



DECORATED LETTER – Pattern, Colour, Symbolism

Students use watercolour pencil techniques to create a decorated letter that includes a Celtic knot and personal symbolism as part of the design.

Required Time

160 Minutes

Grade Level

Grade 7 to Grade 10

Subject

Language Arts
Social Studies
Visual Arts

Vocabulary

balance
celtic knot
colour
harmony
illuminated letters
line
pattern
repetition
shape
symbolism

Materials

Crayola 12 Count Bulk Crayons - Black

Crayola Marker & Watercolour Paper - 22.9 cm x 30.5 cm (9" x 12")

Crayola Watercolour Pencils - 12 Count

Crayola Variety Brush Set - 5 Count

Water Containers

Paper Towels

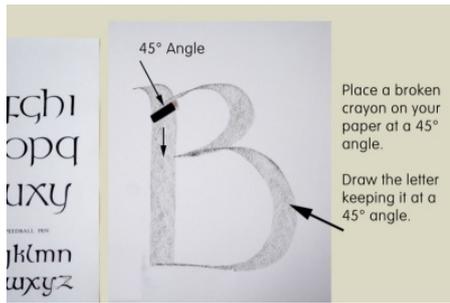
Small Pencil Sharpeners

Green Masking Tape

Plastic Placemats - 1 per student

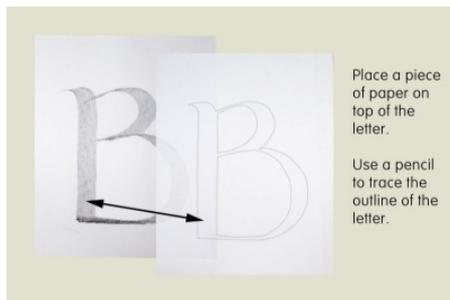
Shop Crayola
Products

Steps



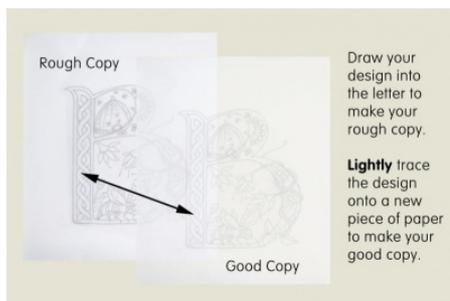
Step One

1. Unwrap a crayon and break it into a piece about 2.5 cm long.
2. Place the broken piece of crayon on your paper at a 45° angle.
3. Draw the letter keeping the crayon at a 45° angle.
4. Make the letter large enough to fit the page.
5. Practice drawing the letter until you get one that looks good to you.



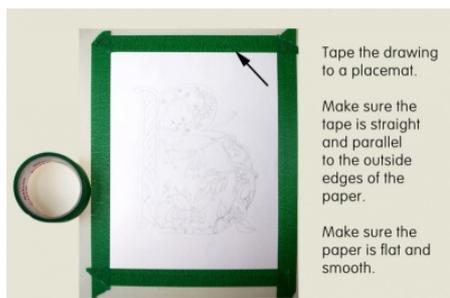
Step Two

1. Place a new piece of paper over the letter.
2. Use a pencil to trace the outline of the letter.



Step Three

1. Draw your design into the letter.
2. This is your **rough copy**, remember to include:
 - symbols that are personally meaningful to you
 - a Celtic knot somewhere in the design
3. Trace the design **lightly** on a new piece of paper. This is your **good copy**.
 - keep the paper clean and without finger smudges
 - do not use an eraser on the good copy



Step Four

1. Tape the drawing to a placemat.
2. Make sure the tape is straight and runs parallel to the outside edges of the paper.
3. Make sure the paper is flat and smooth.



Step Five

1. Use a variety of watercolour pencil techniques to colour the design.
2. Carefully remove the tape when your painting is dry.

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- create a decorated letter using watercolour pencil techniques;
- use line, shape and colour to create a variety of patterns;
- include a Celtic knot and personal symbolism as part of the design;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artworks.

Extensions

Have students:

- work in their sketchbooks to explore different ways to use watercolour pencils and calligraphy;
- design modern letters decorated with emoticons;
- work with a partner to compare their modern version with a letter from the Book of Kells;
- share their ideas with the class.

Prepare

1. Prior to this lesson have students learn how to make a Celtic knot using the Celtic Knot worksheet. (Downloads - BasicCelticKnot.pdf)
2. Provide time for students to explore ways to draw Celtic knots in their sketchbooks.
3. Prior to this lesson have students work with watercolour pencils using the **Exploring Watercolour Pencils** lesson plan available on this website.
4. Download images of decorated letters from the Internet, for example,
Decorated A
Decorated B
Decorated B2
Decorated C
Kells
Kells-2
5. Gather several alphabet style sheets, for example,
Alphabet

Introduction

1. View images of decorated letters including from the Book of Kells.
2. Discuss the Book of Kells, how it was made, and its use of symbolic imagery.
 - *an Irish book begun around 800 CE in Scotland, and moved to Ireland around 806 CE after Viking raids*
 - *made by Monks to teach people about Christianity*
 - *most famous European medieval manuscript still in existence*
 - *admired because of its beautiful art, attention to detail and craftsmanship*
 - *made on vellum (calfskin)*
 - *used 10 different colours, many of which were rare and expensive because they were so hard to get*
 - *contains the Four Gospels, stories about Jesus as told by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*
 - *uses symbolism to represent different parts of the story, for example, Matthew - man/angel; Mark - lion; Luke - calf; John - eagle*
3. Discuss the meaning of symbols that students are familiar with.
4. Point out the overlapping pattern of the Celtic Knot in some of the letters. Ask if and where they have seen this design before.
5. Introduce the challenge

Activities

The Challenge

1. Create a decorated letter using watercolour pencil techniques.
2. Use line, shape and colour to create a variety of patterns.
3. Include a Celtic knot and personal symbolism as part of the design.
4. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.
5. Support your ideas with evidence found in the artworks.

The Process

1. Make sure everyone understands the challenge.
2. Establish success criteria with your students, for example,
I know I have been successful when I have:
 - *created a Celtic knot accurately*
 - *erased all guide lines*
 - *used colour to emphasize parts of the design*
 - *created a variety of patterns to add interest to the design*
 - *used a variety of lines to move the eye through the design*

- *used watercolour techniques effectively*
 - *included symbolism that is personally meaningful*
 - *created a composition that is balanced and harmonious*
 - *kept the finished artwork in good condition*
3. Demonstrate how to draw a letter with a broken crayon and allow them time to practice.
 4. Encourage students to think of the combinations of colours they will use and why.
 5. Encourage them to use symbols that are personally meaningful in their design.
 6. Encourage them to do several thumbnail sketches before beginning.
 7. Guide students through the steps outlined in this lesson plan.
 8. Observe students as they work.
 9. Provide individual assistance and encouragement.
 10. Once they are ready to begin, demonstrate how to tape their good drawing to the plastic mat and encourage them to use the various watercolour pencil skills they have developed in earlier lessons.

Sharing

1. Once all the paintings are complete display them for a group discussion. Remind students of the challenge.
 - *Look closely at the work.*
 - *Choose one that interests you for some reason.*
 - *Share thoughts about the work*
2. During the discussion include references to:
 - *colour – how it has been used to emphasize parts of the design*
 - *movement – how line and patterns move the eye through the whole space*
 - *balance – how the placement and size of objects create visual balance*
 - *symbolism – how objects and colours communicate ideas*
3. Ask students to tell how they felt about doing this project.

Assessment

1. Observe students as they work – thoughtful focus, discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their paintings – speaks with a clear voice, looks at audience while speaking, points to areas in the design, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen – looks at presenter, asks effective questions, supports ideas with evidence found in the artwork.
4. Use a checklist to track progress. (Downloads – DecoratedLetter_tracking.pdf)
5. Have students use the self-assessment form to evaluate their work. (Downloads – DecoratedLetter_self-assessment.pdf)