

# Ancient Egyptian Painting

The last ancient Egyptian queen was called Cleopatra the seventh (because there were 6 other Queen Cleopatras who lived before her). In 30 BC she lost a battle against the Romans so Egypt then became part of the Roman Empire.

The people who lived in Egypt carried on being Egyptians, making mummies and so on but they were ruled by Roman emperors after that time.

When people died in Egypt during the Roman Period, they would be made into mummies and a board with a portrait of them was tied to the front. This way we can see what Egyptians looked like.

The picture here was probably made about 100 years after the Romans had taken over. The paint was made by mixing coloured powder with beeswax but other portraits like this were made by mixing the coloured powder with egg yolks. This type of paint is called egg tempera. We think the ancient Egyptians also used this type of paint.



Roman Coffin Portrait  
36.a.1912 CC Glasgow  
Museums

## Your Challenge:

You are going to paint an ancient Egypt portrait using egg tempera paint!

You will need egg yolks (that's the yellow bit from inside an egg), paint or food colouring, a piece of cardboard or flat wood to paint on and some paint brushes.

Carefully crack your egg into a small bowl and separate the yellow bit (egg yolk) from the clear bit (egg white). The egg whites can be used for something else so keep them safe.

You will need a different bowl for each colour so if you don't want to use too many eggs, separate your yolk into different containers.

The ancient Egyptians would have used different stones and earth crushed into a powder to make their paint. You can buy powder paint online or just use any paint for kids or even food colourings.

If you have a paint tray with those hard lumps of paint that you normally add water to for painting, you can put the lumps in a bag, hit them with a hammer or rolling pin to crush them into a powder. (Keep the colours separate!)

Now add your paint or food colouring to the egg yolk and mix it up.

Congratulations, you've made ancient Egyptian paint!

Now paint your portrait and leave it to dry. Ancient Egyptians made their brushes by chewing the end of a stick to make it soft and floppy – we can just use proper paint brushes.

Rules:

1. Wear old clothes or things you don't mind getting messy.
2. Put old newspaper under where you are going to be painting so you don't make a mess if you spill anything.
3. While it's drying, you can tidy up!