

# Printing, Painting and Writing



In Medieval Scotland the only people that could read and write were Monks and the Nobility and most books were written, painted and drawn by Monks.

Monks would write on Velum which is the skin from a Lamb. One side of the Velum was smooth and one side slightly rougher. It lasts a lot better than paper and is in fact still used today in Parliament, where all new laws are written on Velum.

A quill, usually made from a goose feather, was used to write on the Velum. Feather Quills had a bad habit of leaking ink all over documents, so to help stop that, Monks would write on the vellum while it was propped up on an almost vertical slope.

The beautiful scrolls that Monks would create had illuminated letter and borders.

The gold coloured ink was in fact gold!

Other colours would be made from a pigment powder mixed with egg!

Black paint could be made using soot or charcoal, Red could be made from Cochineal, which was a type of beetle.

Greens were made from Malachite (a type of mineral) and Blue was made from Lapis Lazuli which was a semi-precious stone and made Blue one of the most expensive colours to make.



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Woodcut prints were a way to create pictures that could be reprinted a number of times.

A picture was carved into the wood, ink rolled onto the wood and then the wooden block was either pressed down onto the paper or the paper was put onto the inked wood and rubbed.

Some woodcuts were then hand painted, especially those that would be given to Royalty, Nobility or the Rich.

## Tasks

### 1 Illuminated Letters

Equipment: Paints, paint brushes, black pen, pencil, paper.

- Look at the picture of the illuminated manuscript.
- Can you see that the first letter is very large and has a wonderful design around it?
- Can you see the floral border painted at the edge of the page?

Write your name on a piece of paper but make the first letter of your name larger than all the other letters.

Using a pencil draw a floral border around the page and around your first letter.

Using the paints colour in your design.

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## 2 Woodcuts

Woodcuts can be difficult to make and take a lot of work, however every woodcut starts with a drawing.

Look at the woodcuts below



These woodcuts show people doing everyday tasks - Stirring a pot, planting vegetables and baking bread.

Think of something that you do each day and try to draw it in the style of a woodcut.

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## 3 Making Paint

Let's make some medieval paint and you can paint your woodcut picture!

You will need

- Egg yolks
- Dried parsley
- Ground Mustard
- Soot or charcoal
- Small bowls
- Mortar and pestle.
- Spoons

1. Put an egg yolk into a small bowl.
2. Add one of the above "Colours"- parsley or mustard or charcoal (Use the mortar and pestle to ground up your pigments if needed- they need to be a very fine powder)
3. Mix thoroughly
4. Add a little water if you think your paint is a little thick.

And that's it!

You can experiment with different pigments.

- How about rubbing 2 rocks/stones together and using the powder to see what colour you can get.
- Try using Turmeric to give an orange colour.

Use your imagination to see what colours you can make.

To get a very deep colour or good coverage of paint you may need to paint your picture in layers. Allow each layer to dry before painting the next one.

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