyptian, from Beni Hasan, Middle Kingdom, c. 2050–1850 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Papyrus *replica*



- Papyrus was expensive to make so ancient Egyptian scribes only used it for official documents.
- Papyrus was made from sliced and interwoven stems of the papyrus plant. Strips of wet papyrus were laid on top of each other at right angles, to make sheets. Sheets were then pasted into long rolls laid flat, slightly overlapping and hammered into a single sheet, dried and polished.
- Sherds of pottery and limestone fragments were sometimes written on, for teaching and unofficial communication.



What colour is the papyrus? Does it look like paper we use today?



Touch the rough surface of the papyrus. What do you think it would have been like to write on?



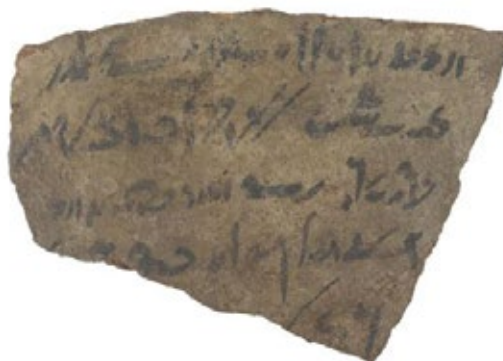
Why would the ancient Egyptians have made their paper from papyrus, instead of making it from wood like we do today?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Funerary papyrus of the Lady of the House and Temple-Singer of Amun, Nes-nebt-Ashru, unrolled and glazed; Ancient Egyptian, Thebes, 3rd Intermediate Period, c. 1069–715 BC



Ostrakon of a red potsherd with pink-buff slip written in black ink on recto only; Ancient Egyptian, Ptolemaic Period



Sheet of papyrus written in black ink with fifteen lines of hieratic script consisting of a chapter from the Book of the Dead; Ancient Egyptian, 3rd Intermediate Period, 21st Dynasty, c. 1069–945 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Toy Mouse *replica*



- The toy mouse in our ancient Egyptian collections dates to the New Kingdom, around 3500 years ago.
- Children's toys were often made from scraps of clay, linen or wood. Toys like balls or dolls have been discovered by archaeologists. Some lucky children had things like toy crocodiles or horses which had moving parts. Older children and adults enjoyed fishing, wrestling and dancing.
- Board games also existed in ancient Egypt, one game called "Senet" was particularly popular. Tutankhamun was buried with four sets. It was the ancient early version of the modern board game backgammon.



What different parts of the toy mouse can you see? Do you have any toys like this?



Can you guess which part is made of wood and which part is made of clay?



How would you feel if you discovered an object like this?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Toy mouse in dark grey clay coated with remains of a brown pigment and red blobs, with a wooden stick for the tail and a moveable wooden jaw: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c.1550–1069 BC



Portion of relief in limestone showing the Vizier Paser seated in a kiosk playing senet: Ancient Egyptian, Thebes, 19th Dynasty, c. 1279–1213 BC



Wooden toy top with iron peg: Ancient Egyptian, Middle Egypt, Oxyrhynchus (Behnasa), Roman Period 30 BC–AD 395

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Clay Vessel *replica*



- This is a replica Egyptian clay vessel. They would have been used by the Egyptians to hold liquid, for example beer, wine or milk.
- This would have been made by moulding wet clay into the right shape, and then firing it to make it hard. Sometimes, vessels like this would have been glazed or engraved for decoration.
- These are common finds in ancient Egyptian burials. The Egyptians believed the dead needed food and drink in the afterlife, so they often placed vessels in tombs.



What size and shape is the vessel?



What does the clay vessel feel like? Do you think an ancient Egyptian vessel would feel like this if it was discovered today?



What similarities are there to what we use to drink from today?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Jar of red pottery which has the remains on the surface of a net bag, woven to imitate bead-work, in which it was originally contained: Ancient Egyptian, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, 2nd Intermediate Period, 17th Dynasty, c.1585–1545 BC

Flask of red burnished pottery, tear drop shape: Ancient Egyptian, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, 2nd Intermediate Period, 17th Dynasty, c. 1585–1545 BC



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Life

Mallet *replica*



- These types of mallet were probably used by masons.
- They would be used to hit another tool, perhaps a chisel or something similar.
- On the ancient mallets in our collections you can see which part of the mallet was used to strike the other tool.
- Mallets were heavy and made from wood.



Can you describe the different parts of the mallet?



How heavy is the mallet? What texture is the material it is made from?



How easy would it be to use as a tool?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Mason's mallet of wood, left by Ramesside workmen: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Deir el-Bahari, 19th Dynasty, c. 1295–1186 BC



Wooden mallet with large head, showing the results of use over time: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Deir el-Bahari, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1186 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Mummification

Canopic Jar and Lid *real*



This is a real ancient Egyptian canopic jar, please handle with care.

- During the process of mummification the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines were mummified and stored in specific canopic jars (c. 1550-1186 BC).
- Over time, as tomb reuse and robbery became more frequent, the organs would be wrapped and placed back inside the body for safety (c. 1069–656 BC).
- The ancient Egyptians believed that this would ensure the person was complete in the next world.
- All the other internal organs were not saved, apart from the heart which was always kept within the body, as it was believed to be the seat all of thought and feeling, and was needed for the judgment of the dead.
- Each jar was protected by one of the four sons of Horus.
 - The liver would be placed in a human headed jar (Imsety)
 - The lungs would be placed in an ape headed jar (Hapy)
 - The stomach would be placed in a jackal headed jar (Duamutef)
 - The intestines would be placed in a falcon headed jar (Qebehsenuef)
- This ancient Egyptian canopic jar is made from limestone.



Examine the lid of the canopic jar – can you work out what it is and which god it represents?



How heavy is the canopic jar?



Look for the markings inside the canopic jar. What do you think these are?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Canopic jars in white limestone with carved stoppers:
Ancient Egyptian, Giza, Late Period, c. 656–332 BC



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Mummification

Mummification tool *replica*



- A tool similar to this replica would have been used during the mummification process. A metal tool with a hook at the end could be used to remove the brain during mummification.
- It would be inserted into the nose and moved around the skull until the brains were mashed up. The brains could then be drained out of the nose although there is sometimes evidence that some brain would remain.
- There were other ways to remove the brain, including entering the skull through the eye orbits, back of the palette of the mouth or through the back of the neck.
- The brain was not always removed during mummification, as the practice changed over time.
- Scientific examination has shown that royalty rarely had their brain removed through the nose. This is because they wanted to keep their nose in perfect condition, maintaining their looks in the afterlife.
- Only the wealthy could afford to be mummified. Ordinary people were often simply wrapped in linen and buried in the ground. Sometimes the hot desert sand dried bodies naturally.



What do you notice about the top of the tool. Why was the end hooked?



Is the tool comfortable to hold? Could you perform delicate operations with it?



Why would ancient Egyptians have wanted to remove the person's brains?



**Use the aroma units here.
Can you guess what the smells are?
Can you think how smells were used during the mummification process?**

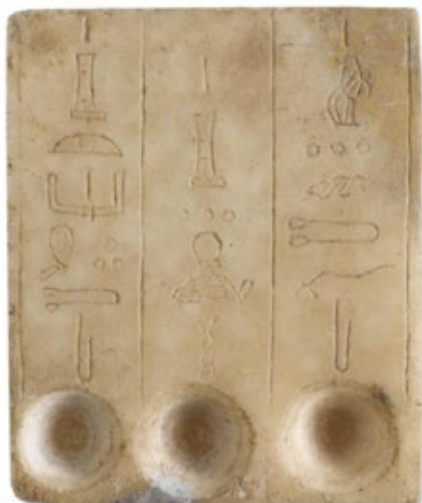
Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Organs were traditionally removed via the left-side of the torso. The Eye of Horus amulet was placed on the incision to heal it, so the body would be whole again. Silver, Egypt, c. 1069–656 BC



Copper knife with lunate blade and handle expanding towards the tip: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Abydos, Middle Kingdom or later.



Calcite offering slab for unguent; rectangular in shape with three hemi-spherical cavities along the upper edge: Ancient Egyptian, Old Kingdom

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Mummification

Amulet *real*



This is a real ancient Egyptian amulet, please handle with care.

- Amulets in ancient Egypt were worn by the living as protective jewellery, and also wrapped into the bandages of the dead.
- The embalming priests recited spells and prayers, whilst placing amulets between the bandages and on the person, to protect the dead on the journey and in the afterlife.
- Different shapes of amulets offered different forms of protection.
- Ancient Egyptians believed that amulets could protect the wearer against illness and evil, or give them strength and bravery.
- During the later years of mummification when the internal organs were mummified and returned to the body, amulets representing the four Sons of Horus would be wrapped with the mummified organs so they would be protected for eternity, even though they were not kept in canopic jars.



What colour is the amulet? What do you think it is made from?



Can you feel the different textures and the small holes in the amulet? You can also see the mark of a hole where it is broken at the feet. What do these tell us about how they might have been worn and used?



Who might have worn or used this amulet? Do you have anything that you keep or wear for luck, just as the ancient Egyptians did?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Amulet in pale blue faience in the form of the goddess Taweret as a hippopotamus: Ancient Egyptian, Late Period, c. 656–332 BC



A winged scarab in blue-green faience with a plain base: Ancient Egyptian, Late Period, c. 656–332 BC

Amulet in blue and white striped glass in the form of an Ib-heart: Ancient Egyptian, possibly Middle Egypt, Amarna, 18th Dynasty



Amulet in carnelian in the shape of the djed-pillar (backbone of Osiris): Ancient Egyptian, possibly New Kingdom, c. 1550–1292 BC



Mummification

Information Card

Mummified Woman

This woman was part of the family of a high-ranking official called Montsuef. The family lived through the reign of Egypt's last pharaoh Cleopatra. Cleopatra was descended from one of the generals of Alexander the Great, who had brought Greek rule to Egypt in 332 BC.

Montsuef's family witnessed Egypt's conquest by the first Roman Emperor Augustus. Under Roman rule, classical influence increased, but southern Egypt where Montsuef lived held on to many Egyptian traditions. Montsuef and his family came from Armant, 12 miles south of Thebes, but they chose the ancient, sacred Theban cemetery as their final resting place. They added an iron lock in order to securely open and close the Tomb. Over time, eight adults and three children were added to the lower chambers before the Tomb fell out of use.

The unique objects from their burials combine new classical influences with traditional Egyptian funerary practices. Items such as the funerary canopy and bilingual papyri reinvent ancient traditions and reassert the family's Egyptian identity in their search for eternal life.

CT scanning has allowed us to see beneath her wrappings. She was five feet two inches tall. Her teeth and bones tell us that she was aged between 20–35. She has a funerary papyrus placed at her right-hand side.

Mummified woman, wrapped in linen bandages coated with a thick layer of black resin embedded with stone, opaque glass and gilded amulets: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, excavated by Alexander Henry Rhind in the tomb of Montsuef, Early Roman Period, c. 30 BC–AD 20



Ancient Egypt handling collection

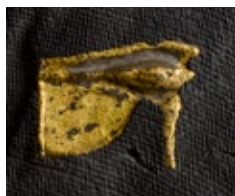
Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Amulets were placed on this mummified woman's body to protect her and help her reach the afterlife. Each shape, material and colour has a different magical power.

Djed-pillar, the backbone of Osiris: stability



Eye of Horus: healing and protection



Anubis, the jackal god of mummifying: preservation of the body



Winged scarab, the new-born sun: rebirth



Ba-bird (spirit) holding a sail and an ankh-symbol: breath and life



Sons of Horus: protecting the mummification incision and internal organs



Lotus flower: rebirth



Montsuef was an important person in southern Egypt. His huge wooden canopy is shaped like a temple. It protected him and made him more like the god Osiris. This canopy was excavated by Alexander Henry Rhind. Sycamore wood, Thebes, Egypt, 9 BC

Mummification

3D Printed Amulet *replica*



- CT scanning revealed an amulet hidden within the mummy-wrappings of this woman's head.
- The amulet is made from a thin sheet of metal, probably either silver or gold.
- The outline of a scarab beetle with wings is visible, possibly created by hammering the reverse of the metal plaque to create a raised design on the front.
- 3D printing was used to create this replica.
- The winged scarab represents the sun god and hope for rebirth in the afterlife.
- Another similar winged scarab is visible on the surface of the wrappings, almost immediately above the hidden amulet.



Can you see how this amulet would sit on the mummified woman's head?



Can you feel the outline of the winged scarab beetle?



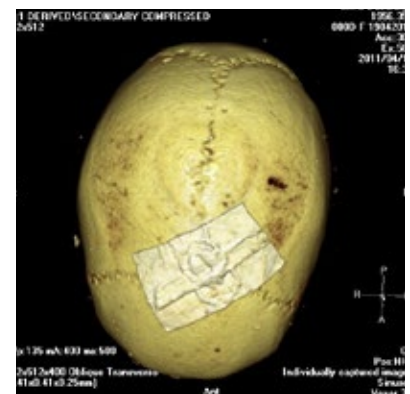
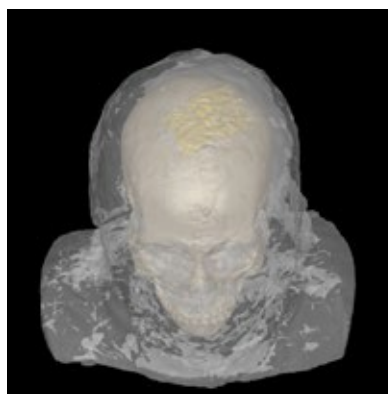
This is an exact replica of the amulet beneath the mummified woman's wrappings. Have you ever seen anything else that has been 3D printed?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



A computerized tomography (CT) scan combines a series of X-ray images using computer processing to create cross-sectional views of inside the body. CT scanning provides more detailed information than ordinary X-rays. Scanning can inform us about a mummified person's age, sex, height, health at time of death and how they were mummified, as well as revealing any objects hidden within the wrappings.



The CT scans images show that within the wrappings there is the body of a fully grown person, lying with their arms at their sides. The preservation is good, the body was embalmed to a high standard. The scans revealed that an amulet had been placed on top of the woman's head before her body was wrapped.

Mummification

Eye of Horus *real*



This is a real ancient Egyptian Eye of Horus, please handle with care.

- The Eye of Horus was one of the most powerful amulets in ancient Egyptian times. It is also known as the *wedjat* or *udjat* eye, which means *flourishing* or *healthy*.
- Horus was the god who protected the Pharaoh. In one myth Horus was said to have lost his left eye in battle. It was later found and returned to him, so it symbolises being made whole again after death.
- This amulet is made of faience, which is a mixture of sand, lime and natron (a type of salt) mixed with water to form a paste. The paste could be moulded into different shapes, then glazed and fired so that the faience would harden and the outer surface would become shiny.
- The blue green colour comes from adding a mineral called copper oxide to the glaze before it is fired.



Can you see the shape of an eye?



Is faience light or heavy? Is it rough or smooth?



Why would an eye be a good symbol for a protective amulet?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Amulet in blue faience in the form of a *wadjet* eye with eyebrow and pupil marked in black: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1186 BC

Pottery mould for *wadjet* or Eye of Horus: Ancient Egyptian, Lower Egypt, possibly Tell Basta (Bubastis), Lower Egypt, Roman Period, 30 BC – AD 395



Faience amulet in the form of a *wadjet* eye with right eyebrow and pupil shown in black: Ancient Egyptian, Late Period, c. 656–332 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Mummification

Scarab and Scarab Mould *replica*



- The scarab was one of the most powerful amulets in ancient Egyptian times.
- Scarabs are a type of dung beetle. The ancient Egyptians observed scarab beetles rolling balls of dung and associated this with the sun travelling through the sky.
- Scarabs were often wrapped into the bandages of mummified people. In later Egyptian times, a scarab was placed above the heart of the dead person. This heart scarab was to ensure that the heart did not betray the dead person during the judgement ceremony in the afterlife.
- Ancient scarabs are the only amulets that frequently have text written upon the back.
- Scarabs were inscribed with a spell from the Book of the Dead to prevent the heart from giving away any of the dead's past bad deeds.



What size is the scarab? Why do you think they were bigger than the other amulets?



Can you feel the detailed carvings of the scarabs? Think about all the work that must have gone into making these – what does this tell us about how important scarabs were to ancient Egyptians?



Egyptians used the dung beetle to represent their belief about rebirth. Can you think of other stories about animals that have been used to represent beliefs?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Heart scarab in olive green stone with an oval base:
Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1295–1069 BC



Scarab, dark green stone, incised on base with the heart spell (30B) from the Book of the Dead in favour of the workman Meryt: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1295–1069 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Afterlife

Necklace *real*



**This is a real ancient Egyptian necklace
Please do not open or shake this case.**

- Ancient Egyptians wore necklaces like this as jewellery. They also wore bracelets, rings, anklets, earrings, hair bands, and hair pins.
- Important people wore broad collars made of gold and precious stones which fastened at the back of the neck. Ordinary people wore necklaces made of brightly coloured beads.
- Ancient Egyptians believed that jewellery could have protective powers and bring good luck, which is why people were often buried with pieces of jewellery. They also wanted to make sure they looked good in the afterlife.
- Beads were made by moulding a small piece of faience paste around a thread. The beads would then have been glazed and fired, so that the faience hardened and the thread burned away. This left a hole, so that the finished beads could be threaded and made into a necklace.



Can you notice the different colours and shapes of the beads?

Sometimes faience beads were made to look like semi-precious stones.



Why do you think faience might have been made to look like precious stones? Think about what materials might be easy to find in Egypt.

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Bead collar consisting of three rows of polychrome faience beads in the form of flower petals and leaves. Ancient Egyptian, 18th Dynasty, 1550–1069 BC

Broad collar of blue faience beads, reconstructed from ancient and modern restorations: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1069 BC



Necklace consisting of a string of thirty-one blue-green faience ball beads, with two natural shell terminals: Ancient Egyptian, Deir Rifa, Middle Kingdom, 11th–13th Dynasty, c. 2010–1660 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Afterlife

Osiris *real*

This is a real ancient Egyptian Osiris statuette, please handle with care.



- This statuette is made of bronze, which is a mixture of copper and tin.
- Osiris is the god of the dead and the ruler of the afterlife. He is one of the most important gods in ancient Egypt. Osiris is usually shown as a mummified king holding a shepherd's crook and a flail (an agricultural tool), which symbolise his responsibility to guide his people and provide for them.
- Statuettes like this are found in burial chambers, and also in temples and homes. The ancient Egyptians believed that it was important to recognise and worship their gods and goddesses.
- This was probably made using the lost wax method. A figure would be carved from wax, and then covered with clay and fired. As the clay hardened, the wax melted and ran out of a small hole in the clay. Molten bronze would then be poured into the hole left by the wax. The bronze hardened and cooled, and the clay was chipped away to reveal a bronze figure.



Can you spot the rearing cobra at the front of the crown? This is called a *uraeus*, and represents royalty and authority.



What tells you that it might once have been fixed to a wooden base?



Who might have owned statues like these?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Bronze statuette of Osiris. He is shown standing, wrapped tightly as if mummified. He wears a crown known as the *Atef* crown and holds a crook and flail: Ancient Egyptian, Lower Egypt, Saqqara, Late Period, c. 664–332 BC

Afterlife

Information Card

The Osiris myth

According to ancient Egyptian myth, the god Osiris was the first king of Egypt. His brother Seth was jealous and killed Osiris. Seth scattered the pieces of Osiris' body throughout Egypt.

Isis, Osiris' wife, was a powerful goddess of magic. With the help of Nephthys, Osiris' sister, they collected the pieces of his body. With the jackal-god Anubis, they bound and wrapped the body, and then Isis used her magic to bring him back to life. This was the very first mummification.

Having conquered death, Osiris became the god of resurrection and ruled over the afterlife. The son of Osiris and Isis, Horus, avenged his father's death by defeating Seth in a battle for Egypt's throne. Horus became the god of kingship.

These gods played important roles in the rituals surrounding mummification.



Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Mummy shroud of linen painted with a figure of the deceased as the god Osiris. Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, excavated by Alexander Henry Rhind in the tomb of Montsuef, Roman Period

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Afterlife

Shabti *real*



This is a real ancient Egyptian shabti figure, please handle with care.

- A shabti is a small figure of a person, which represents a field worker. They often hold tools and carry a sack or water container.
- Everyone was expected to work in the afterlife, but, if you had lots of shabtis in your tomb, they would magically come to life and do the work for you!
- The hieroglyphs on shabtis are spells which means that the shabti will come to life when needed. The Shabti is to reply “I am here” to any work request. The inscriptions also name the deceased.
- Very important people may have had a shabti figure for every day of the year, together with one overseer for every ten shabtis. This makes a total of 401 figures!
- There are over 200 shabtis in the collections of National Museums Scotland.
- This shabti is made from faience; shabtis were also made from other materials like wood, stone or mud.



Can you see the hairstyle and beard of the shabti? Are these styles common today?

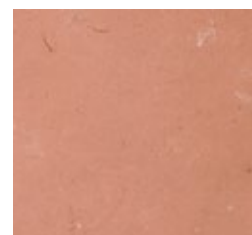
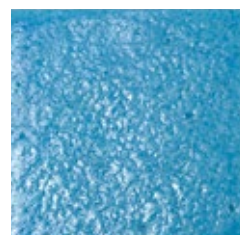


What do you think the hieroglyphs carved into the figure might mean?



What sort of jobs do you think shabtis would be expected to do in the afterlife? What jobs would you want shabtis to do for you?

Use the faience and clay tiles here. Discuss which material you think would have been used to make the shabtis for important ancient Egyptians?



Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Shabti of bright blue faience, dedicated to King Pinudjem I. The figure is shown wearing everyday costume, and carries a whip: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Deir el-Bahri, c. 1070–1032 BC



Sixteen pottery mould-made shabtis, contained in a rectangular wooden shabti box: Ancient Egyptian, Third Intermediate Period, c. 747–656 BC

Afterlife

Wooden Stela *replica*



- This is a replica of a stela in our collections. At the top is a winged sun disk and hieroglyphs reading 'Behdet'. The scene below this shows the deceased offering to Osiris-Khent-Imentiu, winged Isis, and three of the sons of Horus. The five horizontal lines of inscription are almost illegible.
- Stelae were used for lots of different purposes – tombstones, monuments, and boundary markers. This means that they can be different shapes, sizes and colours.
- Stelae usually lay in the innermost part of the tomb. They were often carved and painted with scenes showing the deceased in front of a table of offerings, with representations of family members or servants bringing food and drink. The deceased would often be depicted making offerings to the gods.
- Stelae made it possible for the spirit of the dead to leave the burial chamber, re-enter the chapel, and enjoy the food offerings left by the living. Food was also magically created by the texts and scenes on the stela.



How do you think ancient Egyptians would have made coloured paint?



Can you trace the hieroglyphs with your finger?



What food do you think would be good to have in the afterlife and why?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Painted wooden stela depicting the winged sun disk over a group of divine figures and six lines of text beginning with the hieroglyphs for the offering formula, followed by made-up signs. Collected by Alexander Henry Rhind: Ancient Egyptian, possibly Ptolemaic or Roman period c. 100 BC– AD 100



Limestone stela carved in relief, from the tomb of Mereri, the Count, Overseer of Priests and Guardian of the Temple Cattle, who stands on the left holding a staff and baton. On the right is a prayer to Osiris for funerary offerings: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Dendera, c. 2100 BC



Stela in bright blue glazed faience, showing the Maker of Faience for Amun, Rekh-amun making an offering to Osiris who is seated on a throne: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Thebes, New Kingdom, c. 1295–1186 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Afterlife

Clay vessel *real*

This is real ancient Egyptian clay vessel, please handle with care.



- This is an ancient Egyptian clay vessel. Its small size means it would have been made to represent a plate for use in a tomb rather than to actually use.
- These are common finds in ancient Egyptian burials. The Egyptians believed the dead needed food and drink in the afterlife, so they often placed vessels in tombs.
- The wealthy wanted to take their riches with them and they filled their tombs with all the beautiful things that they enjoyed in life, from jewellery to furniture. Some economised by making miniature versions for burial.
- This would have been made by moulding wet clay into the right shape, and then firing it to make it hard. Sometimes, vessels like this would have been glazed or engraved for decoration.



What size and shape is the vessel? Do you think these would be practical in real life?



Feel the surface of the vessel. Why do you think it feels like this?



What similarities are there to what we use to eat from today?

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Small bowl or shallow cup of red pottery: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, 2nd Intermediate Period, 17th Dynasty, c. 1585–1545 BC



Shallow bowl or lid of red pottery: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, 2nd Intermediate Period, 17th Dynasty, c. 1585–1545 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Afterlife

Fragment of bread *real*

Please do not open or shake this case.

This is real ancient Egyptian bread, please handle with care.



- Bread, along with other food and drink, was buried in tombs because the ancient Egyptians believed that the dead needed nourishment in the afterlife.
- Bread was an everyday food in ancient Egypt, although Egyptians would also have eaten fruit and vegetables, and occasionally salted fish and meat. They also drank beer, which was made from barley. It was not like modern beer, it was thick, sweet and not as alcoholic. Even children drank it.
- To make bread, the ancient Egyptians first had to grind grain to make flour. The flour would then have been mixed with water to make dough, and the dough baked in an oven to make bread.



Does it look like the bread we eat today?



Bread was the staple diet in ancient Egypt. How does this compare to our diets today – what other things do we eat?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Bread cake or roll, flattened conical in shape with a rounded end: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1069 BC

Cake or loaf of unleavened bread, discoid in shape: Ancient Egyptian, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1069 BC



Model in painted wood of a servant group depicting a bakery: Ancient Egyptian, Beni Hasan, 11th–12th Dynasty, c. 2055–1773 BC



Sandstone millstone: Ancient Nubian, Faras, Early Dynastic, c. 3000 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptology

Archaeologist's Tool Kit *real*



- This is a modern archaeologist's tool kit with some tools which would be used during archaeological digs today.
- Alexander Henry Rhind was one of the first excavators in Egypt to keep a record of the precise locations of objects. Today we use GPS technology, photography and other recording methods to be even more accurate.
- In the past, archaeologists worked quickly at sites, often spending only a very short time there. Modern excavations take much longer, often lasting for many years. This allows us to record more information and take more care over the site.
- In our collections we have a measuring rod which belonged to Astronomer Charles Piazzi Smyth (1819–1900), famous for his studies of the Great Pyramid of Giza.
- Excavations in Egypt mostly happen during the Egyptian winter, when the climate is cooler.
- There are other examples of measuring tools used by Egyptologists in the collections of National Museums Scotland.



Do you recognise any of the tools in the tool kit?



Is the tool kit heavy with all the tools inside?



What object would you most like to find on a dig?

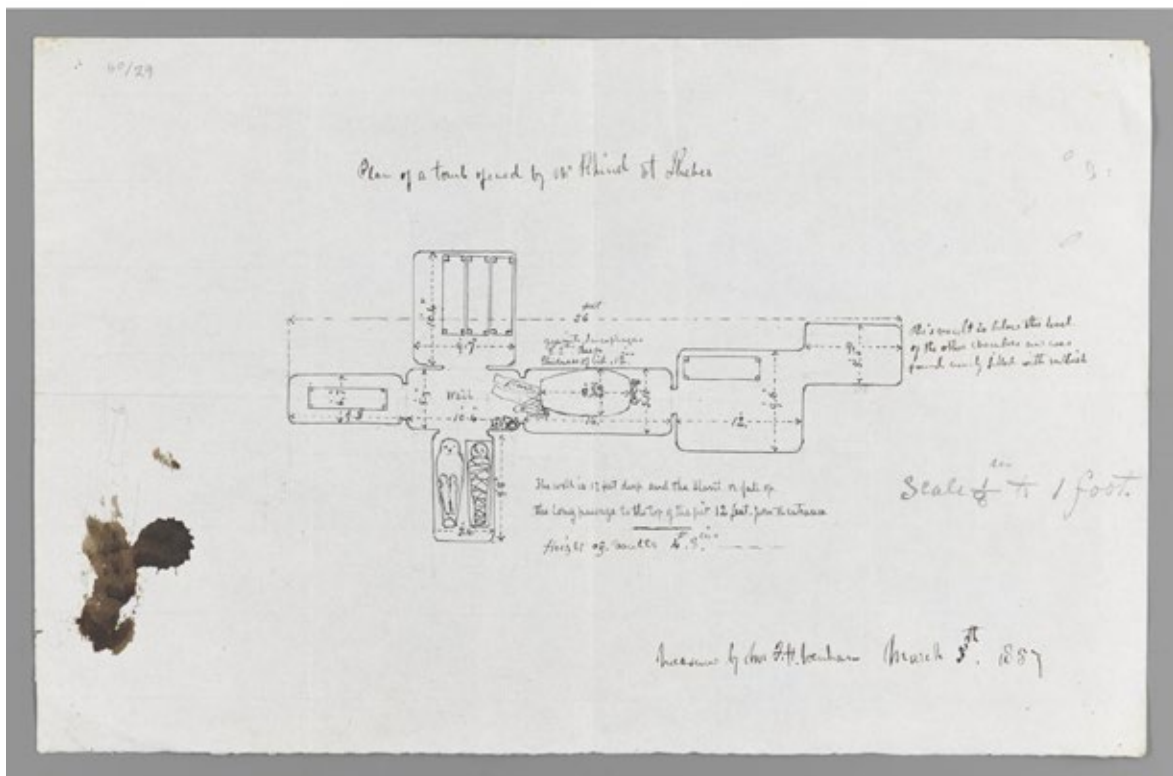
Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland

Charles Piazzi Smyth's measuring rod.



Rhind's tomb plan with measurements



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptology

Information Card

Alexander Henry Rhind

Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–1863) collected many ancient Egyptian objects. Rhind had become interested in archaeology when he was a teenager. He studied natural history and Scottish history and antiquities in Edinburgh (1848–50). He excavated and wrote about several important sites in Caithness, in the north of Scotland, near where he grew up. He donated the objects he found to the museum. In 1853 he fell ill with a lung disease and, trying to escape from the cold and damp of Scotland, started to spend time in warmer countries such as Egypt.

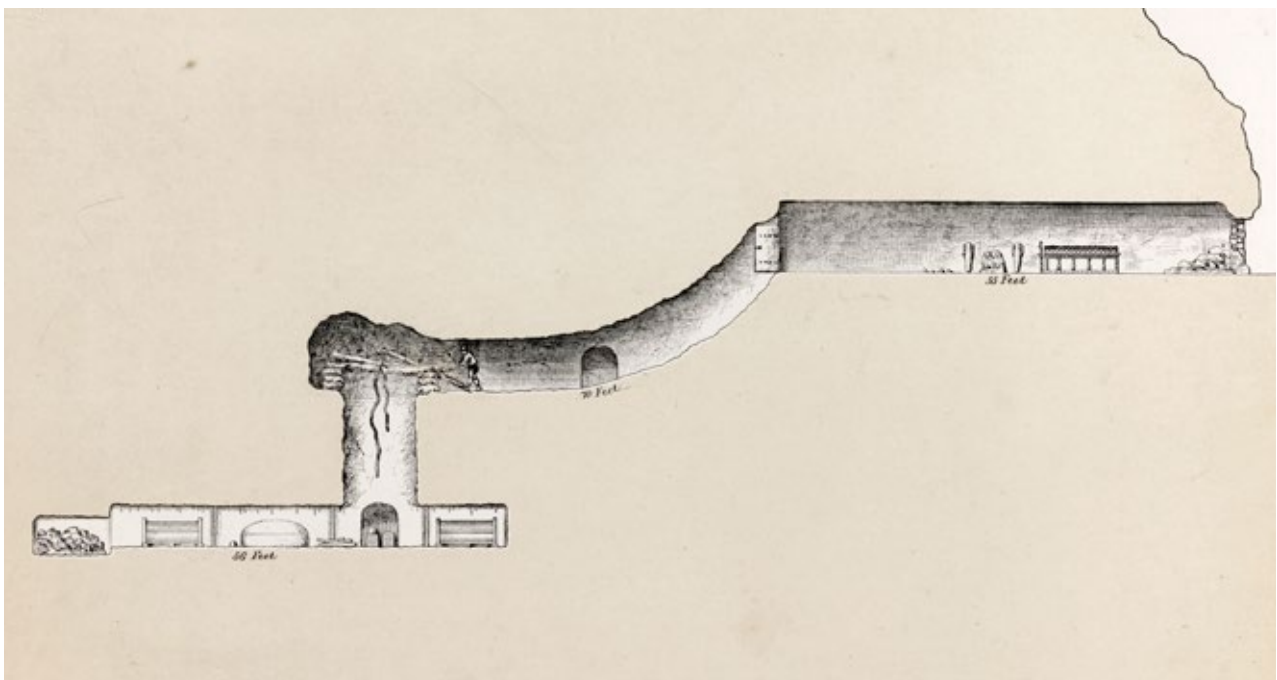
While in Egypt he undertook excavations in a number of places, mainly around modern Luxor, which in ancient times was called Thebes. He is regarded today as one of the first excavators to scientifically record his discoveries, which included many objects now in National Museums Scotland. His career was tragically cut short when he died in Switzerland, on his way home from Egypt in July 1863, aged 29. He is buried in Wick parish churchyard.



Ancient Egypt handling collection



Hand-drawn and tinted of the Theban West Bank in ink and watercolour by Alexander Henry Rhind (1861)



Plan of the tomb from Alexander Henry Rhind's Book *Thebes, its Tombs and their Tenants Ancient and Present* (Published 1862)

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptology

Faience Beads *replica*



- Jewellery made from beads was popular in ancient Egypt.
- Beads were made by moulding a small piece of faience paste around a thread. The beads would then have been fired, so that the faience hardened and the thread burned away. This left a hole, so that the finished beads could be threaded and made into a necklace.
- There are many surviving examples of ancient Egyptian beads, however they are not always in their original state. There are many reasons Egyptologists find loose beads.
 - Sometimes the material which held the beads together could have disintegrated over time. Another reason is that ancient or modern tomb robbers may have broken them whilst taking things.
 - Reuse of the tomb is another possible reason for finding incomplete beads. At points in Egyptian history people could not afford to build a new tomb for themselves.
 - The objects may also have succumbed to time, having been buried for thousands of years, they may simply have broken.



How many different shades can you see in the beads?



How do the large faience beads feel? Would you wear jewellery made from faience?



Do we still use beads to make jewellery today? What other materials do we use that were not available in ancient Egypt?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Left collar terminal in pale blue faience with dark blue markings, in the shape of the head of a falcon wearing a sun disk: Ancient Egyptian, Late Period, c. 664–332 BC

Fragmentary bronze menat showing in flat profile the head of a queen, possibly Tiye: Ancient Egyptian, Amarna, 18th Dynasty, c. 1550–1069 BC



String of beads: Ancient Egyptian, from Abydos, Upper Egypt, Predynastic Period, c. 4400–3100 BC

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptology

Scarab Beetle *real*



**This is a real dung beetle, please handle with care.
Do not open or shake the case.**

- This is the 'sacred beetle' of the ancient Egyptians.
- The ancient Egyptians observed scarab beetles rolling balls of dung and associated this with the sun travelling through the sky.
- The beetle is part of our collections and comes from the Natural Sciences Entomology department which is located at the National Museums Collections Centre.



What details can you see on the beetle?



What other insects have you seen this close up?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptian objects from the Natural Sciences collections of National Museums Scotland

Scarabaeus sacer, dung beetle, dried specimen



Anacridium aegypticum, Egyptian locust, dried specimen



Mud deposit with some dried vegetation from the River Nile, Egypt.



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptology

Broken Objects *real*

Object 1



Object 2



Object 3

These are real ancient Egyptian objects, please handle with care.

Do not open or shake the case with the beads.

- It is common for Egyptologists to discover broken fragments of ancient objects during archaeological excavations.
- Egyptologists study for many years to learn how to excavate objects. The delicate nature of archaeological digs means some objects could be damaged or broken by the Egyptologist by accident. Although this is very rare nowadays, it was quite common in the past.
- In our collections there are many fragments and incomplete objects that came to the museum in this condition.
- The museum employs professional conservators who ensure that the objects are in the best condition they can be. This includes cleaning them, repairing them when necessary and controlling the conditions in which they are kept.
- Broken objects can be as helpful to researchers as complete ones; often allowing us to see the material which the object is made of in more detail.



Can you see where the objects have broken?



Do you think the broken objects feel the same as complete objects? What are the differences?



How do you think these object were broken?

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Objects from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland



Relief fragment in limestone depicting the upper part of the figures of two men carrying caskets above their heads: Ancient Egyptian, Upper Egypt, Deir el-Bahari, Tomb of Queen Neferu, Middle Kingdom, c. 2010–1940 BC



Lower portion of a faience statue of Ptah, legs only seated on block throne, with inscription “[An offering that the king gives on behalf of Ptah] creator of the gods that he might give life, prosperity, and health to the Chief Controller of the Craftsmen, setem-priest of Ptah, Shedsu-nefertem justified”: Ancient Egyptian, Saqqara, Late Period, c. 664–332 BC



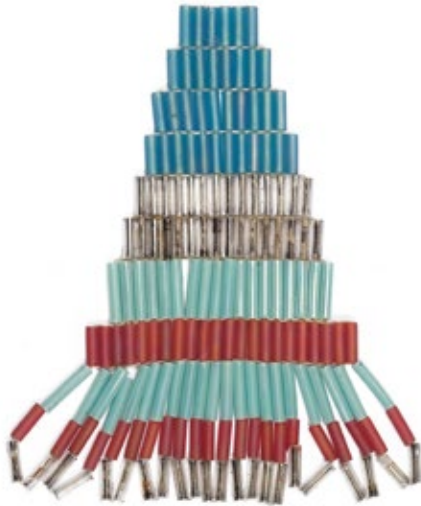
One of our conservators cleaning an Osiris statue from the ancient Egyptian collections of National Museums Scotland.



Ancient Egypt handling collection

Egyptology

Mystery Objects *real and replica*



Object 1



Object 2



Object 3

Objects can become unrecognisable for many reasons. It is an Egyptologist's job to ask the right questions to find out what the objects are.

We need your help to investigate what the three objects above are.

Answer the following questions and then tell us your professional opinion!

- Is the object broken or complete?
- What is the condition of the object?
- How heavy is the object?
- Does it look like anything you would use nowadays?
- Is it real or replica?

Egyptology

Broken Objects - Answers



Object 1 Shabti – *Real*



Objects 2 Hapy Amulet - *Real*



Objects 3 Beads – *Real*
Please do not open this case.

Egyptology

Mystery Objects - Answers



Object 1 Piece of a necklace - *Replica*



Object 2 Ancient Egyptian glass faience bead - *Real*



Object 3 Sekhmet Statue - *Replica*

Ancient Egypt handling collection

Activities

Discussion Cards

For this activity, the discussion cards can be used when the group is not familiar with the objects, and also used as prompts during any handling activities.

These cards are designed to encourage discussion about ancient Egyptian life and beliefs, and as a tool to compare to our lives today.

The pupils are encouraged to listen, ask each other questions and research the objects using other sources such as books and the internet.

The discussion cards will prompt the students to look at the objects and think about the following questions

- Do you think the object real or replica?
- How heavy is the object?
- What do you think the object is made from?
- How do you think the object was made?
- What do you think the object was used for?
- Do you think the object broken or complete?
- What similarities and differences are there between these objects and modern objects?

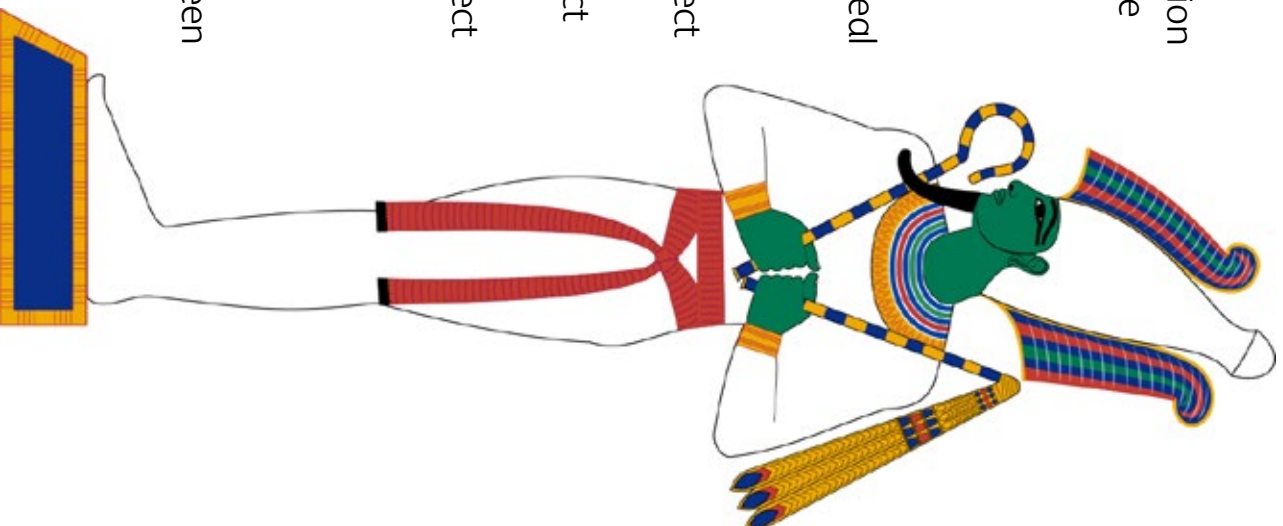


Ancient Egypt handling collection

Discussion Card

In your group, use the discussion points below to investigate the objects and see what it is like to be a curator working with ancient Egyptian objects.

- Do you think the object is real or replica?
- How heavy is the object?
- What do you think the object is made from?
- How do you think the object was made?
- What do you think the object was used for?
- Do you think the object broken or complete?
- What similarities and differences are there between these objects and modern objects?

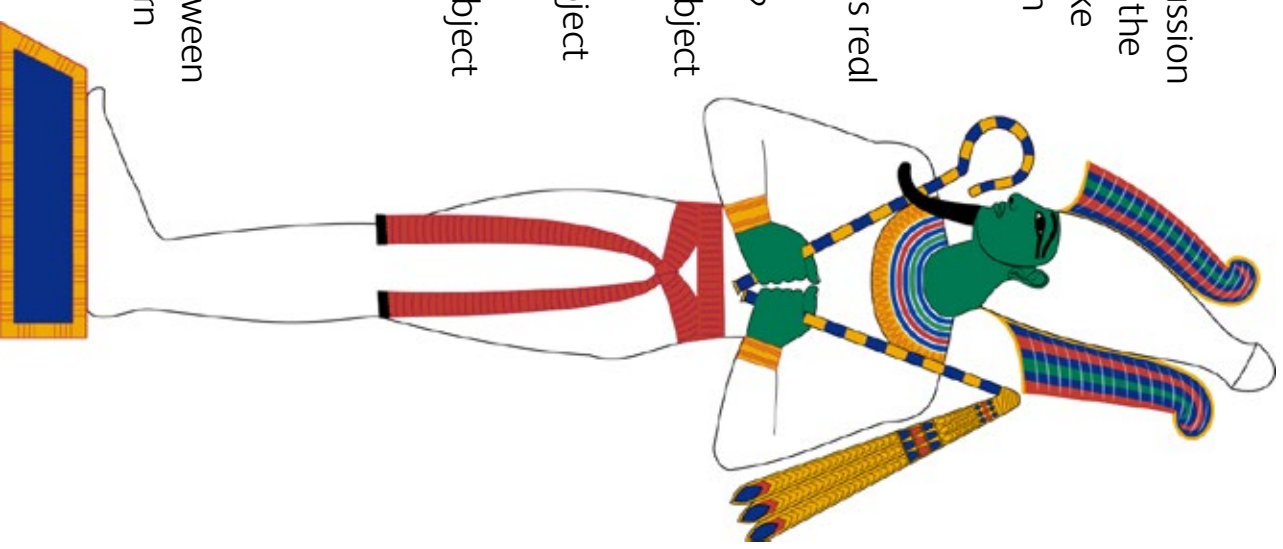


Ancient Egypt handling collection

Discussion Card

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- What similarities and differences are there between these objects and modern objects?



Ancient Egypt handling collection



Many thanks for visiting the National Museum of Scotland and using this learning resource. We hope you have enjoyed your visit.

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