

## Ramesses III

This activity has been designed as a starting point for looking, talking and doing together. The **Look** and **Think** activities should take 5 -10 minutes.

The **Do** activities might take longer depending on the task and how creative you are feeling!



### Look

Do you think this might be someone important?

How can you tell?

### Think

This is the lid of an Egyptian Pharaoh's sarcophagus (stone coffin) made over 3000 years ago. It weighs about 7 tonnes.

How do you think the Ancient Egyptians carved this sculpture?

How do you think they moved it down the river 150 miles and then dragged it over 8 miles of desert to the Valley of the Kings?

### Do

Can you make a raft to float Ramesses' sarcophagus up the Nile? Use what you can find at home and experiment with different shapes and sizes of boat.

What floats and what sinks?

**Egypt, 12th century BC**  
**Coffin lid of Ramesses III, ruled 1184 - 1153 BCE**  
**Red granite, E.1.1823**

## Ramesses III



According to Helen Strudwick, Associate Curator (Ancient Egypt), this granite sarcophagus lid was found in the tomb of Ramesses III in the Valley of the Kings, which is fairly close to the tomb of Tutankhamun. It is not clear when the object was damaged, but it may have been caused by tomb robbers trying to reach the king's treasure. The Pharaoh's mummified body would have lain inside several other wooden and gold coffins within this sarcophagus.

Recent excavations in the burial chamber of this tomb have uncovered several more fragments of granite. Their shape suggests they belong to this sarcophagus lid, but they do not fit. This makes us think that Ramesses III may have had a second granite sarcophagus. This is possible because one of his predecessors, King Merenptah, who was also buried in the Valley of the Kings, had at least three granite sarcophagi. This raises the fascinating question of whether all the coffins and sarcophagi were fitted together before they were put into the burial chamber, which would have been a monumental undertaking. Or they might have been assembled inside the burial chamber, which would also have been extremely difficult. What do you think?

You can find out more about Ramesses III Sarcophagus Lid in our online [Fact Sheet](#).