

## BOOKPLATE UNIT TEACHER NOTES

There is no assignment schedule included with the unit, allowing each teacher to scaffold the assignments in line with student ability and the school class schedule. Within the Middle Years Program of the IB, assignments are given weekly, and students work entirely at their own pace. To help students pace themselves, give weekly deadlines for each numbered instruction with the understanding that they can work at their own speed, but must fulfill each assigned task for a grade.

The bookplate unit clearly addresses the four categories on which this curriculum is based:

**In composition**, bookplate designs are formal in the way shapes are organized. Images are grounded against simple geometric shapes and can replicate historical heraldic models. Designs also integrate ribbon banners and text into the design.

**The subject** of the bookplate will be based on personal identity but grounded in traditional models. The student is required to study the way historical models used images as metaphors for the personal qualities of families and individuals; then apply these kinds of metaphors to their own identity.

**The function** of a bookplate does not apply to modern books the way it did when books were more precious and the property of wealthy people only. The underlying narrative to this unit reflects the history of books, the relationship of this genre to heraldry and even modern-day product branding.

**The medium** of pen and ink acquaints students with a drawing technique of historic significance. The medium is an important one for students to master because pen and ink is a medium readily accessible and of historic importance. Technical skills using quill pens requires students develop lyrical lines and value shapes (hatching).

Steel quill pens are recommended, but for younger students, a pen with a rolling ball can be used.

The most difficult aspect to a student's work will be the values; how to make the values and textures needed. I encouraged students to use watercolor brushes for values as well as hatching techniques.

I have discovered that student work improves greatly in quality if more than one preliminary design is required and if a final design is re-worked several times.

Scaffolding the unit to allow for several preliminary versions of a final work assure a higher quality of work. It also allows for a deeper understanding of the cultural context of the genre.