

Introduction to Heraldry

Heraldry is the art of assigning specific symbols in an exact arrangement to make a picture that represents a person, family or business.

Although modern heraldry has strict rules that govern the registration of official crests and coats of arms, it is still fun to arrange or "BLAZON" your own coat of arms.

The following pages contain common heraldic symbols. Though most symbols have a commonly agreed upon meaning, you can choose a symbol to reflect your own meaning.

Use these symbols to create your own coat of arms on the blank page provided. Your main design, or "ARMS", should go inside the shield outline. On top of the helmet there is a blank space for a "CREST". This can be the same symbol used in your arms or something completely different.

Your symbols can be separated by lines, waves or zig zags. You can use different colored backgrounds, or even patterns such as a checkerboard.

Around the helmet is a fabric drape called the "MANTEL". It may look confusing. Imagine it is like a piece of fabric hanging from the back of the helmet. Then imagine the edges of the fabric are cut into jagged shapes called "DAGS". Then imagine that a breeze is blowing the fabric so the dags are flipped over onto the front of the fabric. Traditionally, the sides of the fabric are two different colors, so the dags will be a contrast from the main fabric.

The banner shape at the bottom is for your "MOTTO". Traditionally written in Latin, this is where you write a word or phrase that means something special to you or your family. It could be a battle cry, a pledge to be loyal, or a cause that you feel strongly about.

The color yellow is symbolic of gold, and the color white is for silver. That is why these colors are called metals. The other colors are called "TINCTURES" and have special names in Latin.

Instructions:

1. First sketch out a rough idea of your coat of arms.
2. Copy the symbols and shield outline to a transparency sheet.
3. Use a projector to draw the outline on a large piece of paper, then trace your symbols onto the shield.
4. Write your motto in fancy letters and color your design.