

Europeana Learning Scenario

Title

Making Medieval Books

Authors

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Abstract

Medieval illuminated manuscripts are hand-written books with pages made from animal skins, adorned with hand painted designs and precious metals. They are some of the most beautiful artefacts that remain from the period. The process of their creation tells us about scribal and artistic practices of the Medieval period. In this programme, students will explore this process through a series of online resources featuring content on the materials and techniques used to make these books.

Keywords

Monasteries, Cities, Courts

Table of Summary

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| Subject | History, Art, |
| Topic | The practice and process of creating Medieval Manuscripts |
| Age of students | 12 - 16 |
| Preparation time | 1 hour to gather and prepare resources |
| Teaching time | 3hrs 45mins |
| Online teaching material | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Manuscripts introductory video by the Getty Museum • Calligraphy Pen video • Calligraphy Templates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carolingian - Gothic • Making Ink videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making Ink Part 1 - Making Ink Part 2 • Leiden University's Exploring the Medieval Manuscript Book video series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scripts - Structuring the Medieval Page - Bindings - Dimensions and Forms - Traces of Scribes. |



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| Offline teaching material | N/A |
| Europeana resources used | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medieval Books Exhibition• Lighting the Way Blog |

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Integration into the curriculum

This programme links with both the Art and History curricula for post primary school level students. Students will learn about and practice the art and craft of making a manuscript — they create their own calligraphy pens and learn about the process of making inks from natural and foraged materials. They will also learn about the craft of book binding. Students will also learn about the historical context in which these manuscripts were made by exploring Europeana blogs, galleries, and videos.

Aim of the lesson

The aim of this lesson is to introduce secondary school students to the processes involved in creating a manuscript in the medieval period, and to give them an understanding of the creativity and craftsmanship that goes into the creation of these objects that makes them so special and valuable. They will be encouraged to learn through doing, as they will be provided with resources and instructions to get hands on and try out some of the processes involved such as calligraphy, ink making, and book binding. They will also discuss what these processes teach us about life in during the medieval period.

Outcome of the lesson

Following this lesson, students will:

- Have an increased understanding of the materials used to create manuscripts in the Medieval Period
- Have gained hands-on experience with the process of calligraphy, ink making, and book binding
- Gain an understand of the use of manuscripts and the value placed upon them in Medieval society
- Gain an understanding of the people who created Medieval manuscripts

21st Century Skills

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy



Activities

| Name of Activity | Procedure | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------|
| Introduction | <p>Students can view this video from the Getty Museum to gain an introductory overview of the process of making Medieval manuscripts.</p> <p>They can also view this exhibition from the Europeana website introducing the various components of Medieval books and processes used to make them.</p> | 15mins |
| Module 1: Calligraphy | <p>In this section, students will learn about the practice of calligraphy in the Middle Ages. They will also learn about the scribes that created them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic of calligraphy by watching the video from Leiden University to learn about Scripts in Medieval manuscripts. Students can also view the video Traces of Scribes. • Students can then make their own calligraphy pen guided by this video <u>Materials required:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Straw or large feather 2. Sandpaper 3. Scissors 4. Black ink 5. Paper • Students can practice the Carolingian script and the Gothic script using the following templates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carolingian 2. Gothic | 60mins |



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| <p>Module 2: Making Ink</p> | <p>In this section, students will learn about manuscript illumination and the process of making ink in the Medieval period. They will also get to experiment with making their own inks.</p> <p>Introduce students to the topic by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading the following Europeana blog about manuscript illumination viewing the following video: Making Ink Part 1 2. Students can make their own ink from natural and foraged guided by the following video: Making Ink Part 2 <p><u>Materials required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural plant materials (foraged plants, spinach, cabbage, onion skins etc.) • Clay / Charcoal • Water • Pot • Hob or gas stove • Pestle and mortar • Sieve • Funnel • Coffee filters • Gum arabic • Salt • Baking Powder • Containers • Paper and pen | <p>2 hours</p> |
| <p>Module 3: Layout and Form</p> | <p>In this section, students will explore two video resources from Leiden University outlining the ways in which Medieval Manuscripts were laid out and structured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuring the Medieval Page • Dimensions and Forms <p>This can be followed up with a class discussion. Some prompting questions can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways are Medieval manuscripts similar to the books we read today? • How are Medieval manuscripts different to the books we read today? | <p>20mins</p> |
| <p>Module 4: Conclusion: Binding</p> | <p>In this section, concludes the programme on making medieval books. Students will explore medieval book bindings. This video by the University of Leiden will outline the variety of bindings that covered medieval books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bindings. | <p>10mins</p> |