
Inspiration: Book of hours

In this activity sheet students will:

- look closely at the pages from a medieval illuminated *Book of Hours (Use of York)* on the Mirror of the World website, using the Zoom & Pan interactive display
- explore the medieval design, construction and use of illuminated manuscripts, and more specifically *Book of Hours (Use of York)*
- analyse images to develop a sense of medieval daily life; compare and contrast medieval and contemporary practices
- write medieval style script; demonstrate understanding of content and aesthetics of the *Book of Hours (Use of York)* by recreating the missing page.

Answers to Question time 1

1. Late 15th century
2. Bruges, Belgium
3. A family in York, England.
4. The decoration and illumination of manuscripts was a lengthy process that used many expensive materials, and a professional scribe had to be paid. You can direct students to this interactive animation that illustrates the many steps involved in making an illuminated manuscript:
http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/sections/making_art/index_manuscript.html
5. A man chopping trees for firewood.
A man ploughing the fields to grow crops.
A man scything the grass (instead of mowing).
A man herding sheep so that the sheep can find more to eat.
Some men about to slaughter a pig to eat.
A man sewing seeds to grow crops.
A man having a bath in a barrel (they didn't have indoor bathrooms).

Answers to Question time 2

1. Lifestyle differences: chopping firewood to keep warm, ploughing, sowing and picking your own wheat and vegetables; feeding and killing your own animals, cutting grass with a scythe.
2. A plot of land you either own or rent from a landowner.
3. Points of similarity: eat similar foods, many farm chores are still the same today.
4. Summer – harvest fruits and vegetables, make hay for livestock
Autumn – plough and sow seeds
Winter – chop wood
Spring – scythe grass
5. It may take weeks, months, even years to produce an illuminated book of hours manuscript.
6. Christians had books of hours in order to be able to recite prayers for different times of each day, as well as special holy days.
7. Calendars with special dates marked (holidays etc.)
Religious calendars (advent calendars)
Online calendars
Mobile phones/PDAs/organisers
Diaries
Birthday/anniversary date books
Self-help, New Age and alternative spirituality books
Almanacs
8. Instigate class discussion.

Activity 6 – Create your own manuscript

Students can make their own personal book of hours, with a page for each month and include different pictures for different times of the year. They can also include some quotes, photos, pictures, statements and values that are important to them.

This site has more information on how manuscripts were made, printable activity sheets and instructions on how to design and make your own book of hours:

<http://www.leavesofgold.org/learn/index.html>

This site has suggestions on how to experiment with different historically used dyes and inks:

<http://www.thebakken.org/education/SciMathMN/plant-dyes/dyes2.htm>

Additional class activities and links

Illuminated Lives is a short animation based on illuminated medieval manuscripts that shows daily life at that time. Students can watch this to further develop their understanding of medieval life as well as the aesthetic of the illuminated manuscript.

For teachers residing in Victoria, Australia, it can be borrowed from the ACMI lending library in Melbourne. The film can be picked up at most public libraries across Victoria, or delivered to most Victorian schools. For more information see the ACMI website:

<http://www.acmi.net.au>

Illuminated Lives (1989) [catalogue no.306999]

Students can learn more about medieval life on this website made by students for students:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/J002390/>

This is an excellent interactive animation on the making of manuscripts:

http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/sections/making_art/index_manuscript.html

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