

# Amulet Necklace

*Basic Project is recommended for students grades 2-5*

In this project students will make a simple, single-stranded necklace as they were always popular in ancient Egypt and are often recovered among grave goods. Students will consider the meaning of amulets and create historically accurate replicas or new amulets of their own design.

## Objectives & Preparation:

Students will understand the cultural significance of an amulet, discuss why the Egyptians created wearable art, and apply this knowledge to assemble their interpretation of Egyptian style neckwear.

Students will select historically accurate ancient Egyptian symbols (Mayco sprig molds) to create an amulet. Students will demonstrate their understanding of focal point (amulet), symmetry, and pattern, in both a design plan and a final 3D ceramic Egyptian style wearable art.

*\*This lesson is easily modified for both cultural content, and creative complexity. For example, students could create a personal amulet, experiment with beading and bead shapes, compare and contrast amulets from various cultures, investigate amulets in modern society, etc.*

## For classroom preparation and discussion:

“The ancient Egyptians embellished their usually plain clothing with elaborate costume jewelry. Both men and women wore jewelry such as earrings, bracelets, anklets, rings, and beaded necklaces. They incorporated into their jewelry many minerals including amethyst, garnet, jasper, onyx, turquoise, and lapis lazuli, as well as copper, gold, and shells.

Because the Egyptians were very superstitious, frequently their jewelry contained good luck charms called amulets. Egyptian amulets were worn by both the living and the dead. Some protected the wearer against specific dangers and others endowed him or her with special characteristics, such as strength or fierceness. They were often in the shape of animals, plants, sacred objects, or hieroglyphic symbols. The combination of shape, colour and material were important to the effectiveness of an amulet. One of the most common amulets was the lotus flower – a symbol of rebirth.”



## National Standards:

- Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Processes
- Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
- Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures

## Materials:

- Cone 04 White Earthenware Clay
- Wire Cutter
- Canvas
- Fettling Knife
- Wooden Skewers
- Synthetic Sponge
- Acrylic Brushes
- Glaze Brushes

## Mayco Bisque:

- Assorted Bisque Beads: MB-B01 – MB-B13
- 30” Leather Cord: MB-B100

## Clay Design Tools

- Egyptian Design Sprig Molds CD-1218

## Color:

- Magic Metallic Acrylics
- Mayco Softees Acrylics

## Mayco Glazes:

- Stroke® & Coat Bisque Glazes
- Mayco Underglazes

*\*as Magic Metallic and Softees are both acrylic paints, and no firing is required, other molding materials can be substituted for fired clay (some examples are: Model Magic, Celluclay, Polymer clay, etc.)*

## Procedures:

### Create a Design Plan

1. Students should prepare a drawing of their design intentions that reflect learning objectives, class-room discussion and/or student preferences. The choices of beads selected, the metallic colors and placement of beads surrounding the amulet should be part of the design plan.

### Create Amulets

1. Provide each student 2-3 oz. of wedged clay. **Note: You may choose to wedge the clay for your students or decide to have a few students perform the wedging activity. Use a wire cutter to prepare 2-3 lb. portions of clay. Place clay on canvas and work with your hands until clay is smooth and bubble-free. Divide wedged clay into 2-3 oz portions.**
- 2 Use CD-1218 to create an amulet from one of the feature shapes. Press the clay into the sprig mold. Lay the fettling knife flat against the mold and trim away excess clay.
3. Remove the sprig shape by flipping the mold over onto the palm of your empty hand and lightly slap the back of the sprig mold. **Note: If sprig shape sticks to mold press a small ball of clay against the shape and pull it from mold. Glazing Option: If students chose to glaze the amulet, Mayco's Underglazes or Stroke & Coat® glazes can be applied to greenware. See bead decoration instructions below.**
4. Consider the orientation (which will be the top or bottom) of your amulet and how it will hang on your necklace. Using a wooden skewer pierce the clay amulet, creating a hole that completely extends through the clay. Twist the skewer and ream out the hole until it will be able to allow the cord to pass through easily.
5. Allow clay to completely dry and bisque fire together to shelf cone 04. **Note: If glazes are used, bisque fire and glaze fire once after the glazes are applied.**

### Decorate Beads

1. Choose 7-8 beads to decorate. Thread beads onto spare skewer – this will allow you to paint the entire bead. Brush on the Magic Metallic colors of your choice. Balance skewer over two cups and let dry. **Note: If a patina or rust effect is desired apply the appropriate activator while the metallic paint is still wet.**

### String Beads

1. Thread amulet and beads onto leather cord. **Note: If you wish to restrict the movement of the beads you can tie a small knot in between beads. Additional spacers or decorative elements can use in this project.**

#### Art Vocabulary:

**Amulet** – “an object that protects a person from trouble”, consists of any object intended to bring good luck and/or protection to its owner. Potential amulets include: gems or simple stones, statues, coins, drawings, pendants, rings, plants, animals, etc.

**Focal Point** – the portion of an artwork’s composition on which interest or attention centers.

**Pattern** – the repetition of any thing: shapes, lines, or colors, as such it is one of the principles of design.

**Symmetry** – the parts of an image or object organized so that one side duplicates, or mirrors, the other. Also known as formal balance, its opposite is asymmetry — asymmetrical balance.