

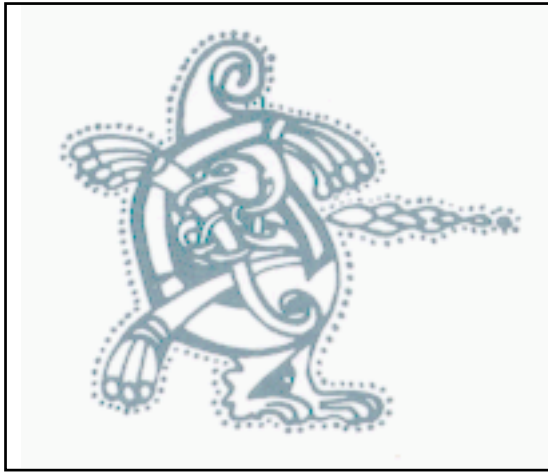
# Medieval Art

Wells Art 7/8

Standards: 7.2.1, 7.3.2  
8.2.1,

## The Dark Age of Europe

The period of time from the fall of the Roman empire (400 A.D.) to the Renaissance (1400) is known as the **Dark, or Medieval, age in Europe**. During this time many cities became walled fortresses that were ruled by kings, lords or nobles and was populated by peasants, or serfs, that worked for the ruler. Each “city-state” had knights and armies to defend itself from neighboring invaders while maintaining a strong connection to the **Catholic church**. In addition, **illnesses and plagues** swept across Europe killing thousands of people at a time. A source of comfort for the population was the Bible, and a strong faith in God. However, bibles had to **copied by hand** and few people could read, so each page was a work of art, completed by **Monks** in the monasteries.



## Manuscript Illumination

Illumination paintings combined the art of writing and drawing to create amazing scenes on the pages of these hand made books. Monks, working by candlelight, would find meditative tranquility in the complex forms of the designs they used to decorate the scenes and stories of the bible. Letters became more than symbols, they were transformed into works of art in their own right. Some designs used the letter name in the meaning of the design. For example, the letter “Q” would be decorated to illustrate the word “quarrel” showing a knight engaged in battle. These scenes helped the illiterate population understand the meaning of the printed text, as well as giving them some beautiful art to view.

## The First of Two Steps

Materials: Letter examples, beginning original designs, linoleum blocks, cutting tools.

Activity:

- 1) Look at examples of medieval manuscript
- 2) Design letter, **reverse it so it can be printed correctly**. Transfer to linoleum block.
- 3) Cut block to create relief areas for printing.
- 4) Use printers ink for printing process (experiment with inks and colors)
- 5) Use best printing for next step- Calligraphy.