

Ancient Egyptian Mud Bricks

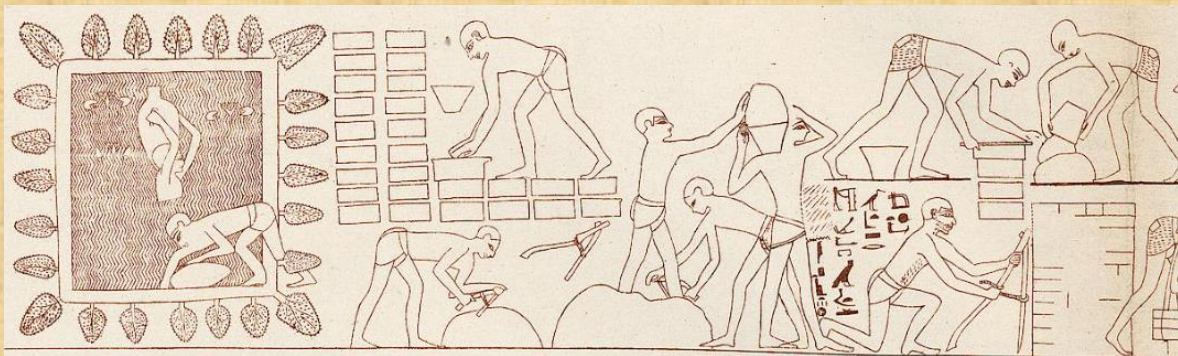
Ancient Egyptians made pyramids and temples out of stone but made other buildings using bricks made of mud and straw.

The rectangles on the side of this coffin represent the arches on a mud brick tomb.



Coffin of Nakht 1923.33.a.1
CC Glasgow Museums

Ancient Egyptians would gather mud from the banks of the river Nile and chopped up bits of dried grass or straw and then mix them together. After a few days, they would squeeze the mixture into brick shapes and leave them to dry in the hot Egyptian sun.



Drawing of a wall painting inside the tomb of the Vizier Rekhmire made in 1900 by an Egyptologist called Percy Newberry. On the left, men are collecting water from a pool, the next part shows a man gathering mud and above him a man is filling brick moulds.

Your Challenge:

You are going to make mud bricks!

This could get messy so it might be a good idea to do this outside.

You will need a bucket or large container, earth (without worms), straw or dry grass, small tubs to make your bricks in (yoghurt pots or similar size would be best). Make small holes in the bottom of these to let the water out.

Put earth in your bucket and add a little bit of water at a time until it is squidgy but not really liquid. Put your hands into the mixture and squish and mix it until there are no lumps.

Chop your grass or straw into little bits and add it to your mud. Your mixture should be about half mud, half straw.

Now you need to leave it for a day or so. After this, pour away any water and squeeze your mud mixture to get rid of water and then squash into your brick moulds.

Now leave your bricks in the sun to dry. This might take a whole day if your mud was quite wet. When they are dry, you should be able to turn them out of the moulds.

Congratulations, you've made ancient Egyptian mud bricks!

Rules:

1. Grown ups don't like mud on walls, doors or TV screens – so wash your dirty hands before you touch anything!
2. Wear old clothes or things you don't mind getting messy.
3. Don't play with your hair while your hands are covered with mud.