



KS 1/2

Communicating through time – Make your own papyrus!

The Ancient Egyptians used to write on a kind of paper called **papyrus**. It was first made as far back as the 3rd millennium BC. It was made from a type of reed called **Cyperus papyrus**.

This plant was originally grown in marshy areas around the Nile river. The Ancient Egyptians also used the papyrus plants to make boats, mattresses, mats, rope, sandals, and baskets. A sheet of papyrus with hieroglyphs looks like this:



Writing in hieroglyphics was complicated and it took years of training, starting at age six or seven. The people who trained to write were called scribes. They held a good place in society and only the children of the wealthy got the opportunity to train as scribes.



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Make papyrus like the Ancient Egyptians did! The papyrus plant is harder to come by these days, but you can get an idea of the process they used with paper from a brown paper bag and some glue.



Supplies needed:

- Scissors
- Paint/pens
- Brown paper bag
- Bowl and stirring stick
- Water
- White glue
- Wax/baking paper
- Rolling pin



Step 1. Cut the brown paper bag into 2cm wide strips of equal length. You can ask an adult to use the scissors or just rip them.



Step 2. To make about 1 sheet of papyrus, mix together 1 cup of water with 1 cup of white glue in a bowl.



Step 3. Dip the strips in the mixture and remove the excess glue.



Step 4. Lay the strips on the wax paper or a desk cover, overlapping them slightly.



Step 5. Apply as many layers of strips as possible until you get something that looks like a square sheet.



Step 6. Cover with baking paper/wax paper and use a rolling pin to roll over it, to help stick the strips together nicely.



Step 7. Let it dry overnight or use a hairdryer, with the help of an adult.



Step 8. When it is completely dry, you can cut the edges to get a neater sheet of papyrus.



Step 9. Now it's time to decorate your creation with your paints and pens!