

Exercise: Make your own cylinder seal

From the workshop "Lasting Impressions: Using Seals in the Ancient Near East," by Rhyne King, Delphine Poinot, Jacques Teyssandier, and Tasha Vorderstrasse, March 6, 2020

Materials:

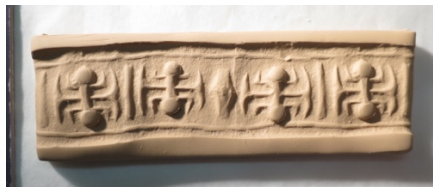
- Candle (painted)
- Short bamboo skewer
- Clay for tablet
- Paper for grid

Step One:

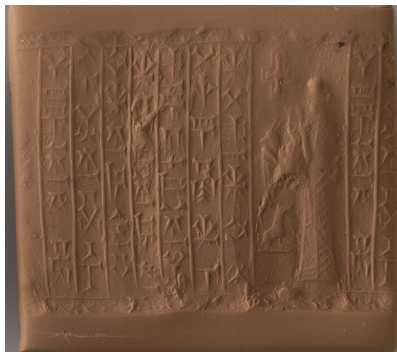
In order to make your design on a cylinder seal, you should first think about what you want to carve. First, drawing the image you want to appear on the cylinder seal on the first grid. Your design could include, people, animals, or cuneiform writing. Here are some pictures of modern sealings of ancient cylinder seals from the OI Museum collection for inspiration:



A21936 (4th millennium BCE)



A12378 (Early Dynastic)



A25492 (Kassite)



A17673 (Isin-Larsa)



A17407 (Middle Bronze Age Amuq)



A8578 (Late Akkadian)

Stage Two:

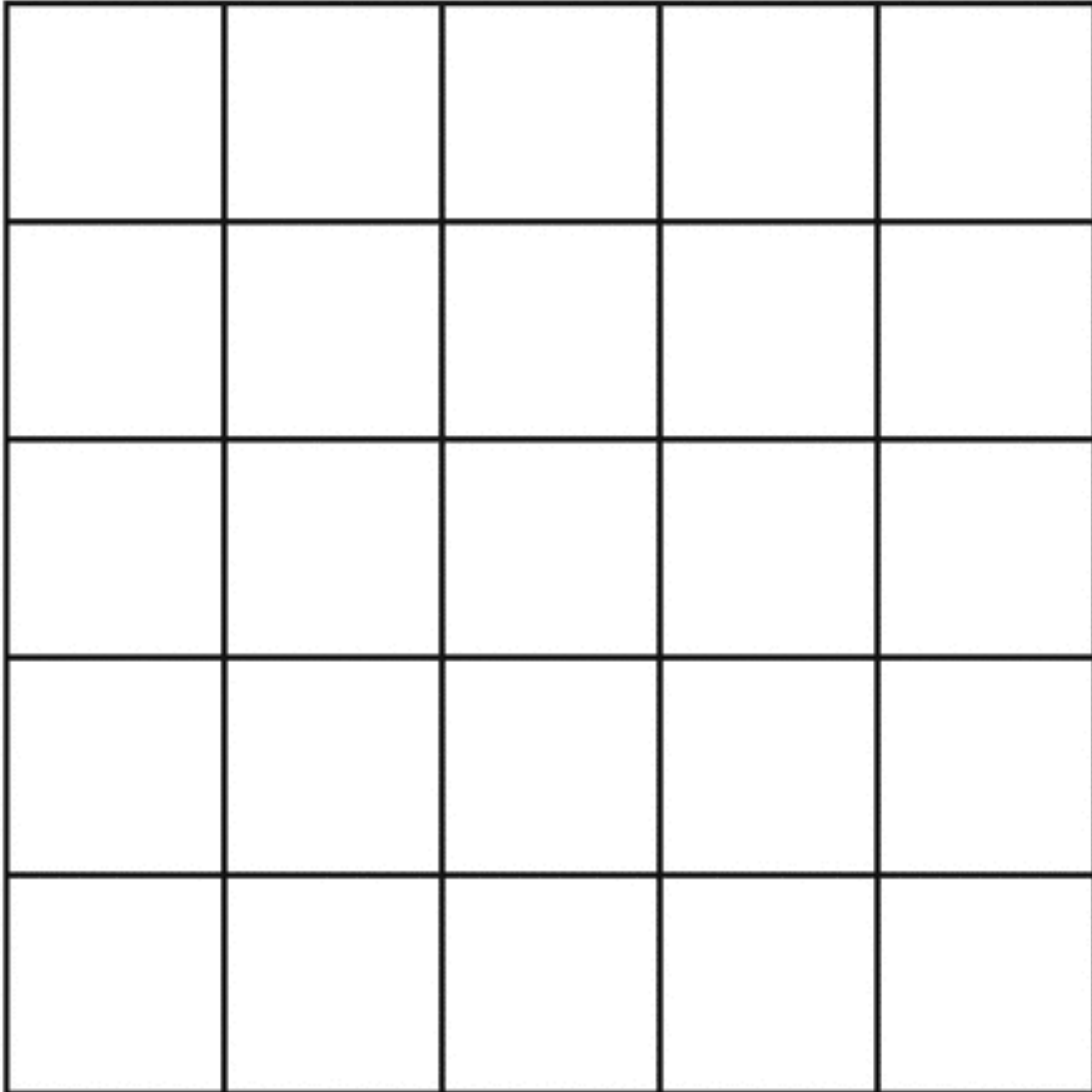
In order for the image to appear correctly on the cylinder seal, it needs to be carved on the seal in mirror image. Use the second grid to flip your design so that it is now reversed.

Stage Three:

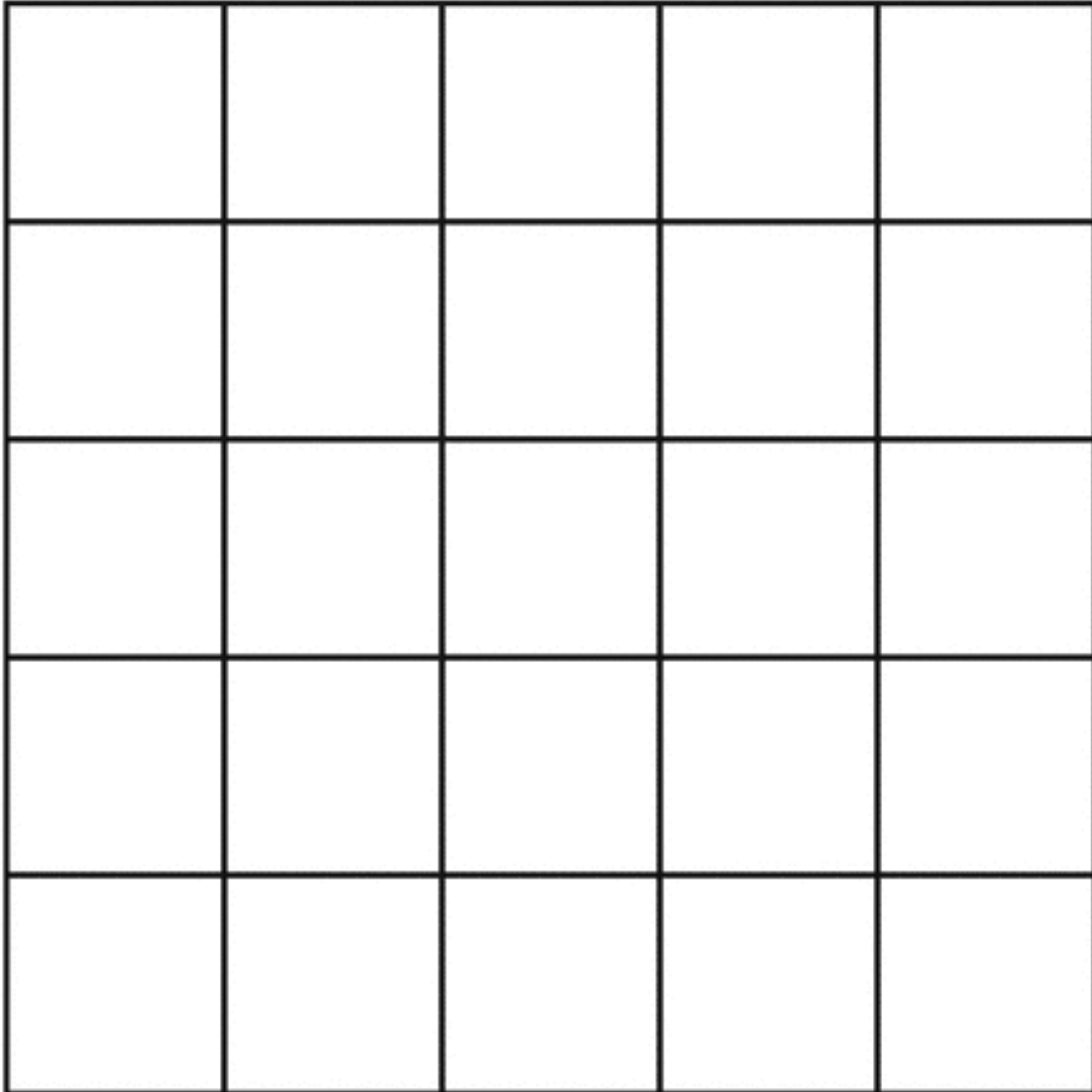
Carve your design using the mirror image as a guide onto the cylinder seal with the bamboo skewer.

Stage Four:

Roll your cylinder seal onto a damp clay tablet



Grid 1: The image as you wish it to appear when you roll the seal



Grid Two: Mirror image of the design as it will be carved on the cylinder seal