

MEDIEVAL CELTIC ART

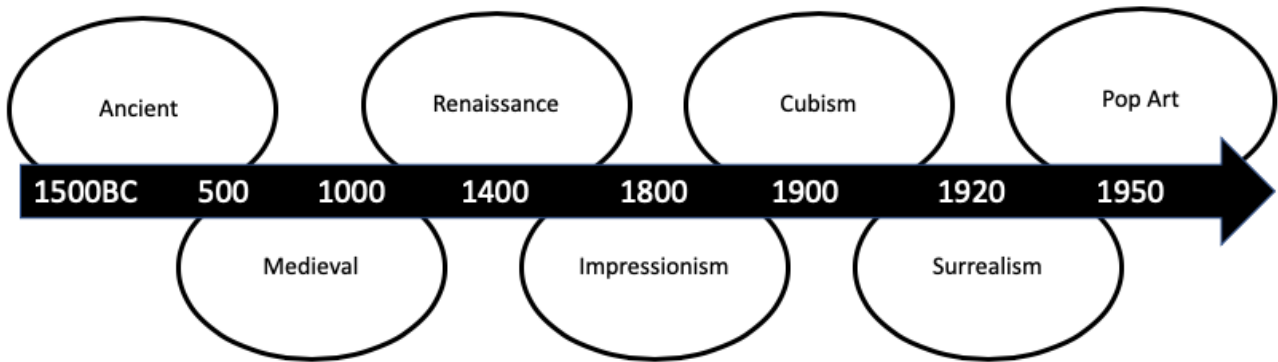


Name _____ Form _____

Teacher _____

Homework hand in day _____

Year 7 Term 1a



These are all examples of different art movements. An art movement is a period of time when artists worked in similar styles inspired by similar ideas. We will study some of the key art movements that have shaped art as we know it today.

Ancient Art (prior to medieval art)

The earliest form of art that we know of was carved and painted into the walls of caves during the stone age. Ancient Art also refers to the ancient art of different cultures such as Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art created before 500.

Medieval Art

The medieval period is also known as the Middle Ages. The start of the Middle Ages is often called the Dark Ages. This is the period of time from 500 to 1000 AD. Before this, most of Europe had been ruled by The Roman Empire. After the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, many changes occurred throughout Europe. Rome had provided a strong government, education, and culture. Afterwards much of Europe fell into barbarianism, life was hard for many and there was thought to be a lack of cultural development during this time as very little was recorded which is why it was known as the Dark Ages.

Much of the art in Europe during the Middle Ages was religious art with Catholic subjects and themes. The different types of art included painting, sculpture, metal work, engraving, stained glass windows, and manuscripts. The artists did not try to make their paintings realistic but focused on the symbolism of their art. Paintings were flat with no shadows and the subjects were generally very serious and somber. The subjects of the paintings were almost entirely religious with many paintings being of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Artists of the early Middle Ages were predominantly priests and monks who lived in monasteries. Their art became the primary method of communicating narratives of a Biblical nature to the people.

Task 1

The Middle Ages/Medieval Period

1. Cave paintings were part of which art movement?

2. Who ruled most of Europe before 500?

3. When was the fall of the Roman Empire?

4. Which word in the text means 'uncivilised, cruel and unpleasant behaviour'?

5. After the fall of the Roman Empire, when life was hard, what was this time known as?

6. What was the theme of most Medieval pieces of art?

7. What is a manuscript? (You will may need to look this up)

8. What were the characteristics of medieval paintings?

My score /8

8 = Excellent

7-6 = Good

5-4 = Inconsistent

3-0 = Poor

The Celts

The Iron Age Celts were a tribe of people who lived all over Europe during the medieval period.

Around 500 BCE, the ancient Celts migrated and settled in Britain. As a result, many of their cultural traditions remain evident in present-day **Ireland, Scotland and Wales**. Even now some people can still speak Celtic languages such as Welsh and Gaelic.

The Celts lived in tribes. Each tribe had a chief, warriors, free farmers, and slaves. Most tribes lived in protected villages, often on a hilltop. There were fields and pastures nearby for farming and raising cattle. Men and women were equal in Celtic society. Women could be warriors, and great queens, such as Boudicca (Boadicea) in Britain, who led a massive revolt against the Romans.

The Celts were skilled in working with metals. They were one of the first peoples in Europe to work with iron. They made swords, shields, helmets, and gold and silver jewellery. The Celts left behind many beautiful examples of their intricate art. Most of it is in the form of stonework and jewellery.

Celtic Priests

The Celts were **polytheistic** meaning they believed in many different gods and goddesses. The Celts practiced a religion called Druidism. **Celtic priests were called Druids**, and the Celts believed that they understood nature and the world around them so well that they predict the future from it. Druids, were the link between the supernatural world and the ordinary human one. They taught that souls lived forever by passing from one person to another at the time of death. The main centre of the Druids in Britain was Anglesey, in Wales.

Druids also acted as judges in Celtic society, and even doctors; they knew a lot about the healing properties of plants, and which ones would help someone feel better if they were ill or hurt. The Celts believed that there were **gods** for every part of life, and that the Druids were the ones who understood how to speak to them and interpret what they wanted.

Task 2

The Celts

1. Where were did the Celts live before they settled in Britain?

2. A group of Celts that lived together as a community would be called a?

3. Name 3 roles that people would have within a tribe

4. Name the Celtic queen who led a revolt against the Romans

5. Name 3 things the Celts would use their skills in metal work to create

6. The term used to describe a belief in many different gods is

7. A Druid is a:

8. What were Druids the link between?

9. Where is the main Druid centre in Britain?

10. Who were the Druids able to speak to that ordinary Celts couldn't?

My score **/10**

10-9 = Excellent

8-7 = Good

6-5 = Inconsistent

4-0 = Poor

Celtic Beliefs

The Otherworld

The ancient Celts believed in an Otherworld. The Otherworld was the home of many gods and goddesses. It was a place of joy, where feasts were always happening. The Otherworld was NOT a heaven. It was NOT a reward for doing something good on earth. The Celts believed that *everyone* entered the Otherworld when they died. Warriors were fearless because they believed the spirit is immortal and if they died it wouldn't matter, because you would be reborn again. They believed in lots of supernatural beings who occupied and controlled parts of the natural world, strange beasts, giants and little people. This gave rise, for example, to lots of Celtic legends about fairies.

The Otherworld existed alongside and connected to our own, a place of eternal happiness and immortality, to which mortals could cross at certain times of the year, and through special natural places such as hilltops, caves, waterfalls, riverbanks and other sacred places. Days in the Otherworld were said to run as years in the mortal world, so returning was another story...

Gods and Goddesses

The Celts believed in over 400 gods and goddesses which were connected to nature including; the sky, thunder, clouds, sun, agriculture and the sea. Many gods had no names, but lived in springs, woods and other places.

The Celts believed that the world was alive

They believed that nature such as rocks, rivers and trees had spirits. These were not necessarily good or bad spirits but could react in a certain way, depending on how they were treated.

Celtic Religion placed great importance on animals

Gods also appeared in many animal forms. Because of this, Celts were often cautious and respectful towards animals. It also helps explain why animal imagery is so much more common in Celtic Art than in the Roman or Christian tradition.

Animals such as birds were particularly important, had supernatural powers and their singing was considered to have healing magic. They were believed to carry messages between the living and the Otherworld.

Task 3

Celtic Beliefs

1. Where did the Celts believe people went when they died?

2. Name 3 places where a mortal could cross to the Otherworld

3. How many gods and goddesses did the Celts believe in?

4. What were the gods connected to?

5. Where did the gods live?

6. What did nature such as rocks, trees and rivers have that made them believe the world was alive?

7. What other form did gods appear in?

8. What did they believe birds could give to the Otherworld?

My score /8

8 = Excellent

7-6 = Good

5-4 = Inconsistent

3-0 = Poor

Celtic Design and Symbols

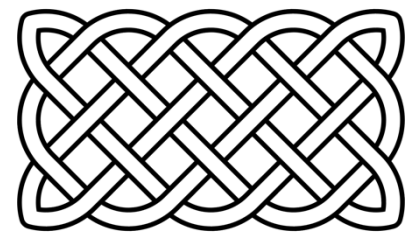
Early Medieval Celtic art of Britain and Ireland is called **Insular art**. Insular comes from insula, the Latin term for "island"; in this period Great Britain and Ireland shared a common style different from that of the rest of Europe.

Insular art is often characterised by detailed geometric designs, interlace, and stylized animal decorations in illuminated manuscripts.

One illuminated manuscript that represents the pinnacle of **Insular Art** is the Book of Kells , created by Celtic monks around the year 800.

Celtic art is full of patterns, spirals, animals and colour. Like their daily life, their art was lively. They made colourful jewellery, fabulous fabrics, beautiful pottery, musical instruments, figurines of bronze and gold, wheels for carts and strong weapons out of iron. They celebrated their gods, ancestors, life, the natural world and its creatures, and the changing of the seasons through their music, poetry, story telling and art.

Celtic Knots There are many different designs of Celtic knots. They were often engraved into stone in burial sites to protect from evil spirits. Celtic knots famously comprise of one continuous line, with no beginning and no end and so are often regarded as a symbol of infinity and eternal life.



The Celtic Cross Was a religious or spiritual symbol. The circle being a reference to the Sun God in ancient times. The four arms are thought to represent the four elements: Earth, fire, water and air. The four quadrants may also represent the four seasons of the year or the four stages of the day: morning, midday, evening and midnight.



The Triskelion Reflects the Celtic belief that everything important comes in threes. Also known as the triple spiral, the Triskelion has rotational symmetry and is very common in Celtic art and architecture. It is seen as a symbol of strength and progress. As it appears to be moving, the Triskelion also represents the will to move forward and overcome adversity.



Tree of Life Designs



The Ancient Celts believed that trees had magical powers. They honoured the Tree of Life by leaving one big tree in the middle of their fields when they cleared their land. Underneath the branches of this tree, the Celts held gatherings and appointed their chieftains. The tree was able to provide shelter, food, and medicine, leading the Celts to believe that it had enough power to care for all life.

The Celtic Tree of Life symbol represents harmony and balance in nature. The Tree of Life, to the Celts, symbolized strength, a long life, and wisdom. The tree also represents rebirth, as it will lose its leaves during Autumn and will be reborn again once spring arrives.

The Celts believed that they actually came from trees, and considered them magical, living beings. Trees were said to guard the land and acted as a doorway into the spirit world.

The Tree of Life connects the lower and upper worlds as its roots grow far down while its branches reach high. The tree trunk connects both of these worlds allowing for communication with the pagan gods the Ancient Celts worshiped before Christianity.

Task 4

Celtic Design and Symbols

1. What is the Medieval Celtic art of Britain and Ireland called?

2. What 3 things characterise Insular art?

3. What is the name of the illuminated manuscript that represents the best of Insular art?

4. Which Celtic symbol represents infinity and eternal life?

5. What are the four arms of the Celtic Cross thought to represent?

6. What is the Triskelion symbol also known as?

7. What did the Celts think that the trees losing their leaves in Autumn and growing them again in Spring represented?

8. What did the Celts believe that trees were the doorway to?

My score /8

8 = Excellent

7-6 = Good

5-4 = Inconsistent

3-0 = Poor

Task 5

Revision

Use this booklet and your knowledge organiser to revise everything you have learnt about the Celts. You will have a short quiz to test your knowledge from this half term in the next lesson.

You may be tested on your knowledge of:

Where medieval art sits within the timeline

Characteristics of medieval art

What Celtic people were like

Celtic religion

Celtic beliefs

Celtic symbols

Key terminology

Mini Test

The Celts

Circle the correct answer

1. a b c d
2. a b c d
3. a b c d
4. a b c d
5. a b c d
6. a b c d
7. a b c d
8. a b c d
9. a b c d
10. a b c d

My score /10

10-9 = Excellent

8-7 = Good

6-5 = Inconsistent

4-0 = Poor

My Homework Record

Tick your result for each homework this half term

Task	Excellent	Good	Inconsistent	Poor
1. The Middle Ages				
2. The Celts				
3. Celtic Beliefs				
4. Celtic Design and Symbols				
5. Mini Test				

Work ethic

How much effort did you put in to your homework this half term? Tick which statement applies to you.

EXCELLENT

My best effort is applied to every homework. My homework is always completed on time and to the best possible standard. I have done my own reading on the subject to ensure I understand it fully.

GOOD

I work hard to complete my homework by spending at least 20 minutes per week ensuring it is completed to a pleasing standard.

INCONSISTENT

I sometimes complete my homework on time and to an acceptable standard, but not always. I do not always spend the time required to do my homework well.

POOR

I rarely complete my homework on time or to an acceptable standard.