

Egyptian Gold Leaf Fan

(art + history; art + social studies; art + literature)

Ancient Egypt artisans spent centuries creating art to honor royalty and their gods, using procedures that are considered to this day to be the ultimate in artistic construction. Gold leaf was applied to many sacred and everyday items, along with precious stones like cornelian, lapis lazuli, dark resin and glass. The colors of glass chosen were turquoise, red, blue, green, black and white.

The Egyptians carved wood, coated it with gesso and hammered or beat the gold leaf onto the surface. The procedure for applying gold leaf is still very similar today, but technology has developed superior adhesive (known as “size”) and we now have the option of using less expensive composition leaf, which is available in shades of gold as well as silver and copper colors. Composition leaf is an alloy of base metals that may include copper, tin and zinc.

This lesson plan introduces students to a hands-on Egyptian craft. The subject matter reproduced depicts King Tutankhamun hunting for ostriches, whose feathers were inserted into the arches of fans.

Process

1. Write a story using favorite Egyptian symbols like chariots, horses, hunting, dogs, fans, lotus flowers, scarabs, falcons, etc. Draw your story onto a sheet of newsprint. Transfer the design to the wood using graphite paper.
2. The wood for the artwork must be a soft solid wood, not a laminate. Use the Speedball cutters to cut the design into the wood. The linoleum cutting process is perfect for this wood cut. The inking plate is safety item that’s good for holding the wood. Review: The knife blade cuts an outline edge. When the gouges are used they stop before that



Grade Levels 5-12

Resources

[Hands on Culture Series: Ancient Egypt](#)
(71836-0000)

[Egyptian Designs](#)
(71300-1004)

[Dover Egyptian Ornament](#)
(71306-1013)

Materials

Wooden Plaque (60414-8122), half-circle, 1 per student

Speedball Linoleum Cutters (40203-1029)

Blick Artist's Acrylic Gesso (00623-1027) 1 quart for 30 plaques

3M Sandpaper (34916-1303), fine

Composition Gold Leaf Kit (27001-4059) kit contains 25 sheets, need 5 per student

Composition Gold Leaf (27012-4010) 25 sheet booklet

Gold Leaf Adhesive (27011-1006) 1 pint 30 plaques

Elmers/Bienfang Foam Board (13202-1013) 1/2", pkg of ten 20" x 30" boards, cut to 5" x 7", one per student

Blick Scholastic Pony Brush (05864-1014) bright, size 14

Sharpie® Fine Point (21316-8001) Brown, one per student

Wonder Cutter Foam Cutter (60802-0100)

Weldbond® Adhesive (23819-1105) 8-oz

Wooden Inking Plates (42906-1002) one per student

Sanford Design® Ebony Layout Pencil (20411-2009)

Blick All-Purpose Newsprint (10311-2013) one 9" x 12" sheet per student

Sally's Graphite Transfer Paper (12918-1009), 12 sheets per box, need 1/2 sheet per student

Process, continued

- cut line, keeps edges clean. The U gouge, removes large areas of wood. The V cuts narrow lines. Work carefully with one hand behind the hand cutter.
3. The sandpaper can soften the wood rough edge. Smooth the cut areas as much as possible. Tear the sandpaper and fold it into small areas to sand into the small rough edges.
 4. Stir the gesso. Do not shake, it causes bubbles. Apply to all areas but do not fill the narrow creases. Let dry then apply second coat.
 5. Stir the adhesive. Apply to areas that have gesso. Make sure the entire surface is covered. The gold leaf will not adhere if the adhesive is missing. The adhesive must dry 45 minutes at least and not more than 24 hours. It will stay tacky and usable up to 23-24 hours.
 6. Gently pick up a sheet of the gold leaf. Move slowly and try not to create a breeze. The leaf is very light. Gently place it onto the gessoed adhesive and rub gently with fingers. Excess leaf will rub off. Use the excess to patch empty spots. More adhesive can be added if needed to fill in the leaf.
 7. Emphasize the relief with brown marker if needed.
 8. Draw the fan handle on the foam board and cut it out with the Blick knife. Gold leaf the handle, using the steps above. Use Weldbond adhesive to glue the handle to the fan.

Options

- Create a gold leaf box with color. Paint in with turquoise, red, green and black
- Carve a small figure like an animal. Make a scarab, lotus design or lion



Options, continued

- Make a small panel without cutters (see left). Apply gold leaf, then draw the design onto the panel with permanent marker

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National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

5-8

Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

9-12

Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

5-8

Students select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas

9-12

Students demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal, or other purposes of art

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

5-8

Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry

9-12

Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works