



H is for Henry III Designing a seal

King Henry III was personally involved in the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey and there are surviving documents that show he gave the Abbey gifts of land. There is one very special document which stated his wish to be buried inside the new Abbey. Important documents from the time of King Henry III had a wax seal attached; by attaching a seal, it showed that someone was giving their agreement to what was written on the document. Just like a signature today. Let's have a go at creating your own.

Do you have a signature?

- Write it out ten times. Does it look the same every time you write it out?
- If you don't have a signature, why not design one? A signature can be your whole name. Or it can be your initials. You can add squiggles and give it your own personal style. Play around with the design until you are happy with it. Then practise writing it out ten times and see if you can get it to look exactly the same every time.

A seal is used in the same way as a signature. It always looks the same because it comes from a mould called a matrix. This was important so you knew that it really came from that person.

Have you ever heard these phrases?

'I give you my seal of approval'

'Signed, sealed and delivered'

King Henry III's seal has a picture of him riding a horse. He looks very powerful and strong. In fact, Henry III was not very interested in fighting in battles but he lived at a time when kings had to be seen as strong. His seal gave people the impression that he was good at fighting.



Design your own seal

Seals were quite big, they were often as big as your hand. Think carefully about the image you want on your seal. You could include things that are important to you, such as your family and friends, your pets, your hobbies, your favourite place – anything that matters to you! Traditionally, seals also had writing as a border. You might want to write your name, nickname, favourite football team or perhaps lyrics from a song that you like.

Now it's your chance to make your own seal. You could draw it on paper or if you have playdough or modelling clay you could try modelling your own.



“If I was to design my own seal” said Livingstone the lion, “it would definitely show off my glorious mane. What is on your seal?”

Share your creations on Facebook or Twitter using #WAbbeyFun