

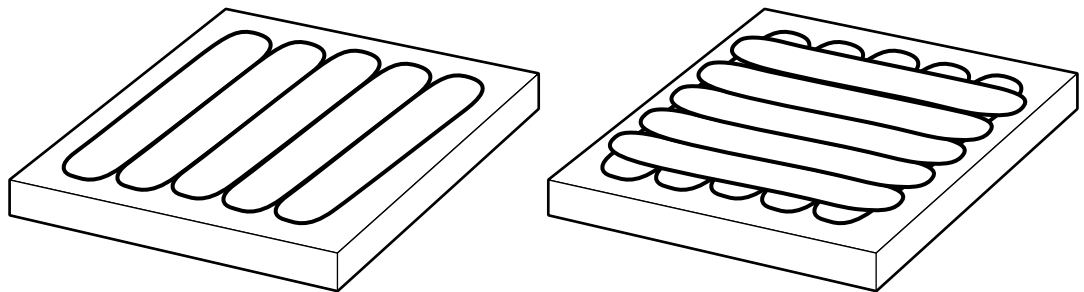
# Make some paper

The Egyptians used the stems of the papyrus plant to make paper. They put slices of the stem together and crushed them and dried them. The material in the stems interlocked to make paper on which the Egyptians scribes wrote.

See if you can make paper from slices of a courgette. A courgette is not related to papyrus but it can be cut into thin slices like the stem of the papyrus plant.

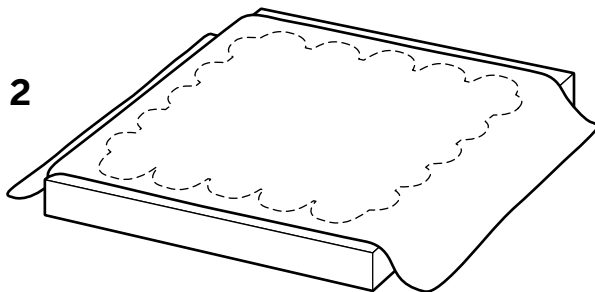
1. Take slices of courgette and arrange them in two layers as diagram 1 shows.

**Diagram 1**



2. Cover the layers of courgettes with a tea towel as diagram 2 shows.

**Diagram 2**



3. Squash the courgette slices by rolling a rolling pin over them six times.
4. Place another piece of wood over the towel and make a pile of books on top of it so a heavy weight presses down on the courgettes.
5. Leave overnight then carefully remove the books and the board.
6. Very carefully remove the towel making sure that none of the pieces of courgette stick to it.
7. Put the board with the squashed layers of courgettes in a sunny place to dry out for a day.
8. When the squashed layers are dry see if you can write on them with a felt-tip pen. Use symbols from the script shown on the worksheet of activity 10c.

# Make some paper

## Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

## Resources

Copies of the worksheet. Courgettes, a knife (for you to use) two wooden boards about 25 cm x 15 cm, a tea towel, a wooden rolling pin, a pile of books, felt-tip pen, a wooden mallet (optional).

## Using the worksheet

The Egyptians used the stem of the papyrus plant to make paper. This must be stressed to the students at the outset of this activity. The purpose of this activity is to show how plant material can be treated to make it into a paper-like material. Before the activity you should prepare the slices of courgettes for the students to use. The slices should be only a couple of millimetres thick and about 8 cm long by 2–3 cm wide. Make sure that all the skin is removed from the slices. The purpose of the tea towel is to absorb moisture. Do not use a paper towel as this could cause confusion if the fibres mixed with the courgette material. After the students have crushed the courgettes with the rolling pin, you may strike the towel a few times with one end of the rolling pin or use a wooden mallet to further press the courgette material together. This simulates the action of beating which was also part of the paper making process.

Note that the courgettes need to be left over night and that they also need at least a day to dry out after being squashed so the activity may take between three or four days to complete.

## Younger students

You may wish to do this activity as a demonstration but let the students join in at setting up the layers and rolling the rolling pin over slices. They could also take turns at writing on the 'paper'.

## Outcomes

The students:

- Know that papyrus was used to make paper in Egypt.
- Know that a paper-like material can be made by squashing certain types of plant material.

## Older students

The students could work in small groups. More responsible students may be allowed to beat the towel with the rolling pin. The Egyptians only used the pith of the papyrus stem and took care to remove the stem skin. As an extension you could leave some skin on the slices and see how that affects the final 'paper' product.

## Outcomes

The students:

- Know that papyrus was used to make paper in Egypt.
- Know that a paper-like material can be made by squashing certain types of plant material.
- Can use simple equipment and materials safely.