



# The Book of Kells

## Primary School Teachers' Guide

3rd - 6th Class

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The Book  
of Kells™

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Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

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## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

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This resource is **for classroom use** pre-visit or post-visit. The worksheets at the back of this guide may be given to pupils as hand-outs. **All other sections** of the guide are aimed at teachers planning class lessons and activities. The meanings of words in bold print throughout the text are included in the glossary.



## CURRICULUM LINKS

Strand:	Strand Unit:	Classes	Section
<b>History</b>			
Skills and concepts development: Working as a Historian	Time and chronology	3rd – 6th	Worksheets
Story	Stories from the lives of people in the past	3rd – 6th	2: Legends of St. Colum Cille
	Myths and legends	3rd – 6th	2: Legends of St. Colum Cille
Early people and ancient societies	Early Christian Ireland	3rd – 6th	1: The Book of Kells 2: Legends of St. Colum Cille 3: How was the Book of Kells made? 4: Artwork from the Book of Kells
Continuity and change over time	Literature, art, crafts and culture	5th and 6th	1: The Book of Kells 2: Legends of St. Colum Cille 3: How was the Book of Kells made? 4: Artwork from the Book of Kells
<b>Visual Arts</b>			
Drawing	Making drawings	3rd - 6th	1: The Book of Kells (activity) 2: Legends of St. Colum Cille worksheets
	Looking and responding	3rd - 6th	2: Legends of St. Colum Cille 4: Artwork from the Book of Kells
Paint and colour	Painting	3rd - 6th	1: The Book of Kells (activity) 2: Legends of St. Colum Cille
	Looking and responding	3rd - 6th	2: Legends of St. Colum Cille 4: Artwork from the Book of Kells
<b>Religious Education</b>			
Word of God	Bible	3rd - 6th	1: The Book of Kells
<b>English</b>			
Writing	Exploring and using	3rd - 6th	1: The Book of Kells (activity)
<b>Science</b>			
Materials	Materials and change	3rd - 6th	3: How was the Book of Kells made? (activity)

# INTRODUCTION TO IRISH MANUSCRIPTS

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Christianity was introduced to Ireland in the early fifth century. As this was a religion based on a book, the Bible, the earliest missionaries to Ireland would have brought books (manuscripts) with them, and ultimately taught the Irish how to read and write. A manuscript is a book that was written by hand. Before the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, we had ogham (an ancient system of writing designed specifically for the Irish language), but it was only practical for short inscriptions, and was superseded by the Roman alphabet which was introduced from Britain.

The Library of Trinity College Dublin is privileged to have the world's largest collection of gospel books from Early Christian Ireland. These manuscripts include the Codex Usserianus Primus, the Book of Durrow, the Book of Armagh, the Book of Dimma, the Book of Mulling, the Book of Kells and the Garland of Howth.



# TEACHERS' NOTES 1: THE BOOK OF KELLS

## What is the Book of Kells?

The Book of Kells is an **illuminated manuscript** containing the four gospels of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) together with supporting texts and commentary on the Bible. It was created by Early Christian monks and is written in Latin. It is celebrated for its lavish decoration and is considered one of the world's greatest medieval treasures. It

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Book of Kells is thought to be over 1,200 years old.

is set apart from other illuminated manuscripts of the same period by the quality of its artwork and the sheer number of illustrations that run throughout the 680 pages of the book. It was intended for ceremonial use on special occasions such as Easter rather than for everyday use.

### FACT

Sadly, 30 folios from the book have been lost over the years. Today, there are 340 folios (680 pages, back and front).

## When was it made?

It is thought that the Book of Kells may have been made around 800 AD. This was almost 400 years after St. Patrick arrived in Ireland as a missionary to convert the Irish people to Christianity. When the Book of Kells was written, there were less than half a million people living in Ireland. During this period, people lived and farmed in close communities along rivers and waterways and had fortified homesteads to defend themselves against raiding groups. There were three categories of social standing in a community; slaves or hostages at the bottom, then peasants and soldiers, and at the top were tribal kings.



*The island of Iona, Scotland*



*The Old Library, Trinity College Dublin*

## MONKS, MONASTERIES AND THE LAND OF SAINTS AND SCHOLARS

A monk is a person who has a life completely devoted to God and lives under religious vows. A monastery is a building or cluster of buildings where a community of monks live. At the time the Book of Kells was made, monasteries were important places of learning and students came from all over Europe to study in them. Ireland became known as the land of saints and scholars.

## Where was it made?

Two monasteries are important to the story of the Book of Kells: the monastery of Iona (off the West coast of Scotland) and the monastery of Kells in Co. Meath (Ireland). When Viking raids made it too dangerous for monks in the monastery of Iona to remain there, they fled to the monastery of Kells in Co. Meath. This was around 806 AD. It is not known if the book was made wholly in Iona or Kells or if part of it was written in each location, but we know that it remained in Kells throughout the Middle Ages and eventually, it was placed in the library of Trinity College Dublin by Bishop Henry Jones of Meath in 1661.

### DID YOU KNOW?

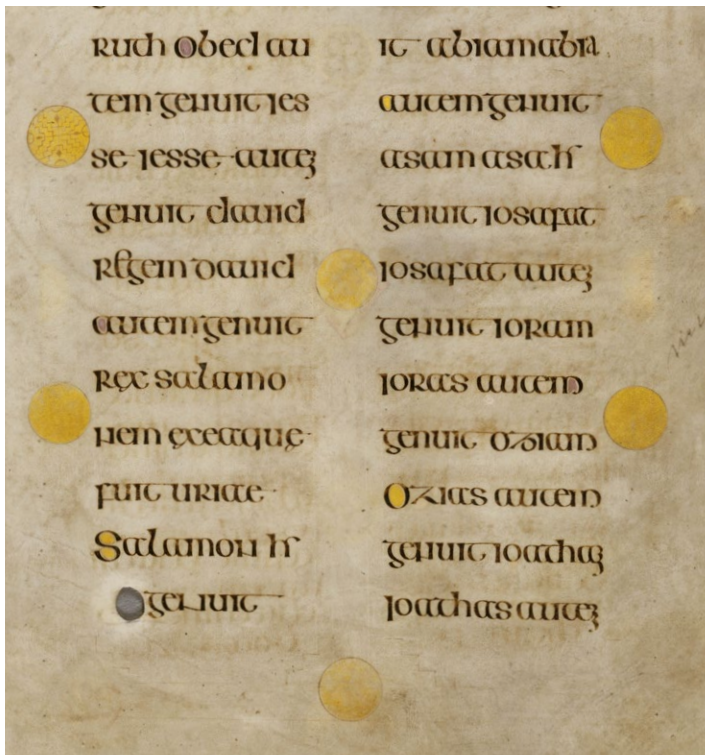
The pages of a manuscript are called folios and the page numbering system works like this:

*Folio 1 recto ( or f 1r for short ) means the front of page 1 and folio 1 verso ( or f 1v ) means the back of page 1.*

The monastery of Iona was set up by St. Colum Cille (or Columba), who was one of Ireland's best known saints. He was born in Gartan, Co. Donegal, but left Ireland to go into exile on the island of Iona and founded the monastery there in 563 AD. While it is not known why the Book of Kells was made, one theory is that it was written to honour the 200th anniversary of St. Colum Cille's death.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Book of Kells was never completed. Two pages are blank and in a few others we can see some decorative elements that were begun but left unfinished. Why? Nobody knows!



*Folio 30r, the Book of Kells, showing unfinished decoration.*

## Life in an early Christian monastery

In the days when the Book of Kells was being written, young men who joined the monastery did so at 15 or 16 years of age. One of the ways that people knew these men belonged to the monastery was because the tops of their heads were shaved. The shaving of part or all of the hair on their head was called 'tonsure'. Monastery life meant following a strict timetable of prayer and work. The self-sufficient monastery was a hive of industry. Each monk had a role within the monastery – some were farmers, others were metal



workers, some taught the neighbouring children and others were missionaries, telling people outside the monastery about the gospel. The missionaries carried pocket gospel books that were small enough to carry in a satchel. Some monks were scribes, who did the writing in manuscripts like the Book of Kells.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Long ago, the Book of Kells used to be kept in a book shrine, a case which was probably made from gold and precious jewels. In the year 1006 AD, the Book of Kells was stolen. Why? For its book shrine. The book was found two months later but the book shrine was never found!

### DISCOVERIES

Archaeologists have made special studies in Iona which have led to interesting discoveries. For example, they found that the monastery was surrounded by a sturdy enclosure which probably had bushes growing on top. Within it there were several buildings dotted around an open space called a plateola. They also found evidence that the monks made book satchels and shoes from leather and covered boats with it as well. The leather was made in their tannery from the skins of cattle and sheep. Some of the monks were expert at woodworking and the knives and other tools that they used were made by monks who were good at iron-working. Fortunately, they swept some debris from their trades into the ditch outside the monastery's enclosure, which has been very helpful for our friends the archaeologists!



# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 1: THE BOOK OF KELLS

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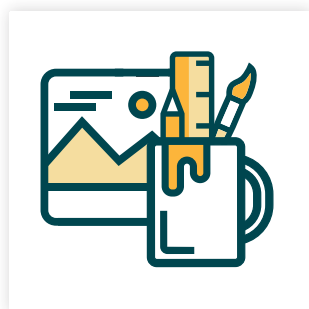
## The Book of Kells Creative Competition

Each year, Trinity invites people of all ages, from school children to adults, to submit new artistic interpretations of the Book of Kells. Ask your pupils to create a painting, drawing, poem or short story based on the images of the Book of Kells and enter to be in with a chance of winning a prize for your school. Find out more at:

[www.bookofkells.ie/competition](http://www.bookofkells.ie/competition)

### ART

Painting / Drawing



### WRITING

Poem / Short Story



FREE to ENTER

## TEACHERS' NOTES 2: LEGENDS OF ST. COLUM CILLE

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St. Colum Cille (or Columba), lived in the sixth century. He was many things: a saint, a prince and a person of great influence and vision. Colum Cille was the kind of person that people told stories about and there are lots of legends and stories about him which are still told today. Here is a selection of them which you may like to read to your class.

### To each cow its calf

St. Colum Cille went to visit his old teacher and friend, St. Finnian of Moville. St. Finnian showed him a book of **psalms** that he had brought back from Rome. Finnian was as proud as punch and Colum Cille could see why. This book was amazing, and Colum Cille wanted to have one himself. So he asked Finnian if he could make a copy of it, but Finnian said no! Colum Cille thought that was a bit mean of Finnian and decided to copy the book in secret. He stayed up all night in his cell, several nights in a row, copying the book while Finnian slept. Eventually, Finnian became suspicious and sent one of his monks to Colum Cille's cell to spy on him. The monk

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The judgement that King Diarmait made about the book that Colum Cille copied is one of the earliest known rulings on copyright.

peeked through a crack in the door and saw him busily copying the precious book. Uh-oh, Colum Cille was caught! But what the spying monk didn't know was that Colum Cille had a pet crane, which is a bird with a long beak. And while the monk was peeping through the crack in the door, the bird went over and poked its beak through the crack, into the monk's eye. Ouch!

When Finnian heard that Colum Cille had copied his book without permission, he demanded that Colum Cille hand over the copy he made. There was a big row, so big that the matter was referred to the high king of Ireland (Diarmait MacCearbhaill) to decide who should keep the copy Colum Cille made. The high king ruled in favour of Finnian, famously saying, "To each cow its calf and to each book its copy". Finnian kept both his own book and the copy that Colum Cille made. Colum Cille was not happy that King Diarmait ruled against him and that was the start of a feud that resulted in a huge battle called the battle of Cúl Dreimhne, with about 3000 casualties. Later, Colum Cille looked back on what had happened with huge regret, knowing that he was partly responsible. He vowed to leave Ireland and go into exile on the island of Iona.

#### A SEED OF TRUTH

While legends are not always true stories, there is often a seed of truth in them.

Legends often begin out of something that actually happened. For example, Colum Cille really did go into exile on Iona sometime after the battle of Cúl Dreimhne which took place in 561 AD. He lived on Iona for the rest of his life and established a monastery there, the Monastery of Iona. It is in that monastery that we believe the Book of Kells was (wholly or partially) made.

## St. Colum Cille and the Loch Ness monster

While travelling in Scotland with some of his monks, St. Colum Cille came to the banks of a lake called Loch Ness. They had no boat to cross the lake but Colum Cille saw a boat on the other side. He ordered one of the monks, whose name was Lugne, to swim across the lake and get the boat. Lugne had heard a story of a man who once went swimming in Loch Ness and got eaten by a monster so he didn't really want to go in. However, he didn't want to disobey Colum Cille either, so in he went. Just then, with a thunderous roar, an enormous monster emerged from the depths of Loch Ness and darted at Lugne with its jaws open wide. Colum Cille immediately raised his hand and invoking the name of God, commanded the monster not to touch the man and to go back at once. And the monster disappeared back down into the lake as quickly as if it had been pulled by ropes.

### DID YOU KNOW?

St. Colum Cille was a great-great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages, who was the person who brought St. Patrick to Ireland as a slave when Patrick was young.

Another interesting connection to St. Patrick is that here in Trinity College, we have the earliest copy of St. Patrick's Confessio. This is one of the books written by St. Patrick and is an account of his life in Ireland. The copy in Trinity College is contained within the Book of Armagh.

### The Convention of Drumceat

When St. Colum Cille left Ireland to go into exile on Iona, he promised never to see Ireland or set foot on Irish soil again. Years later, he was asked to come back to Ireland to speak at a very important meeting, a convention of kings at a place called Drumceat. This convention was about two subjects which were of deep interest to Colum Cille: firstly, the relationship between the Scottish Dal Riada and Ireland (Dal Riada was a kingdom that included parts of western Scotland and northeastern Ireland); and secondly the proposal to expel the pagan poets from Ireland. Colum Cille really wanted to go back to Ireland for this convention, but how could he do that without breaking his promise? Then, he had a brilliant idea! He tied two big sods of Scottish turf to the bottom of his feet and he put on a blind-fold. So, the whole time he was in Ireland for the convention, he didn't see Ireland or have to set foot on Irish soil, so he never broke his promise!

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 2: LEGENDS OF ST. COLUM CILLE

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### Make a class collage

Use the story of Colum Cille and the Loch Ness monster as a stimulus for a drawing activity.

First of all, tell the story to your class. Then have your students work in pairs to do the following:

1. Re-tell the story to their partner.
2. Describe to their partner what they imagine the monster to look like. For example, how big is it? What colour is it? Does it have sharp teeth? Does it have a tail? Are there scales on its back? How many heads/arms/legs does it have? What kind of facial expressions does it make? Does it look scary? What makes it look scary?
3. Plan out how they are going to draw and decorate the monster and discuss it with their partner. They should decide
  - What drawing materials to use and how they will use them. For example, oil pastels, colouring pencils, chalk, markers, paint applied with brushes, rags, sticks, sponges etc.
  - What kinds of colours to use e.g. warm or cool colours, complementary or harmonious colours, variations in tone
  - How they can create emphasis, rhythm and contrast through the use of colour and tone
4. Draw and decorate their monster
5. Look at their work and discuss the following with their partner:
  - What the monster is doing in the drawing
  - How action is suggested
  - What they intended the monster to look like
  - Any challenges they faced and how they overcame them
  - How they feel about their picture
6. Cut out the monster and stick onto a large sheet as part of a class collage.

## TEACHERS' NOTES 3:

# HOW WAS THE BOOK OF KELLS MADE?

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There were no printers at the time the Book of Kells was made, so every book had to be written by hand. (In fact, the word manuscript literally means *written by hand*. It comes from two Latin words, manus: *hand* and scriptus: *written*). This was a time before factories made paper and books, so every page was made by hand and every book was bound (put together) by hand. This was a long and difficult process for the monks who made the book, not least because they had to make all their own materials. Even the ink used to write the book was made by the monks.

### Tools and materials

The basic tools the monks used for writing were quills, ink horns, styluses and wax tablets.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

It took the skins of approximately 185 calves to make the Book of Kells.

#### Quill Pen

The monks wrote with quill pens and made them from birds' tail feathers – preferably from swans or geese. They would cut the base of the feather at an angle to form the nib or point of the pen.

#### Ink well

Ink wells, which the scribes kept their ink in while writing, were made from cow horns. A scribe would dip their quill into the ink well to ink it up for writing.

#### Stylus

A stylus was a pointed tool, generally made of metal or bone, which was used for ruling a manuscript. It was also used for writing on wax tablets.

#### Wax tablet

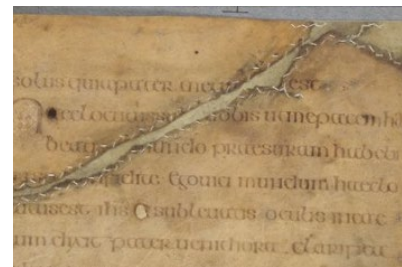
A wax tablet was a slab of wood with a layer of wax on top. Words could be scratched into the wax with a stylus. Wax tablets were used in a number of ways, for example, they were used by scribes and their trainees to practice their writing, for drafting texts (making rough copies) and for trying out designs.



Wax tablet



Detail of folio 316r of the Book of Kells, where the scribe wrote over a patch.



Folio 339r of the Book of Kells which has been damaged and stitched.

## Vellum

The **folios** (pages) of the Book of Kells were made from vellum, which is prepared calf-skin. To make vellum, the skin of a calf was soaked in lime or excrement and the hair was scraped off with a knife. Then the skin was stretched on a frame to dry and rubbed smooth before being cut into pages. Cattle were very valuable so vellum was never wasted. It was used even when it contained flaws. On some pages of the Book of Kells, you can see stitching on the vellum where it was repaired or patched.

## YUCK!

Some flaws and holes in vellum were actually caused by flies and parasites while the animals were still alive. Sometimes they were kept and even highlighted e.g. by outlining them in red ink.

## Inks and pigments

Beautiful colours were used in the Book of Kells but what did the monks make the colours from? Pigments (the colouring agents in paint) and inks for the Book of Kells were made from natural materials like plants and minerals. The monks most likely made the inks and pigments themselves.

### Inks

The monks made one type of black ink by using the juices from crushed **oak apples** and iron sulphate and another type from soot. These black inks were used for writing the text.

### Pigments

Here are some of the pigments used to make the colours in the Book of Kells.

<b>Orange-red</b>	Red lead
<b>Yellow-gold</b>	Orpiment, a toxic mineral, containing a poison called arsenic
<b>Blue</b>	Indigo or woad (a plant widely grown in Ireland)
<b>Green</b>	Verdigris, which comes from corroded copper
<b>Dark green</b>	'Vergaut' was made by mixing two other pigments, orpiment and indigo
<b>White</b>	Mostly made from gypsum, a mineral which is plentiful in Ireland
<b>Purple</b>	'Orcein' which is a dye made from a species of fungus

## Binding

Binding is the process of physically assembling a book (putting it together). To bind the book, the monks made 'gatherings' (several pieces of vellum folded together like a booklet). Then they stacked 'gatherings' and sewed them together.

## Scribes

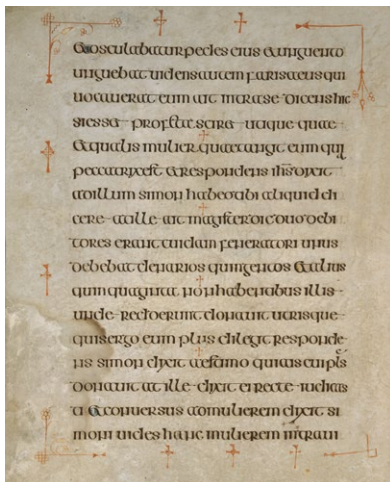
It was a scribe's job to do the writing in manuscripts. Larger books, like the Book of Kells, used several scribes. Scribes would have needed excellent eyesight to create the tiny details in the designs of the Book of Kells

### DID YOU KNOW?

Scribes and artists spent long hours preparing colours and vellum and they had to work with poisonous and foul-smelling materials. Not an easy job!

of Kells and scribes were thought of as important people; however on account of the poisonous nature of the pigments they used, they probably died before reaching old age. Scribes worked in a special writing room in a monastery called a scriptorium. They were trained in the art of calligraphy, which means 'beautiful writing'. The scribes made many errors when they were copying the writing. To correct their mistakes, the scribes would usually draw red dots in the letters to be

deleted. One scribe copied a whole page by accident! In this case, they corrected the mistake by drawing red crosses on the page to show that it was an error.



### Calligraphy

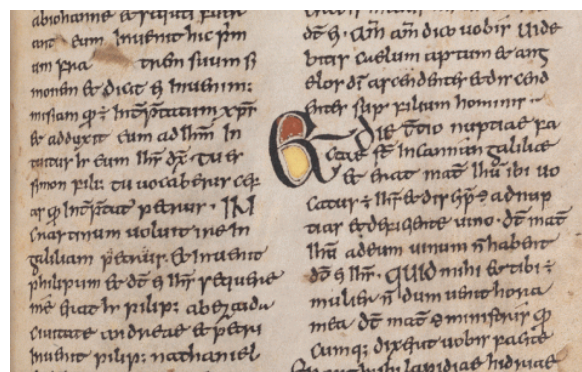
There are lots of different styles of calligraphy. The style of calligraphy used in the Book of Kells is called 'insular majuscule script'. Writing in this style of calligraphy is a little like writing in block capitals – it is what you do when you want to be very neat and tidy, but it takes a lot of time.

Another style of calligraphy used in early Christian manuscripts is insular miniscule script. This is a little like using joined writing – it is a messier but quicker way of writing. Can you see how different the two styles look?

Folio 218v, the Book of Kells, which was copied out by accident.



Insular majuscule script from the Book of Kells



Insular miniscule script from the Book of Dimma

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 3: HOW WAS THE BOOK OF KELLS MADE?

### Copper coin experiment

The pigment verdigris in the Book of Kells was made from the oxidation of copper. Here is an experiment which shows how oxidation works and turns a coin green.



#### You will need:

- 10 copper coins (5 or 10 cent coins)
- White vinegar
- Salt
- A teaspoon (not metal)
- A bowl (not metal)
- Paper towels
- Plastic gloves (to protect your hands)

#### Method:

1. Fill a bowl with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of vinegar and a teaspoon of salt. Mix well.
2. Dip one coin half-way into the vinegar and hold it there for 10-20 seconds. Watch half of the coin get shiny!
2. Put the rest of the coins into the bowl and leave them there for at least 10 minutes.
3. Remove all the coins and leave them on the paper towel for a few hours. Wait and see what happens!

#### What's going on?

A chemical reaction has occurred! A chemical reaction is a chemical change which forms new substances and the chemical reaction happening here is called oxidation.

The oxidation of copper is a chemical reaction between copper and oxygen which produces copper oxide. The coins are made of copper. Acetic acid from the vinegar helps the copper in the coin react with the oxygen in the air to form a new substance, called copper oxide (copper + oxygen  $\rightarrow$  copper oxide). Copper and oxygen are the reactants and copper oxide is the product. The blue-green coloured copper oxide formed in this experiment is verdigris.

The Statue of Liberty in New York is coated with a thin layer of copper. Why has it turned a blue-green colour? Because of oxidation.





## Walking water experiment

The monks made the pigment vergaut (dark green) by mixing two other pigments: orpiment (yellow gold) and indigo (blue). Colours can be mixed to produce other colours in different ways. Take a different approach to learning about colour mixing with this fun walking water science experiment.



### You will need:

- Three empty glasses
- Water
- Blue and yellow food colouring
- Paper towels
- Plastic gloves (to protect your hands from staining)

### Method:

1. Place the three glasses side by side.
2. Put water into the glasses on the outside, leaving the middle one empty.
3. Add a generous amount of blue food colouring to one glass of water and yellow food colouring to the other.
4. Cut a paper towel in half and fold into quarters lengthways.
5. Place the pieces of paper towel so that they run from the glasses with coloured water into the empty glass.
6. Wait and see what happens.

After about thirty minutes, the water starts 'walking' up the paper towels and over into the middle glass. After about two hours, there will be a mix of the two colours in the middle glass.

### What's going on?

The coloured water appears to defy gravity, but in reality it travels up the paper towel because of a process called capillary action.

The paper towel is very 'absorbent' which means there are enough gaps in its fibre for the water to move through quickly and easily. Water molecules bind to the paper towel through a process called adhesion. The water molecules are also cohesive (they have a tendency to stick to one another). The adhesive force between the water and the paper towel is stronger than the cohesive forces inside the water itself. The gaps in the paper towel act like capillary tubes, pulling the water upwards. As a result, the water travels up and across the paper towel, out of one glass and into another.

Transpiration, the process by which water travels from the roots of a plant to the leaves, is also driven by capillary action.

## TEACHERS' NOTES 4: ARTWORK FROM THE BOOK OF KELLS

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We believe that at least three main artists created the beautiful artwork in the Book of Kells. There are many colourful designs in the book. It has 680 pages and all but two of them are decorated, but what are they decorated with? Paintings of animals and people as well as beautifully decorated capital letters and different kinds of designs and patterns.

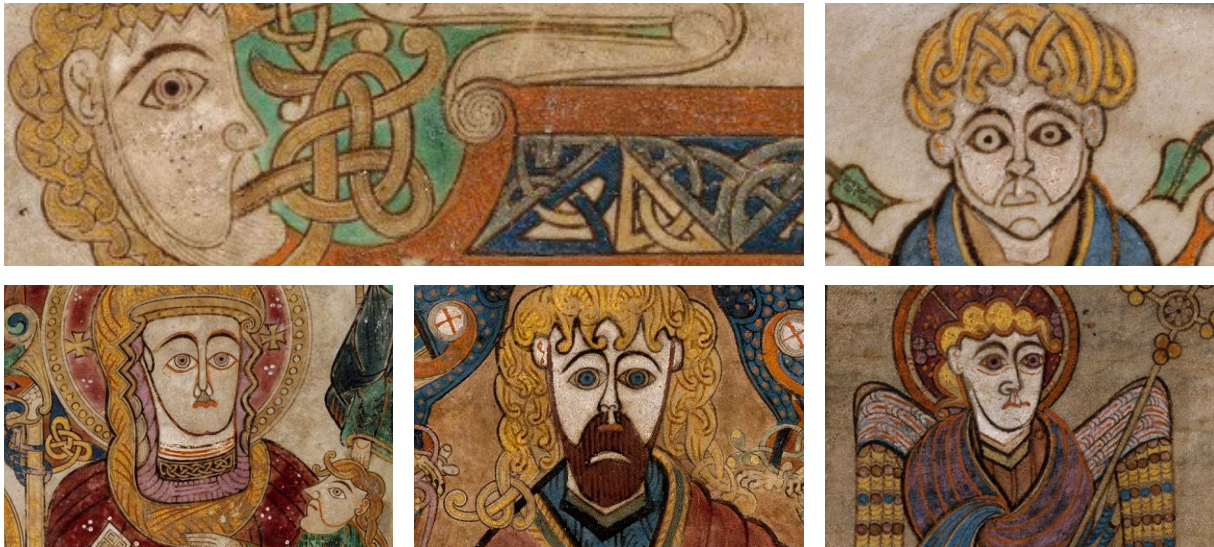
### Animals

The animals painted in the Book of Kells include birds, butterflies, calves, cats, dogs, fish, goats, hares, hens, horses, lions, lizards, mice, moths, otters, peacocks, snakes, stags and wolves. Some of these, such as hens and fish, are animals that monks would have seen from day to day and they could draw them from life. For the more exotic animals which are not native to Ireland and fanciful creatures such as a man with a fish's tail and fins, the monks may have referenced art from other countries and used their imaginations.



## People

Many figures of people can be found in the Book of Kells. They are figures of Jesus, Mary, the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and angels, as well as soldiers and men. By looking at the clothes the people in these paintings are wearing, we can learn about the kind of clothing that was worn in Britain and Ireland in the eighth and ninth centuries. We can even see the kinds of hairstyles people had back then. The most important people had the most elaborate hairstyles.



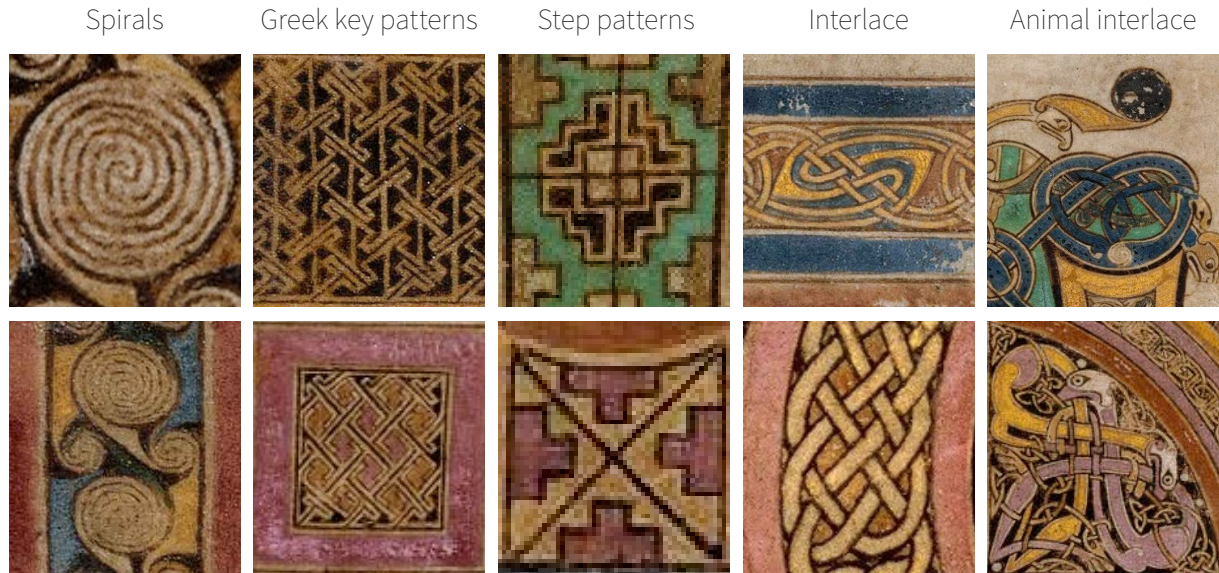
## Capital letters

Throughout the book, there are 2000 illuminated capital letters. These coloured letters are beautifully decorated and some are shaped like animals, plants, flowers or people. Each of these capital letters is different; no design is repeated.



## Designs and patterns

The types of designs we see in the Book of Kells include spirals, Greek key patterns, step patterns and interlace, among others. Interlace looks like ribbons which are interwoven or knotted together. Much of the interlace in the Book of Kells is animal interlace, which is interlace drawn to look like interwoven animal bodies.



### Minute detail

The intricate designs in the Book of Kells are very detailed and some of them are so small that they can barely be seen with the naked eye. This page, the Chi Rho page, is the most famous page from the book. It contains many, many tiny intricate designs and patterns as well as tiny pictures of people and animals.

### Symbols

Some pictures in the Book of Kells have particular meanings. They are symbols (pictures which represent something else). For example, there are pictures of lions and fish, which stand for Jesus, pictures of snakes which stand for Jesus's resurrection and pictures of vines and chalices which stand for the Eucharist. Designs grouped in three stand for the Trinity.

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 4: ARTWORK FROM THE BOOK OF KELLS

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### Looking at and responding to art - the Arrest of Christ page

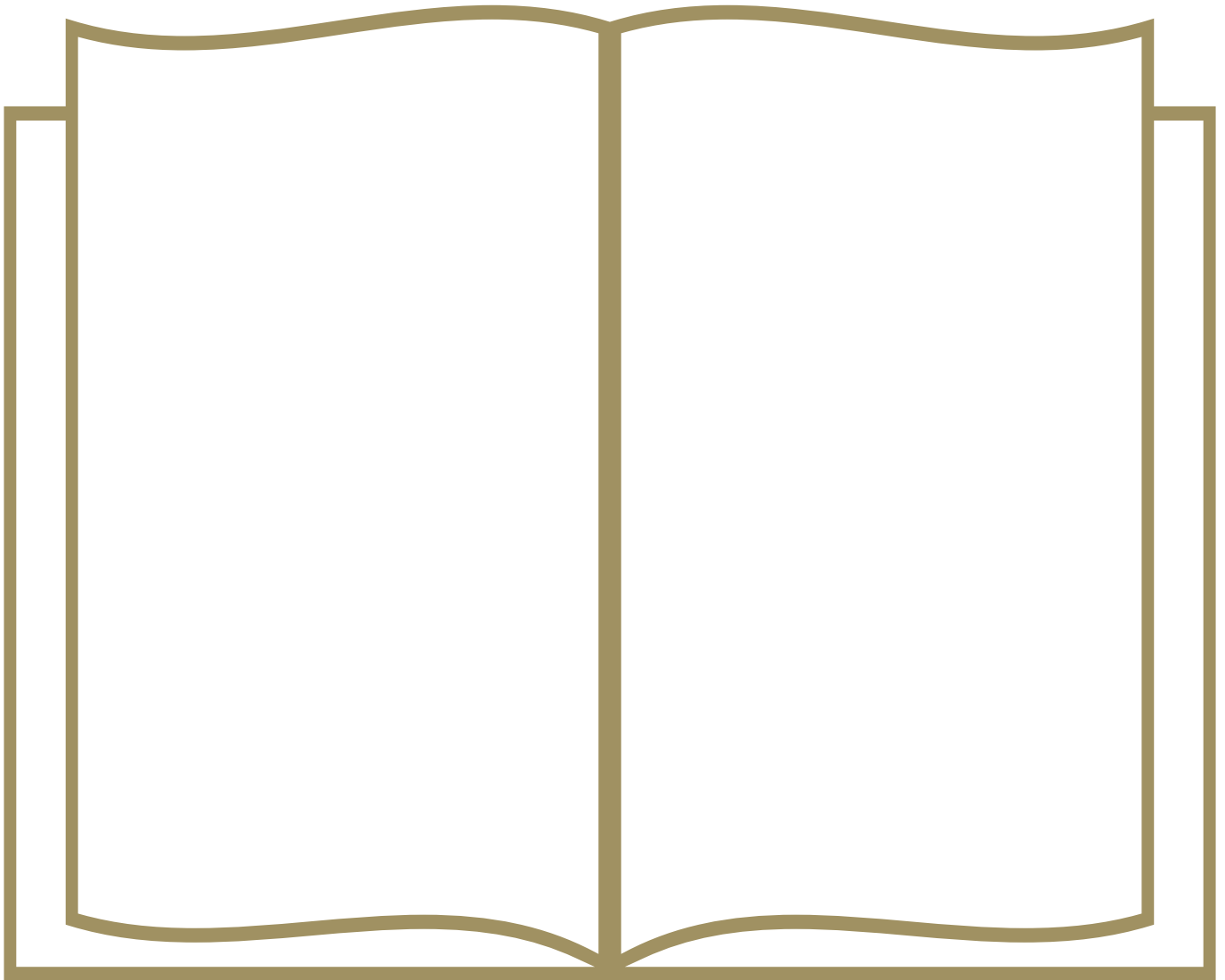
For this activity you can provide the pupils in your class with a colour copy of the Arrest of Christ page (folio 114r) from the Book of Kells or project the page for the whole class to see. (A copy of the image is included in the appendix, page 29, or you can view the book online at [http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS\\_ID=MS58\\_003v](http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=MS58_003v) and navigate to folio 114r).

Ask your pupils questions such as the following to help them focus on the work:

- a. How was the image made?
- b. What was it made from?
- c. Who made it?
- d. What did the artist intend?
- e. What is happening in the picture? What is it about?
- f. What do you see in the picture? Do you notice anything else?
- g. What kinds of designs and patterns can you see in the picture?
- h. What part of the picture did you notice first?
- i. What colours do you see?
- j. What colours stand out most? Why?
- k. What colours are used more than once?
- l. Do you think a mood is created in the picture? What mood is it? How is it created?
- m. What part of the picture catches your eye?
- n. What do you think are the brightest and the darkest parts of the picture?
- o. What are the busiest and quietest parts of the picture?
- p. Do some parts of the picture seem closer and others further away? Which ones?
- q. Do some colours seem to be closer and others further away? Which ones?
- r. Does everything in the painting look flat or three dimensional with a sense of depth?
- s. Could you describe this painting to someone who cannot see it?
- t. What do you think was most important to the artist? Was it the subject matter and meaning or was it making the figures look realistic?

## Design your own illuminated letter

There are 2000 illuminated capital letters in the Book of Kells. Imagine you are a scribe illuminator drawing an illuminated letter on a page of this book. Draw the first initial of your name and fill it with designs and motifs that you have seen in images from the Book of Kells. You can use animals, plants, flowers, people, interlace, spirals, step patterns, Greek key patterns etc.



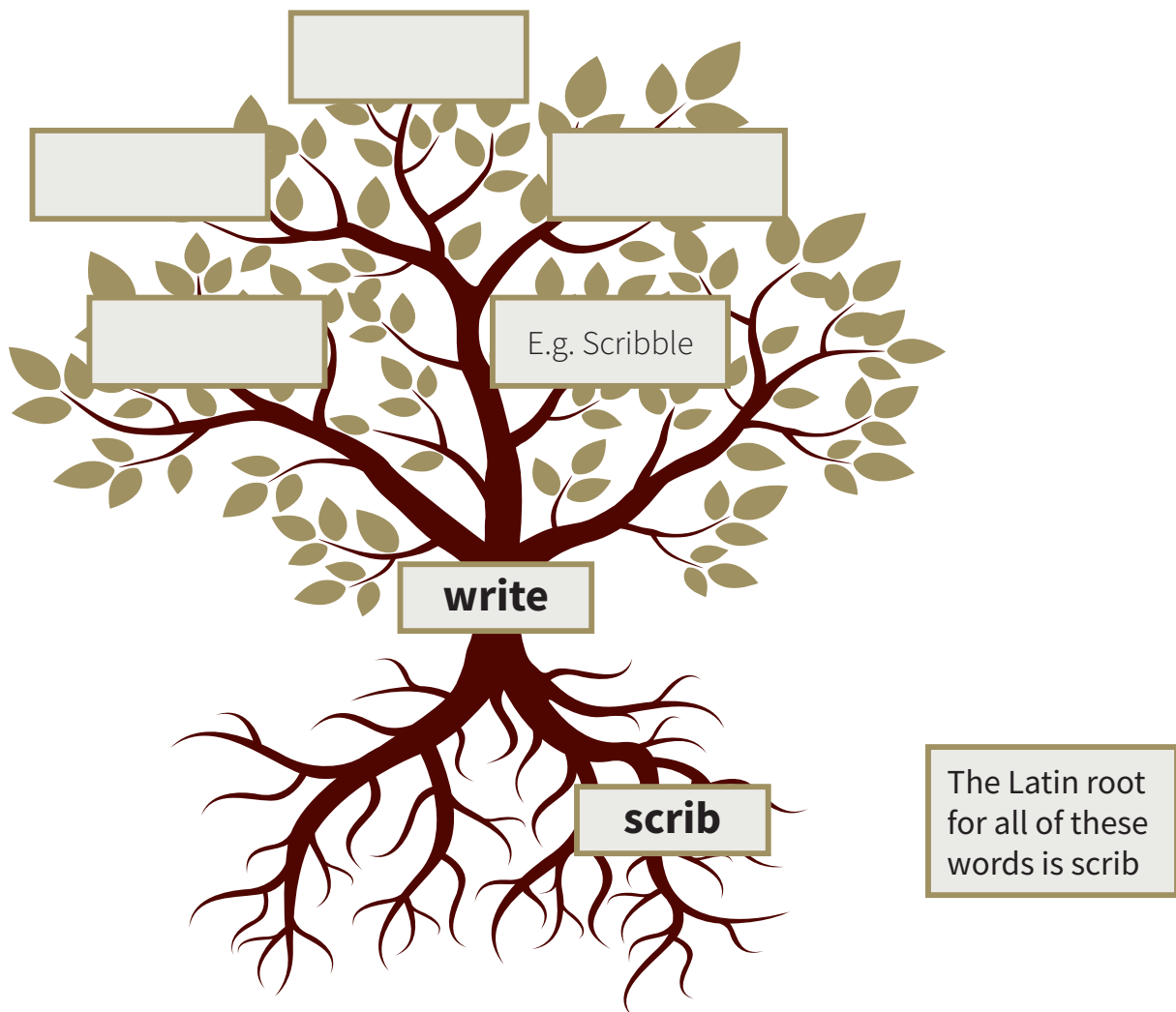
## Latin roots

The word manuscript means written by hand. *Manu* is Latin for 'by hand' and *scriptus* is Latin for 'written'. Manuscript is not the only English word that comes from *scriptus*. There are lots more.

Using these clues, can you find out what these words are and fill them in on the branches of the tree?  
Hint: Think of words that have something to do with writing e.g. 'scribble'.

### Clues:

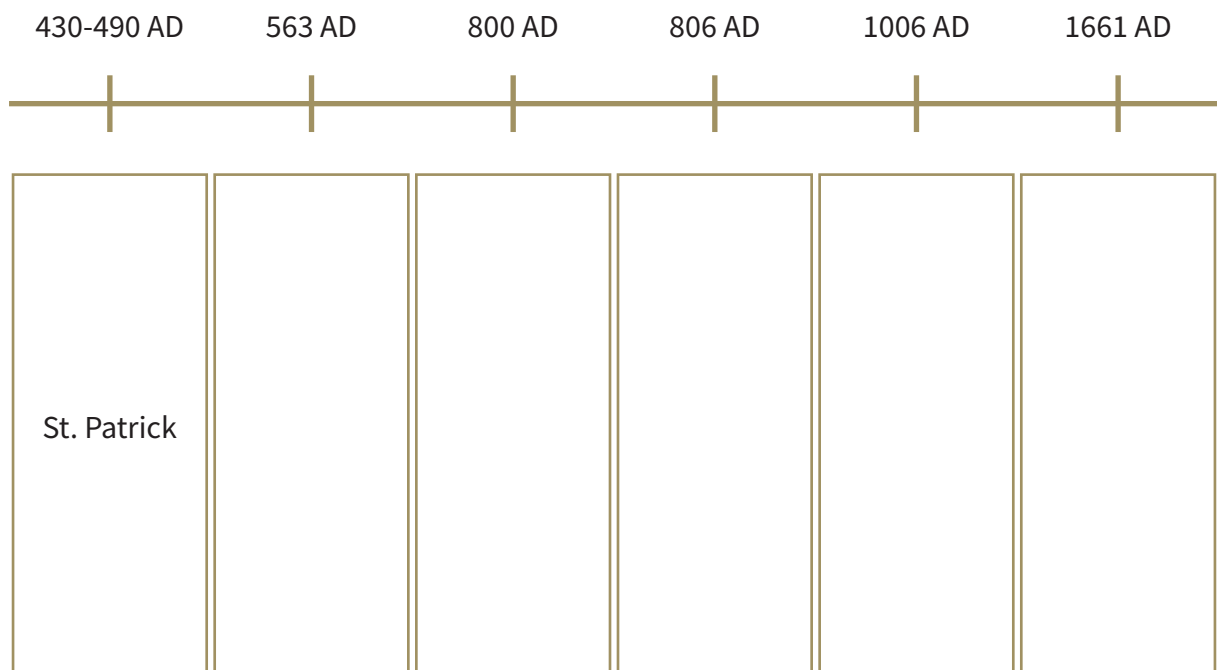
1. A person who writes by hand s\_r\_be
2. This word can mean the written text of a play or film scipt
3. To make a written copy of something tra\_scibe
4. To give a detailed account of something de\_cr\_be
5. Something a doctor writes out for a patient pr\_\_cr\_\_ti\_n



## Make a Book of Kells timeline

Here is a list of things which are important to the story of the Book of Kells. Write them on the timeline below.

- St Patrick arrives in Ireland as a missionary: between 430 and 490 AD
- The Book of Kells is stolen from Kells for its golden book shrine: 1006 AD
- The monks of Iona flee to Kells in Co. Meath because of Viking raids: around 806 AD
- The Book of Kells is placed in Trinity College Dublin by Bishop Henry Jones: 1661 AD
- The Book of Kells is made: around 800 AD
- The monastery of Iona is founded by St. Colum Cille: 563 AD





## Name the place

Find and label these places on the map.

1. Kells in Co. Meath (in Ireland)
2. Dublin (in Ireland)
3. Gartan in Co. Donegal (in Ireland)
4. The island of Iona (off the coast of Scotland)



## Matching

Match each word to its meaning.

Manuscript	←	A building or buildings where a community of monks live
Pigment		A pen made from a bird's tail feather
Calligraphy		The writer of one of the four gospels
Evangelist		The art of writing in a beautiful script
Monastery	→	A document which was written by hand
Quill		The colouring agent in paint

## The big Book of Kells word search

In this word search, you can find twelve words related to the Book of Kells. See if you can find them all!

h	f	z	w	q	u	p	l	w	x	b	i	c	c	u	t	n	h	k	r
t	i	o	n	a	i	l	l	u	m	i	n	a	t	i	o	n	z	t	u
p	s	w	l	q	z	s	c	a	l	l	i	g	r	a	p	h	y	r	u
x	o	g	o	i	x	i	v	x	g	h	y	q	b	i	y	y	z	e	h
a	t	r	k	b	o	h	l	w	s	r	s	d	c	g	p	s	l	a	o
h	g	c	o	j	c	u	r	o	e	g	t	d	k	f	n	d	j	s	u
b	q	o	m	e	a	l	r	t	n	p	g	x	v	d	t	f	x	u	x
d	u	c	x	s	o	y	s	i	i	f	z	f	l	d	t	l	k	r	b
i	i	y	g	h	n	a	k	r	t	n	p	o	y	c	a	g	m	e	h
k	l	c	s	x	n	i	c	d	i	n	t	e	r	l	a	c	e	s	u
z	l	r	f	o	v	s	r	n	d	b	z	n	d	w	j	r	g	p	o
b	q	o	m	x	u	s	f	k	u	m	d	e	b	t	b	v	x	a	t
v	m	k	y	n	g	z	h	r	n	v	g	p	m	c	m	j	k	d	n
h	w	q	a	y	x	<b>k</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>s</b>	o	j	u	s	m	l	q	w	n
p	c	m	u	z	r	f	v	e	l	l	u	m	e	m	l	n	b	i	s

### Kells

Iona  
 Monastery  
 Manuscript  
 Illumination  
 Treasure  
 Vikings  
 Folio  
 Quill  
 Vellum  
 Calligraphy  
 Interlace

# TEACHERS' ANSWERS

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Provided here are answers relating to some of the activities in this pack i.e. those that are based on fact rather than opinion or creative tasks.

## Classroom activities 4, Artwork

### Looking at and responding to art - the Arrest of Christ page

- a. The image was painted
- b. Colours were made from natural materials like plants and minerals and the material the image is painted on is vellum (calf-skin)
- c. The illuminator (artist) was a monk
- d. The artist intended to portray a scene from the Bible, the Arrest of Christ.
- e. In the picture, Jesus is being arrested by Roman soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane. This was the event that led to His crucifixion.
- f. We see Jesus standing beneath a stylised arcade, being held by two smaller figures. The way Jesus is standing and holding His arms is suggestive of both prayer and of the crucifixion to follow. At either side of Christ's head, there are vessels with plants coming from them, which could be vines or olives. Vines are often used in the Book of Kells as a symbol of the Eucharist. (For senior classes, it may be interesting to note that these plants are drawn around Latin words at the top of the page which refer to Jesus going with his disciples to the Mount of Olives following the last supper).
- g. The designs and patterns in the painting include plain interlace, animal interlace and Greek key patterns.

### Latin roots

1. scribe
2. script
3. transcribe
4. describe
5. prescription

### Make a Book of Kells timeline

<b>430-490 AD</b>	St. Patrick
<b>563 AD</b>	The monastery of Iona is founded by St. Colum Cille
<b>800 AD</b>	The Book of Kells is made
<b>806 AD</b>	The monks of Iona flee to Kells in Co. Meath because of Viking raids
<b>1006 AD</b>	The Book of Kells is stolen from Kells for its golden book shrine
<b>1661 AD</b>	The Book of Kells is placed in Trinity College Dublin by Bishop Henry Jones

### Matching

Match each word to its meaning.

<b>Manuscript</b>	A document which was written by hand
<b>Pigment</b>	The colouring agent in paint
<b>Calligraphy</b>	The art of writing in a beautiful script
<b>Evangelist</b>	The writer of one of the four gospels
<b>Monastery</b>	A building or buildings where a community of monks live
<b>Quill</b>	A pen made from a bird's tail feather

# GLOSSARY

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<b>Folio</b>	A sheet of writing material (from the Latin for a leaf), one half of a 'bifolium'
<b>Illuminated manuscript</b>	A handwritten book that has been embellished (decorated) with radiant colours, especially gold and silver
<b>Illumination</b>	The embellishment (decoration) of a manuscript with luminous colours (especially gold and silver). The word comes from the Latin <i>illuminare</i> , 'to enlighten or illuminate'. (Glossary for the British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts)
<b>Insular</b>	Refers to a period of close cultural interaction between Britain and Ireland from around 550 to 900 AD. Elements of Celtic, Germanic, antique, Early Christian and Mediterranean culture fused together to form something new, entirely the product of the islands of Britain and Ireland.
<b>Oak apple</b>	(Also known as oak gall). A round growth which forms on oak trees and contains the larva of certain wasps. (A larva is a newly hatched, often wormlike form of an insect at the stage of its life after it has developed from an egg and before it changes into its adult form).
<b>Psalm</b>	A sacred song or hymn, in particular any of those contained in the biblical Book of Psalms and used in Christian and Jewish worship

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APPENDIX



## FURTHER READING

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