

Unwrapping the Mystery: A Journey into Ancient Egyptian Mummies!

Materials Needed:

- Age-appropriate books or website links about ancient Egypt and mummies
- Pictures/videos showing mummies, sarcophagi, canopic jars, and Egyptian tombs
- A doll or action figure
- Plenty of toilet paper rolls or strips of craft paper/gauze
- Optional: Small containers (e.g., old spice jars, film canisters) for 'canopic jars'
- Optional: Shoe box or similar small cardboard box for a 'sarcophagus'
- Optional: Markers, crayons, or paint

Introduction (Approx. 10 mins)

"Have you ever seen pictures of mummies from ancient Egypt? They look a bit spooky wrapped up like that, don't they? But there's an amazing reason why the ancient Egyptians did this! They believed that after someone died, they went on a journey to an afterlife. To make that journey, they needed their body. So, they figured out a special way to preserve bodies so they wouldn't decay. Today, we're going to become archaeologists and uncover the secrets of mummification!"

Exploration & Instruction (Approx. 20 mins)

1. **Why Mummies?** Read together or watch a short video explaining the Egyptian belief in the afterlife (Ka and Ba). Discuss how they thought the body was essential for the spirit in the next world. Emphasize that mummification was usually for pharaohs and wealthy people because it was expensive and took a long time.
2. **Visual Aids:** Look at pictures of real mummies (explain they are thousands of years old!), elaborate sarcophagi (the mummy's decorated coffin), canopic jars (jars that held preserved organs), and the inside of tombs. Ask questions like, "Why do you think the coffin was so fancy?" or "What do you think they put in the tombs besides the mummy?" (Answer: treasures, food, furniture – things needed for the afterlife).
3. **The Process (Simplified):** Explain the basic steps in an age-appropriate way:
 - * First, the body was washed.
 - * Then, special priests called embalmers removed important organs like the liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines. They believed the person needed these in the afterlife, so they preserved them in special containers called canopic jars. (Show pictures/your optional jars). They usually left the heart, believing it was the center of intelligence and feeling.
 - * The body was then covered in a special salt called natron to dry it out completely. This took about 40 days!
 - * After it was dry, the body was stuffed with things like sawdust or linen to make it look more lifelike.
 - * Finally, the most famous part: wrapping! The body was carefully wrapped in hundreds of yards of linen strips. Sometimes little good luck charms called amulets were tucked into the bandages.
 - * The wrapped mummy was placed in its sarcophagus and then into the tomb.

Activity: Make a Mummy! (Approx. 20 mins)

"Now it's our turn to practice part of the process! Let's mummify this doll/action figure."

1. Give the student the doll and the toilet paper/strips.
2. Guide them to carefully wrap the doll from head to toe, covering it completely in several layers. Talk about how long and careful the process was for real Egyptians.
3. Optional Extensions: Decorate the small containers to look like canopic jars. Decorate the shoe

box to be a fancy sarcophagus for the 'mummy'.

Wrap-up & Assessment (Approx. 5-10 mins)

1. Ask review questions:

- * "Why did the ancient Egyptians make mummies?" (For the afterlife)
- * "What special salt did they use to dry the body?" (Natron)
- * "What were the jars called that held the organs?" (Canopic jars)
- * "What's the fancy coffin called?" (Sarcophagus)

2. Have the student present their 'mummy' and tell you one interesting fact they learned today.

3. Discuss how we learn about this (archaeologists finding tombs, scientists studying mummies).

Differentiation/Extension:

- **Support:** Focus mainly on the 'why' (afterlife) and the wrapping activity. Use mostly pictures and simple explanations.
- **Challenge:** Research a specific mummy (like Tutankhamun), draw detailed pictures of canopic jar gods, or write a short paragraph pretending to be an embalmer describing a day at work.