



# Kimbell Kids | Get Creative!

*Amulet Soap Sculptures*

QUEEN NEFERTARI'S EGYPT



## Explore: Scarab Amulet

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- **THINK** about a special object that you associate with good luck. Is there a piece of jewelry that you or someone you know always wears? A lucky penny in your pocket?
- **LOOK** at the details of this small amulet depicting a scarab beetle. Amulets were very popular in ancient Egypt. People believed that they carried magical properties that would help to ensure well-being. They often included an inscription or a spell that would activate their power.
- **LEARN** about how the Egyptians associated the scarab beetle with the sun god's journey across the sky and with life and rebirth.
- **NAME** ideas you associate with the color blue. Ancient Egyptians believed that blue symbolized life, rebirth, and protection.



## Explore: Djed-Pillar Amulet

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- **SKETCH** the shape of this amulet representing the backbone of the god Osiris, ruler of the underworld. Make it the same size as this 5-inch-tall object!
- **IMAGINE** the tomb of Queen Nefertari, where this ancient object was found over 100 years ago. An inscription on the back includes her name and title.
- **NOTICE** how the artist alternates blue and gold to show the amulet's details? The ancient Egyptians fashioned this precious material in many different forms—casting solid objects or hammering sheets of gold for broad collar necklaces. One Egyptian queen even had gold sandals!



# Create your own amulet!

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## Materials you will need:

- One large bar of soap (The softer and more moisturizing, the better. Ivory brand soap works great, for example!)
- One large paper clip
- One small paper clip
- A sheet of scratch paper
- A pair of scissors
- A sharpened pencil
- Extras: a toothbrush for clearing away soap shavings, a butter knife (preferably not serrated, for making deeper cuts if needed)



## Planning your composition

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- Place your bar of soap on a clean sheet of scratch paper and use a pencil to trace its outline onto the paper.
- Use a pair of scissors to trim the paper down to your tracing marks. This will serve as a template for your design!
- Use a pencil to plan and sketch the details of your design onto your template.



## Start carving . . .

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- Lightly drag the rounded tip of your large paper clip over your bar of soap to smooth and shave away any branding or logos.
- Once you have a smooth surface, use the rounded tip again to carve away any areas of soap not needed for your sculpture.
- We're shaving off our bar's pointed corners to create a nicely rounded oval for our scarab.
- Use a sharpened pencil point to begin incising and replicating the details of your design onto your bar of soap.
- TIPS: If you make a mistake, smooth away any evidence and start again, just like you did with the logo!
- Lay your soap side by side with your template for quick and easy reference. This will help you closely match your carvings with your sketch.



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- Use the rounded tip of the large paper clip to begin slowly carving out the smooth, rounded body of your scarab. Plan to leave about a half-inch base around the edge of your scarab for more details at the end.
  - TIPS: Work slowly and carefully! Switch back and forth between carving the left and right sides to make sure you're carving away material evenly.
  - Feel free to keep everything a bit thicker at first, including the base; you can always refine later!
  - Use the edge of your paperclip to outline the wider, bottom edge of your scarab's body.
  - Then turn the clip on its side again to shave away smaller amounts of soap to taper and add roundness to the body of your scarab.
  - TIPS: Switch to the smaller paper clip if that helps you work more slowly and carefully.
  - There's plenty of wiggle room to correct mistakes, but remember, you can't put back the soap you carve away!



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- Once you are satisfied with the rounded and slightly tapered abdomen of your scarab, you're ready to refine other details, such as the back and head markings.
  - Use the small paper clip to deepen and smooth your original pencil markings in these areas.
  - Use the tip of the small paper clip to carve away excess soap around the thorax and head of your scarab. Then slightly taper and round these areas as well.
  - Smooth out the edges of your scarab, so that the base presents an even height on all sides.
  - Then, use the edge of your large paperclip or a butter knife to cut away the small triangular incisions from your base.



## Finishing details

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- Compare your scarab with your template again. Are you satisfied with the details?
- Take time to smooth out any rough edges and even out your carving on both sides of the sculpture.
- Option: add hieroglyphs for your initials on the back!

## Show us what you made!

- Share a photo of your artwork on social media and tag #KimbellKids.

**Art in order of appearance**

*Scarab Amulets*, Tomb of Khaemwaset (QV 44), Valley of the Queens, Third Intermediate Period or Late Period (c. 1075–332 BCE), Faience. Museo Egizio, Turin

*Djed-Pillar Amulet*, Tomb of Nefertari (QV66), Valley of the Queens, New Kingdom, 19th dynasty, reign of Ramesses II (c. 1279–1213 BCE), gilt wood and vitreous paste. Museo Egizio, Turin

**Credits**

Education department

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