

Tips for Creating the Sphinx out of LEGO Bricks

Companion document to the Sphinx model described in Chapter 7 of
The Unofficial LEGO® Builder's Guide
by
Allan Bedford

As of November 2006 I am having difficulties generating instructions for LEGO models, such as those seen in *The Unofficial LEGO® Builder's Guide*. However, many of you have been asking (and waiting patiently) for the instruction to build the Sphinx. While this document won't end up being the complete instructions for the Sphinx model, I hope it will give you enough information and ideas to begin your own version. As the title suggests this is the "tips" document, not the full instructions. I still do hope to provide those as soon as possible but for now I hope you'll find this document useful.

First thing to note is that the Sphinx model shown in The Unofficial LEGO Builder's Guide (from here on known as ULBG) is intended to be a sculpture. What I mean is that it's not meant to be an exact scale replica of the stone structure in Egypt. Rather, it's meant to be an artistic interpretation of that monument. Recreating precise details and measurements aren't important. What is important is that your model ends up looking like a version of the Sphinx. It should *feel* as though it is the Sphinx, but you can cheat wherever you have to in order to best use the LEGO pieces you have available to you.

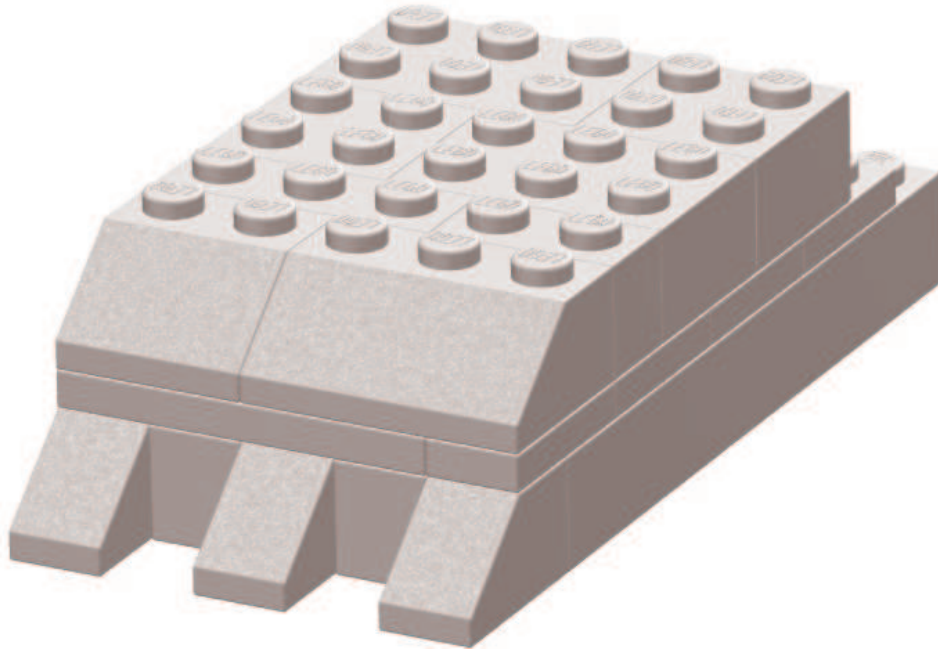
So what does the Sphinx look like anyway? One of the first things I did before writing Chapter 7 of ULBG was to go on the web and find some pics of the real thing. Unfortunately I don't own the copyright to any pictures of the real Sphinx, so I can't include them in this document. However, it should take you only minutes to search the internet, as I did, and find lots of good pictures to use as inspiration.

Where to Start?

Figuring out where to start building an original model can be one of the biggest challenges you face. In the book I talk about how I started with the head and built the body to match. That may also work for you. Look at the pictures both in this document and the ones in the book. You can see that I've tried to capture the overall angles and proportions of the head to the body.

However, you may be more comfortable starting with the body or the paws. Keep in mind that the body is basically just a long hollow box. You need to build sturdy walls and then close in the top with either large plates, or bricks. If you use bricks, you'll likely need to connect the two sides with beams. Look at Chapter 2 for a discussion of beams and their usage.

If you were, for example going to start with the paws, you'll find a close-up of the front end of one in Chapter 7. But suppose you don't have those ½ arch elements? You can create your own version of the paw using some basic slopes. It might look a bit like this:



Notice it's much simpler than the version in the book, but still looks like a paw on the Sphinx. There are two things to remember here:

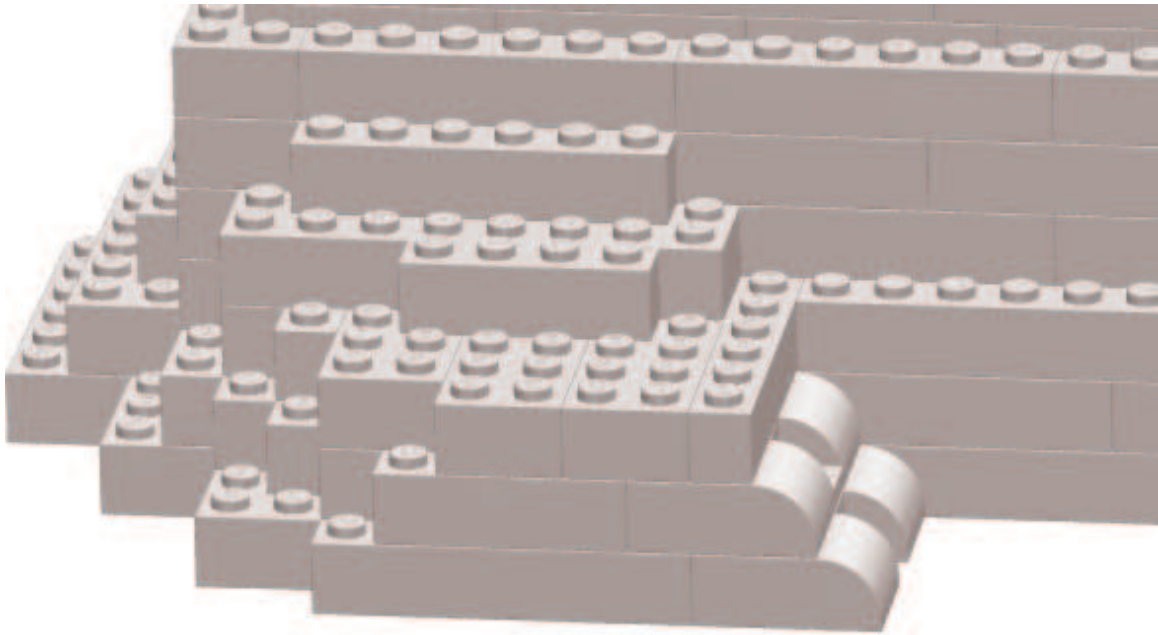
- 1) It's a sculpture and you only need to capture the look and feel of the original. I know I already mentioned this, but it's worth repeating.
- 2) Substitution is a topic that comes up in ULBG again and again. Here I've substituted slopes for arch pieces but obtained roughly the same look. You will need to substitute parts based on what's available to you. Not only for the paws, but probably even more so when you get to the stage of creating the head.

Once you've been able to create a paw, simply begin working toward the main part of the body, by building the front legs. These are really nothing more than low, flat rectangular shaped boxes. They can be hollow or solid, as your bricks allow. (See the 3rd of the real photos at the top of this document.)

The chest area would be next, though you can really start working on the body as a whole section. Look at the 4th picture above. See how the chest (between the front legs and the head) and also the sides of the Sphinx go up like stair steps? You'll find this is really not much different than the way the sphere is created at the beginning of Chapter 7 in ULBG. Take another look at that model and the instructions included for it. When staggering bricks like that you want to make sure you continue to overlap each layer so that the body

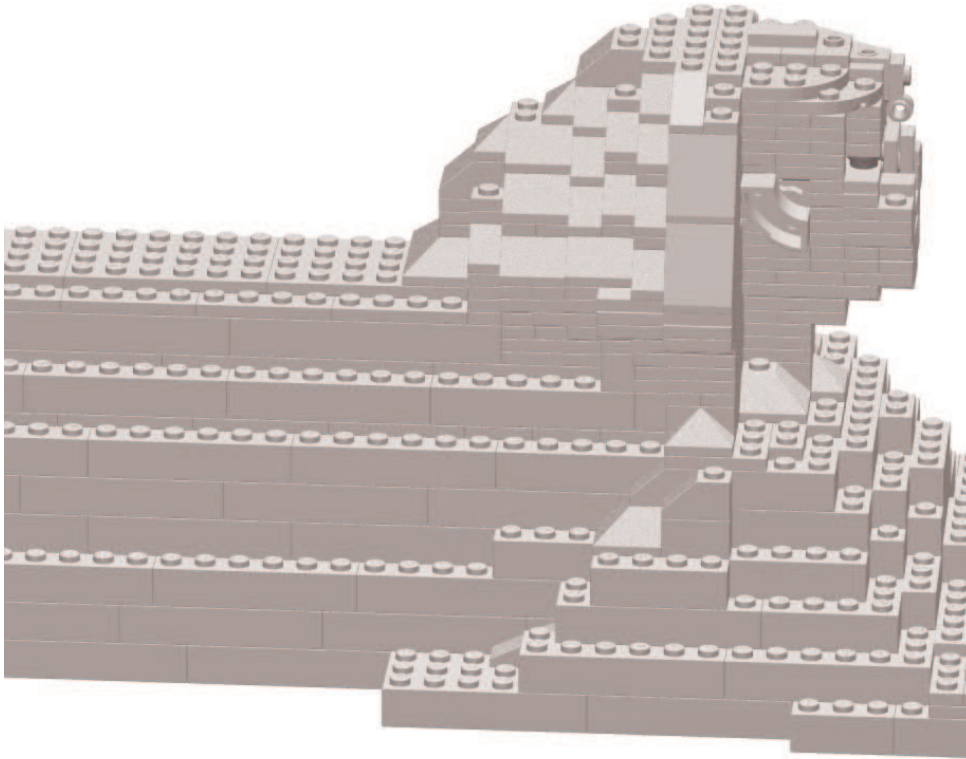
will be solid. See Chapter 2 in ULBG for more on the staggering and overlapping techniques.

Next, the back paws. This is assuming you're working from the bottom up. Again, you may have decided to start with the head like I did. Regardless, the back paws and legs are really just shortened simplified versions of the front ones. Here's a close-up that might help you:



The picture above is of the back end of the Sphinx. The rounded part is the part of the back paw facing toward the head.

The body, as mentioned, is really just a box, with a few staggered layers to give that stair step effect. Here's another close-up of the body just behind the head:

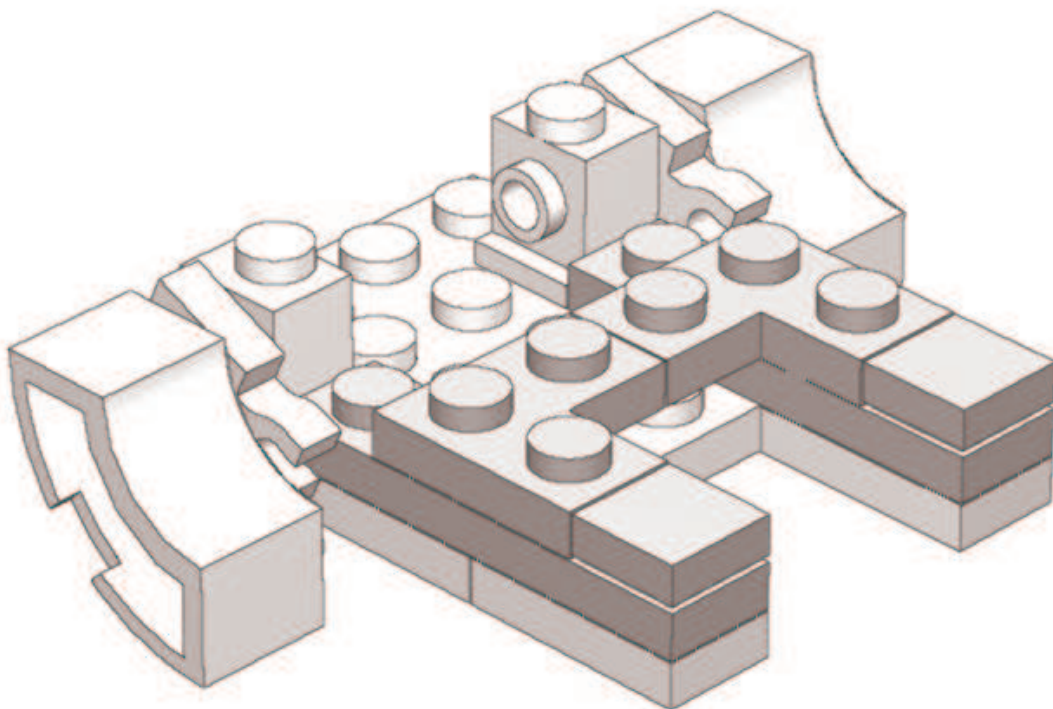
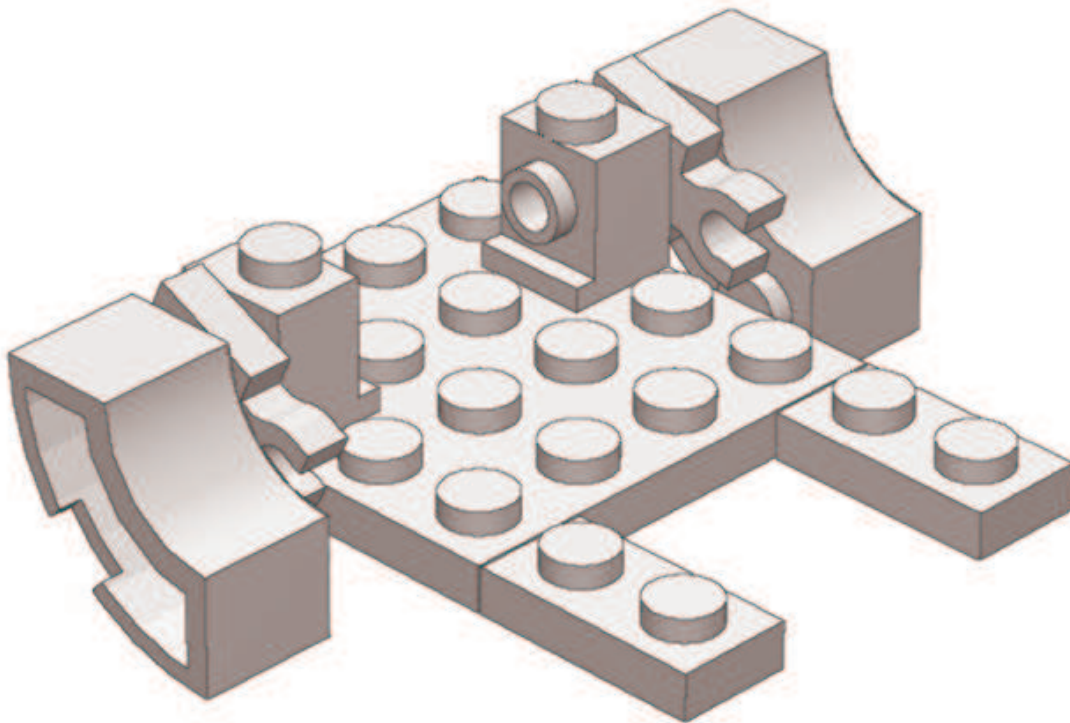


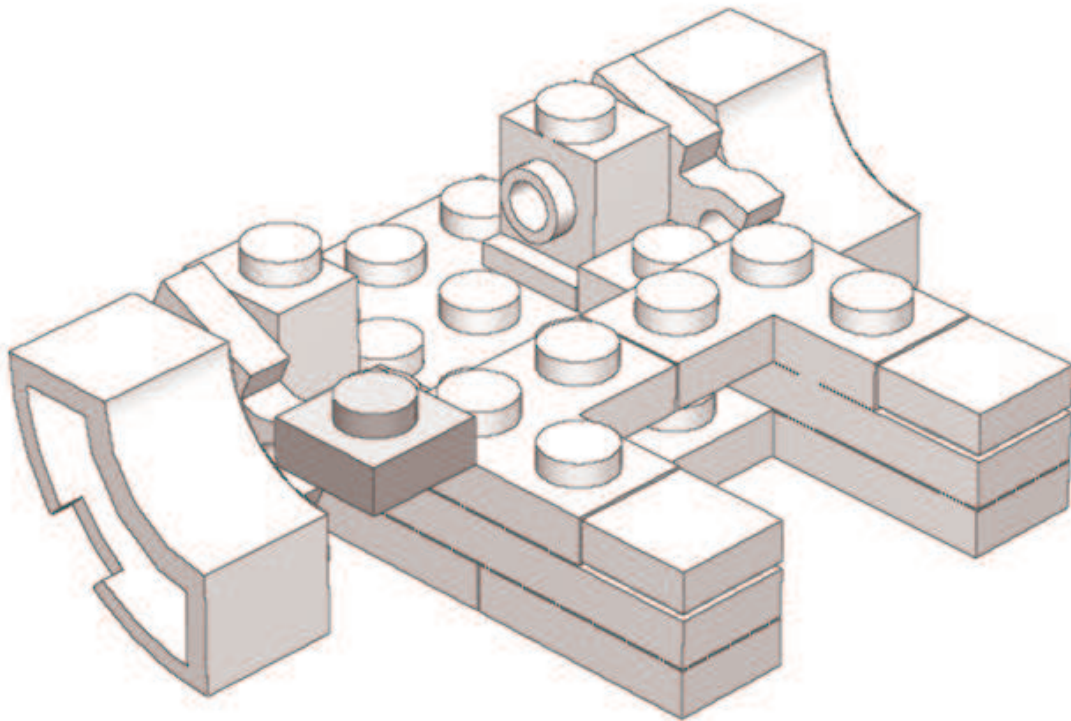
On the right side of the picture above you can very clearly see the stagger technique in use. In fact, it doesn't look all that much different than the sphere I mentioned. It was purposefully left uneven and random looking in order to give the appearance of the ancient stones that have worn and been knocked off over the centuries.

The head of the Sphinx is going to be the hardest part. I will try to produce a bit more guidance on it in the next few days. In the meantime, try looking at the pictures in ULBG again to see how it was done. The clarity of the pics should allow you to see individual bricks and in some cases the smaller plates. As noted, you probably won't have exactly these pieces so you'll have to substitute. That's o.k. That's not a bad thing at all. It will stretch your creativity and in the end the model you create will be entirely your own.

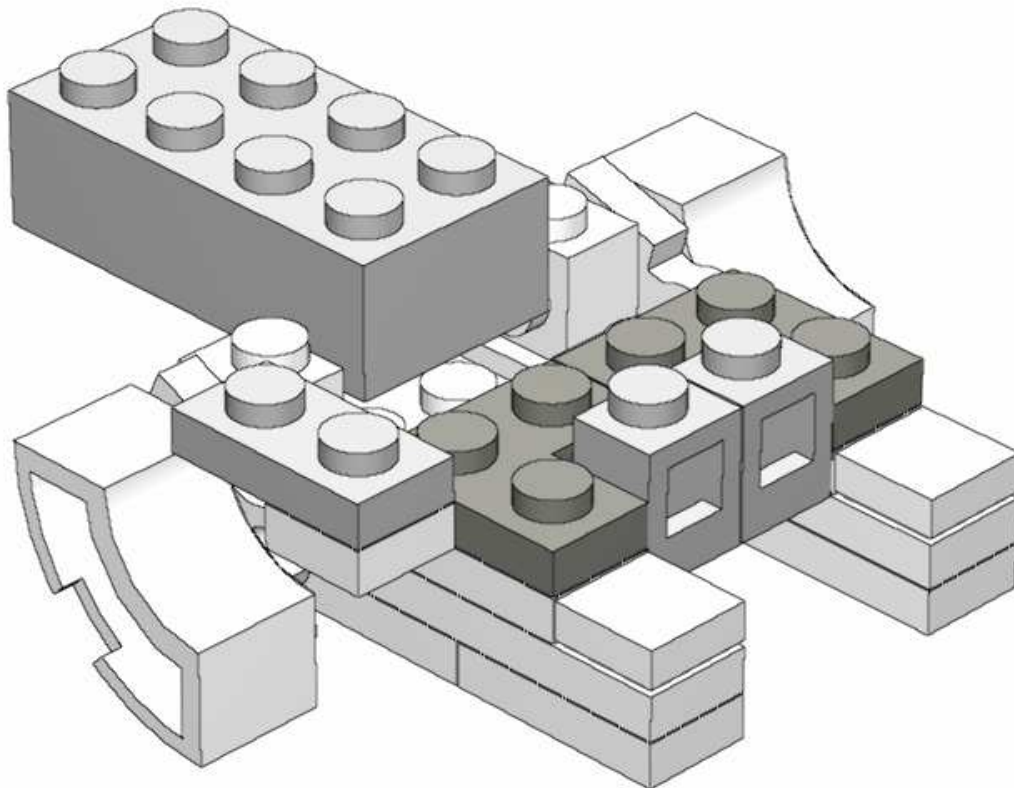
For now, try working with the slopes you have to try and recreate the look of the headdress (behind the head) and also the face. You will probably have to build the face a couple times before it looks right. I had to do just that myself.

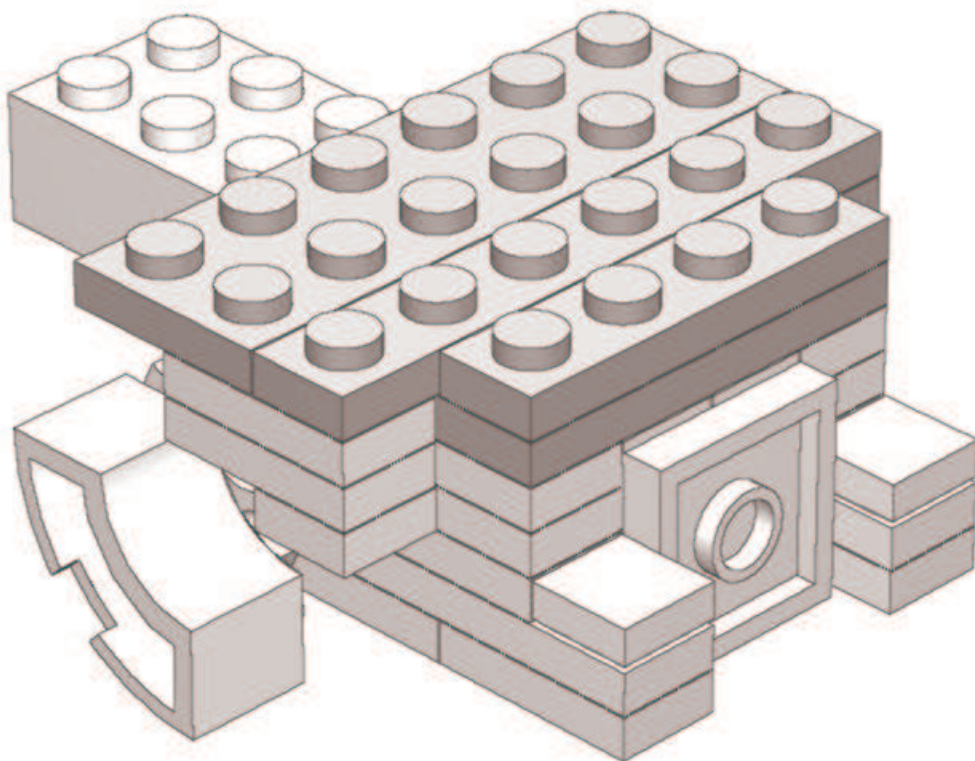
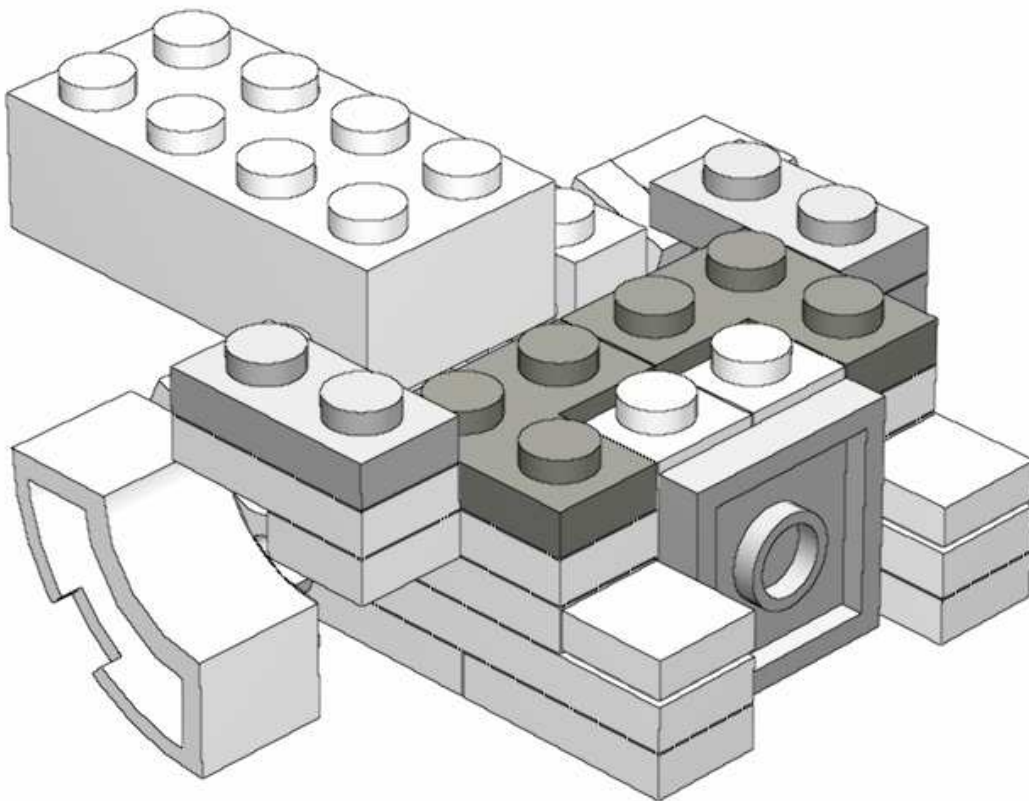
Instructions for Sphinx Face

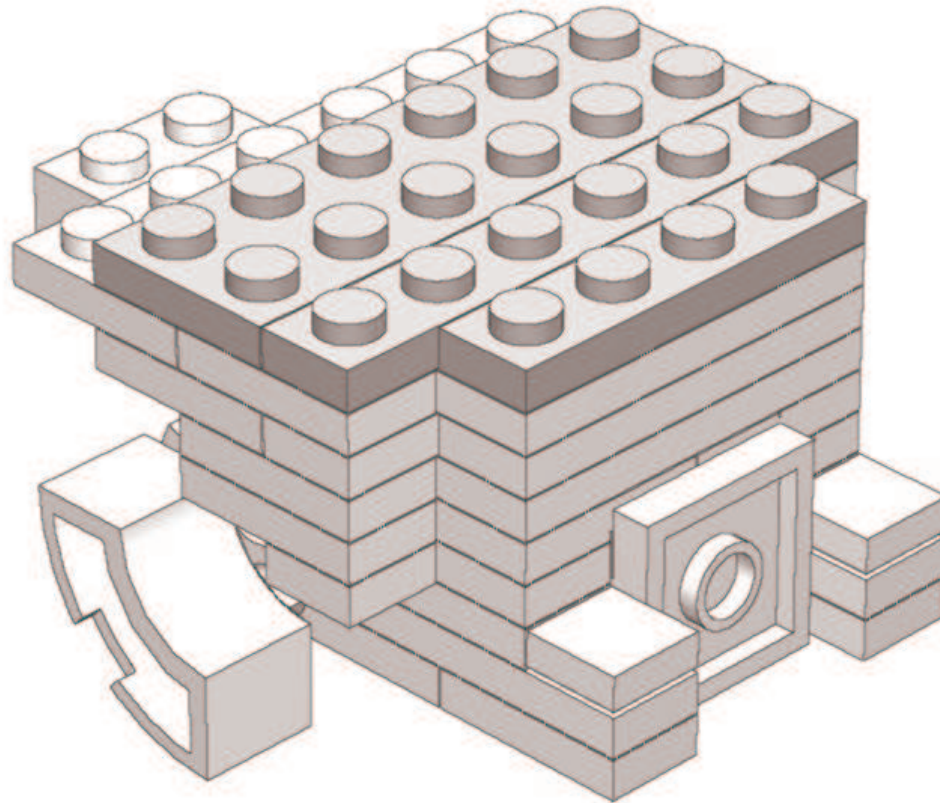
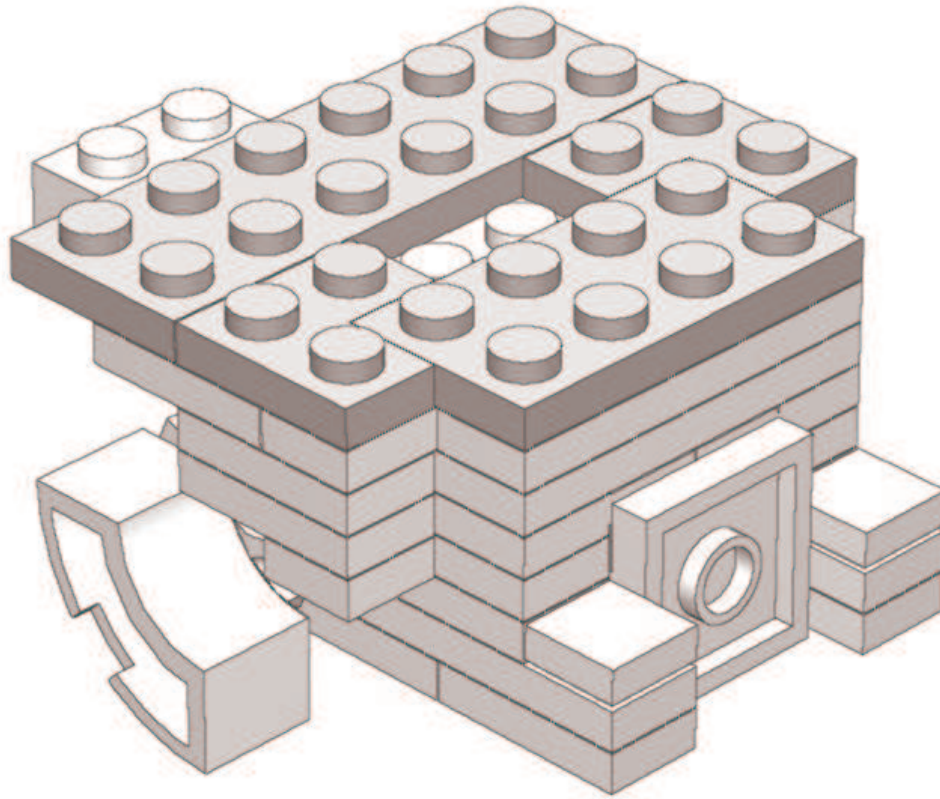


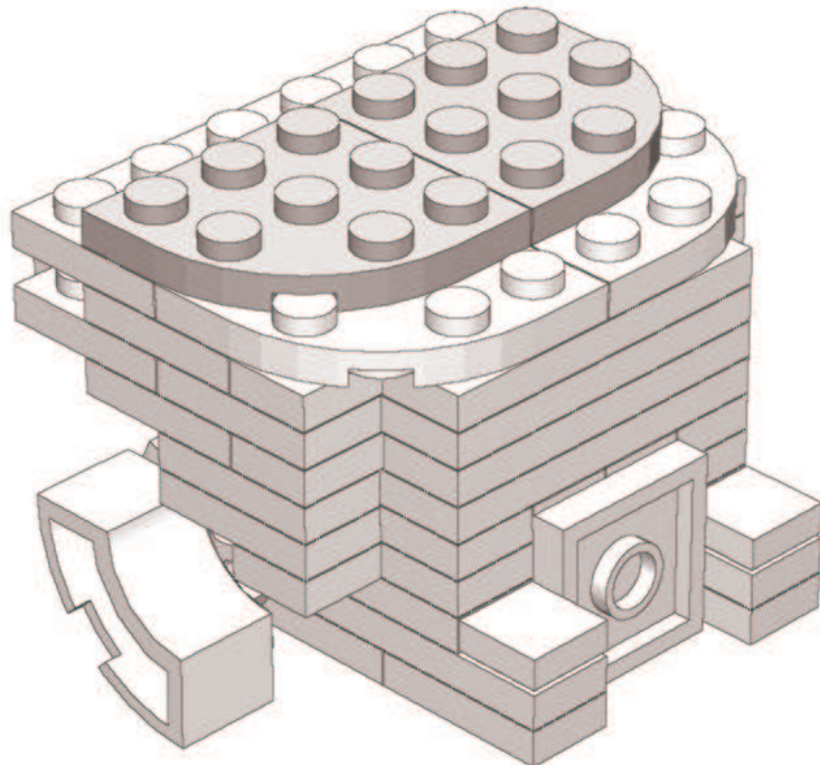
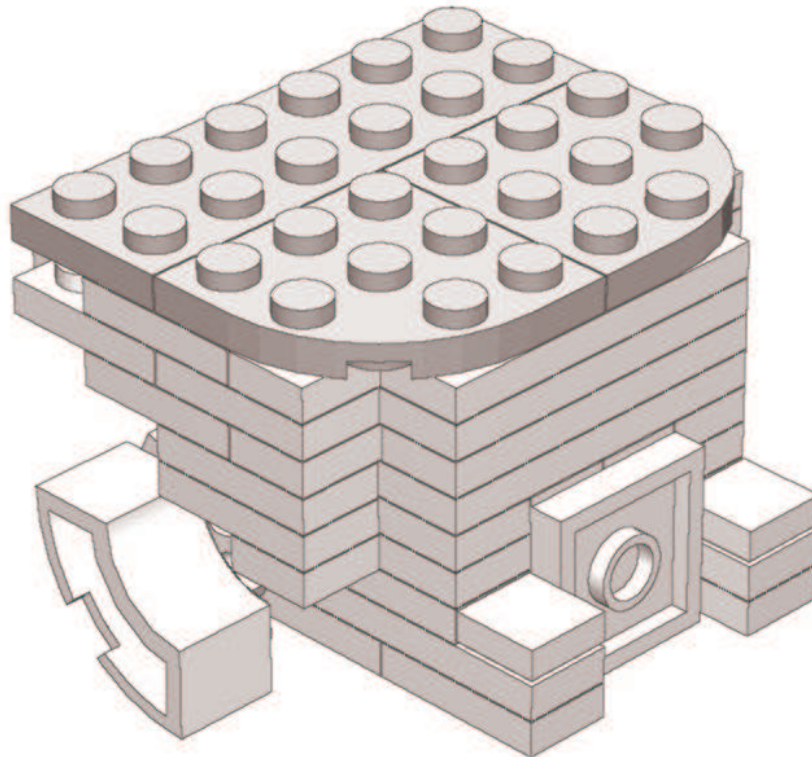


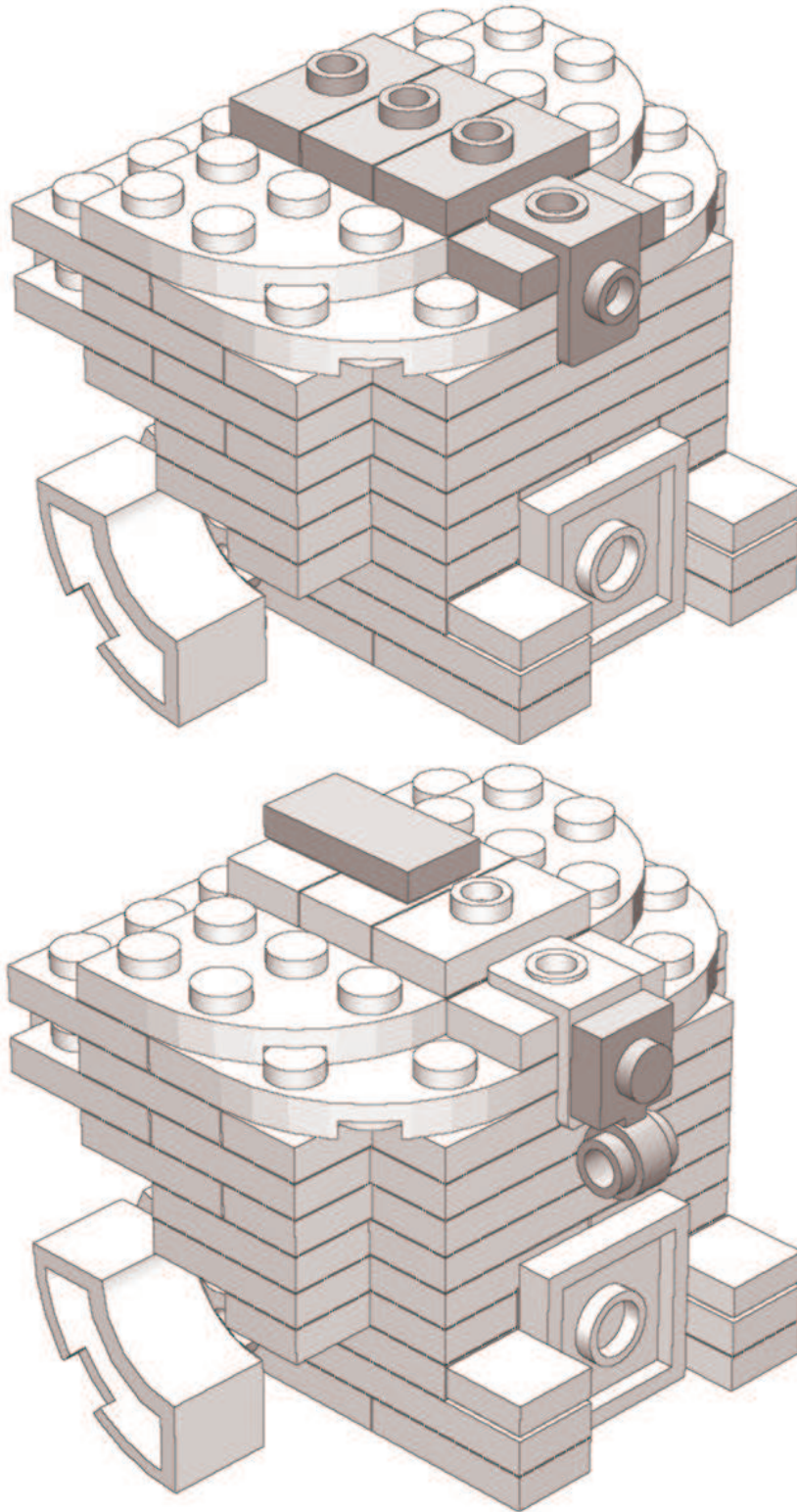
Note that in some steps, such as the one above, pieces seem to “float” without being attached to anything. They actually do attach to the next layer above, but basically hang underneath that layer. So in this case, just know that the 1x1 plate needs to go there and see the next step to find out what part goes above it.











The face shown in this document lacks eyes, as you may have seen already. This feature has been left off the model tips for now, in order to allow you to find your own 'face' to give to your sculpture. Eyes on human or animal-type models can change the look and

feel of the model dramatically. Try several different ways of making eyes for the Sphinx using the pieces you have. With a little experimentation you are likely to find some pieces that make the sculpture your own unique creation.

Allan B.