

PAPYRUS

THE PLANT

USES OF PAPYRUS

PAPYRUS PAPER

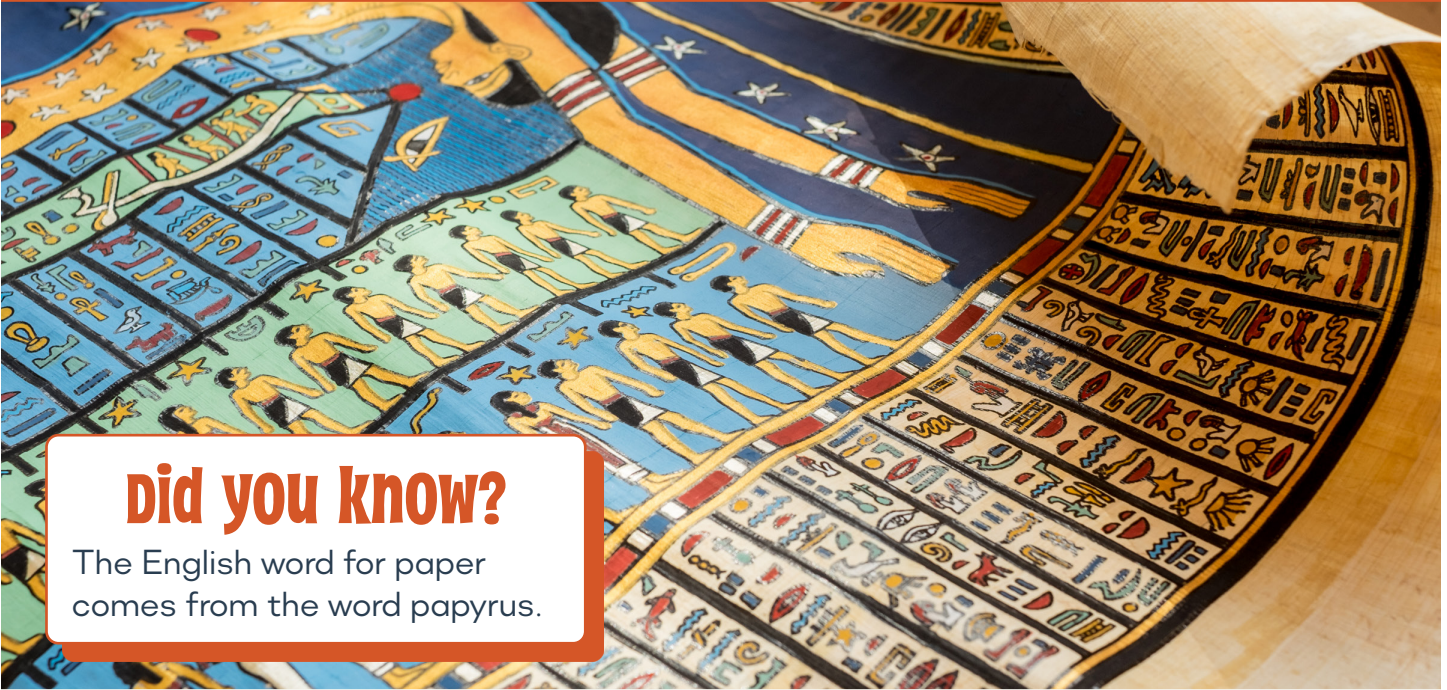
MAKING PAPYRUS PAPER

READING RESPONSE

PAPYRUS MAKING ACTIVITY



PAPYRUS



Did you know?

The English word for paper comes from the word papyrus.

The papyrus plant was used by the Ancient Egyptians for thousands of years to make many things including paper.



The papyrus plant has a triangular stem with a dense cluster of thin stems on top.

THE PLANT

The papyrus plant, *Cyperus papyrus*, grows in the Nile Delta and Nile River Valley. It had a long triangular stalk that grew up to 5 meters tall. In the time of the Ancient Egyptians, large amounts of papyrus grew in the mud on the banks the Nile, but the papyrus plant is less common today.

rope, sandals, boxes, baskets and even small boats! And that's not all, papyrus flower was used to make perfume and medicines.

PAPYRUS PAPER

Papyrus is not only the name of the plant, but also the paper that is made from the plant. Papyrus was used to make paper as early as 3,000 BC and was used for thousands of years.

Papyrus paper was expensive to make, so it was mainly used for religious and official documents. Most Egyptians couldn't afford papyrus, so they would write on other materials, like stone or wood. Even scribes had to practice on wood before they could start writing on papyrus.

Papyrus paper was strong and durable. Many ancient papyrus documents have been preserved. These include literature, religious texts, drawings, criminal investigations, official records medical textbooks, math problems, magical texts and cartoons.

USES OF PAPYRUS

The most well-known use of papyrus is papyrus paper, but Egyptians had many uses for the plant. Papyrus was a staple food for Egyptians. They would bake the root and eat it, using it much like we use potatoes.

The outer skin of the papyrus plant was used to make many items including furniture,



Sayed Farag demonstrates the making of papyrus at the Nefertiti Papyrus Institute in Luxor, Egypt.

MAKING PAPYRUS PAPER

These are the steps Egyptians used to make papyrus paper after the stalk was harvested.

1. The outer fiber was peeled away.
2. The stem was cut into thin strips.
3. The strips were rolled or beaten with a mallet and soaked in water for six days.
4. A layer of papyrus strips was laid side by side, overlapping slightly.
5. Another layer of strips was placed at a right angle to the first layer.
6. The layers were pressed and dried in the sun.
7. The papyrus sheet was rubbed with a stone to make it smooth.

Sheets of papyrus could be attached to each other to make long rolls which could be transported easily or made into a scroll.

READING RESPONSE

1

How tall does the papyrus plant grow?

2

Where did papyrus grow in Ancient Egypt?

3

Name five things the Ancient Egyptians made with the papyrus plant:

4

What did scribes practice writing on before using papyrus?

5

Fill in the blanks in the list of steps for making papyrus:

1. The outer fiber was _____
2. The stem was cut into _____
3. The strips were beaten with a mallet and soaked in water for _____
4. A layer of papyrus strips was laid side by side, _____ slightly
5. Another layer of strips was placed at a right angle to the first layer
6. The layers were pressed and _____
7. The papyrus sheet was rubbed with a _____ to make it smooth

MAKING PAPYRUS

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



- Brown paper bag
- White glue
- Water
- Wax paper
- Bowl
- Stir Stick

WHAT TO DO

Step 1

Rip the brown paper bag into one inch wide strips of equal length.

Step 2

In a bowl make a mixture of half glue and half water. (To make one sheet of papyrus you only need about 1/4 cup of each.)

Step 3

Dip the brown paper strips in the glue mixture and remove excess glue.

Step 4

Lay the strips side by side on the wax paper, overlapping them slightly.

Step 5

Apply another layer of strips at a right angle to the first layer.

Step 6

Let the paper dry overnight.

Step 7

Decorate your creation with paints or crayons.



READING RESPONSE

1

How tall does the papyrus plant grow?

The papyrus plant grows up to 5 meters tall.

2

Where did papyrus grow in Ancient Egypt?

The papyrus plant grows in the Nile Delta and Nile River Valley

3

Name five things the Ancient Egyptians made with the papyrus plant:

Food, furniture, rope, sandals, boxes, baskets, boats, perfume, medicines and paper.

4

What did scribes practice writing on before using papyrus?

Scribes practiced writing on wood.

5

Fill in the blanks in the list of steps for making papyrus:

1. The outer fiber was *peeled away*.
2. The stem was cut into *thin strips*.
3. The strips were beaten with a mallet and soaked in water for *six days*.
4. A layer of papyrus strips were laid side by side, *overlapping* slightly.
5. Another layer of strips were placed at a right angle to the first layer.
6. The layers were pressed and *dried in the sun*.
7. The papyrus sheet was rubbed with a *stone* to make it smooth.



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