

Fun at home activity

Make a medieval shield

Inspiration

Make a shield like those from medieval times, inspired by the Lewis chessmen on show in [A History of the World in 100 Objects from the British Museum](#) at the National Museum of Australia.

The chessmen were found sometime before 1831 on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland. It is believed they were made in Norway in the 12th century.

The knight in the Lewis chessmen holds a shield. Shields in medieval times often included symbolic coats of arms or showed loyalty to a family, king or duke.

What can the Lewis chessmen tell us about history? What will the decorations on your shield say about you? How will the shield shape protect your body?



Time

This activity takes about 30 minutes and is easy.

What you need

- thick cardboard (old boxes are great)
- coloured paper and card
- crayons, textas, pencils or paint
- tape and glue
- scissors (remember, these can be sharp, so ask an adult for help).

How to make your shield

1. Find out more about medieval shields. How were shields used? What shape will your shield be? Think about decorations, colours, and what you want your shield to symbolise.
2. Gather your materials.
3. Draw an outline of the shield on the cardboard. Our shields are kite shaped, like the ones from the Lewis chessmen. Using scissors, cut out your shield.

4. Decorate your shield. Many were divided into sections. We divided ours with strips of blue paper glued to the front.

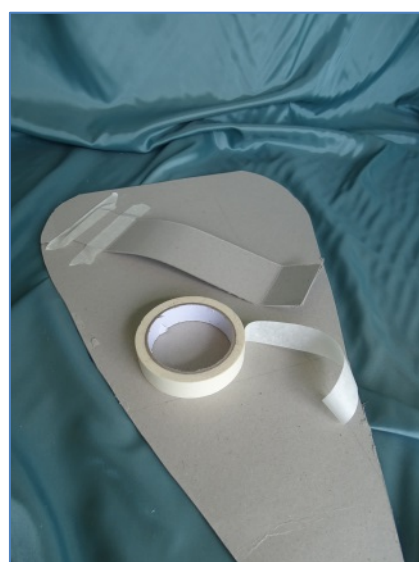


5. Draw onto paper any other symbols you want to add, then cut them out and glue onto your shield. We chose a dragon. You could find out what dragons or other animals symbolise in different parts of the world. We also added green mountains made of tape to show the landscape where we live.

6. You can also draw emblems or symbols directly onto your shield. We used textas to add a red circle and orange crescent. You could represent your family with a coat of arms.

7. Once you have decorated your shield, turn it over and add a handle. Cut a thick strip from your original piece of cardboard. Tape it to the back of the shield, leaving room for your hand or arm.

8. Test your shield. You might like to make a medieval crown to match!



Share your creation

Email a photo or video to schoolholidays@nma.gov.au. We will add this to the National Museum's [Flickr stream](#), where you can see other creations from our Discovery Space.

[Check out more fun at home activities, videos and games on the Museum's website](#)