

A PEASANT’S POEM

Independent Learning Project - Year 7 – Spring Half Term 1

YOUR TASK

Create your own illuminated manuscript featuring a poem about peasant farming life in the Middle Ages.

• Find some examples of illuminated manuscripts	
• Research the jobs which medieval peasants had to do throughout the year	
• Draft your poem using poetic techniques	
• Make your finished illuminated manuscript	

SKILLS YOU WILL USE:



SUCCESS CRITERIA

Show understanding of the features of life in the Middle Ages	
Accurate use of historical vocabulary	
Evidence of using your own research in your final piece	
Show understanding of the features of illuminated manuscripts	
A creative poem which engages the reader’s interest using poetic techniques	
Good spelling, punctuation and grammar	

STEP 1: Illuminated manuscripts

TASK 1 – Make a collage out of medieval illuminated manuscripts

Find some medieval illuminated manuscripts online. You could do an image search on www.google.co.uk

Find and print a selection of ones you which you like and use them to make a collage in your book.

TASK 2 – What can you see in the manuscripts?

Look at the collage you have made. Do the manuscripts have anything in common? Are there any features which they all share? Use the box below to record what you can see.

Think about: colours, text, borders, images, layout

STEP 2: The peasant's year

TASK 1 – Research the jobs which peasants had to do

Peasants had to do different kinds of work in each season.

Pick two jobs from each season and research them.

Make detailed notes about the jobs in your book.

You could start your research at:

http://www.historyonthenet.com/medieval_life/farming.htm

SPRING	Choose two from: Ploughing, sowing, fertilising, harrowing, scaring birds
SUMMER	Choose two from: Weeding, pruning, shearing
AUTUMN	Choose two from: Harvesting, winnowing, milling
WINTER	Choose two from: Butchering, salting/smoking , weaving, repairing

TASK 2 – Research peasants' tools

Peasants had to use different tools & equipment to help them in their farming. Pick five tools from the below. Print a picture of them stick it in your book. Beside each one, describe what it was used for.

You could start your research at:

<http://spartacus-educational.com/MEDTfarming.htm>

http://www.historyonthenet.com/medieval_life/farming.htm

A plough A harrow A scythe A sickle A cart Shears	An ox A flail A winnowing basket A sieve A watermill A spindle
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STEP 3: Draft your poem

Poetic techniques you could use in your poem	
Alliteration	Using lots of words which begin with the same letter e.g. <i><u>S</u>un <u>s</u>hone on <u>s</u>harp <u>s</u>cythe and <u>s</u>ickle</i>
Imagery	Using words and phrases which appeal to the five senses e.g. <i>The sheaves felt crisp and smelt like summer</i>
Simile	Comparing two objects using the words 'like' or 'as' e.g. <i>The blade was sharp <u>as</u> a sword</i> e.g. <i>The field was dry <u>like</u> the desert</i>
Metaphor	Comparing two objects without using the words 'like' or 'as' e.g. <i>The snow <u>was a blanket</u>, it covered the land</i>
Personification	Describing an object as if it is a living thing or human being e.g. <i>The hungry earth swallowed the seeds</i>
Onomatopoeia	Words which sound like their meaning e.g. <i>Whizz, buzz, rattle, whisper, bang</i>
Rhetorical questions	Ask a question which doesn't need to be answered e.g. <i>Was this the year that my crops would fail?</i>
Rhyme	Using sentences which rhyme e.g. <i>The swaying sheaves were tall and gold, The autumn sun above was growing cold</i>

Think about the structure & voice of your poem

One way of structuring your poem would be to write one stanza (verse) about each season – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

Will you write your poem in the first person (Using "I...") or in the third person ("The peasant..." or "He.../She...")?